

Higher Education Summit
Press Conference
Wednesday, May 16, 2001
9:30 a.m.
State Capitol

Talking Points

NEEDS TO BE VERY CONVERSATIONAL.

- I have been traveling the state this week with Carolyn Shanks, President and CEO of Entergy Mississippi.
- We have been busy raising awareness of our initiative to place an Internet-accessible computer in every classroom of the State of Mississippi by the end of 2002.
- A student in one of the classes we were visiting yesterday asked me about funding cuts to education.
- I assured her that I have a commitment to education – my administration has a commitment to education – Kindergarten through University/Graduate level.
- I assured her, as I assured our teachers last week, that I would continue to urge the Legislature to remove the 5% condition on the teacher pay

raise, and that I would continue to urge the Legislature to fully fund education, rather than robbing Peter to pay Paul.

- I assured her that with everything we do in our administration – education is a top priority.
- While our focus at the beginning of this week has been on education K-12, today we are turning our focus to higher education.
- The Nation and the world have noticed Mississippi’s commitment to education.
- We are well on our way to becoming “number one” in the nation in many areas concerning education.
- Today, I am proud to announce another “first” in education for Mississippi.
- Mississippi has been chosen as the first state to hold a Leadership Summit on Higher Education by the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges.

- It is our responsibility, as a state to make sure that higher education meets the needs of the students and the people of Mississippi.
- The purpose of this summit is to outline what all of higher education – public and private, two-year and four-year institutions - can do to advance the competitiveness of our state and to improve the quality of life of our citizens.
- We can best do that by bringing together leaders of state government, the business community and higher education to work together to develop a vision for Mississippi's future – economically, culturally, socially and educationally.
- We have developed a Steering Committee, which will be co-chaired by Aubrey Patterson, Chairman and CEO of Bancorp South and myself.
- I would like to ask Aubrey to say a few words.
- (Aubrey speaks)

- Aubrey, thank you for your commitment to education in Mississippi, and for your assistance in this effort.
- Aubrey and I are joined today by some of the members of the steering committee, who will be available to talk with the members of the media following our press conference.
- (Turn to the steering committee)
- I thank them for the time and energy they will commit to this effort.
- By bringing together a variety of people with different backgrounds, experiences and perspectives, we are ensuring that we cover every aspect of higher education and its importance in our state and nation.
- Throughout this administration we have developed public/private partnerships, which have proven to work and deliver successful outcomes.
- Successes, like the state's new economic development plan, The Advantage Mississippi

Initiative and the success we are having with the Computers In The Classroom Initiative show that Mississippi can accomplish anything when leaders of business, government and education work together.

- The steering committee will develop and propose a set of education priorities, which will be presented to a larger group of Mississippians for their input and endorsement.
- AGB's Center for Public Higher Education Trusteeship and Governance will facilitate the entire process, but most importantly - this is a process that is developed by Mississippians – for Mississippians.
- Rich Novak, Executive Director for the Center for Public Higher Education Trusteeship and Governance has joined us.
- Rich
- (Rich speaks)
- Through this effort we will determine our priorities for higher education.

- We will determine how our colleges and universities can forge new partnerships with the state and with their communities to better address their priorities.
- And we will determine how higher education can work more effectively to enhance economic development opportunities within the State of Mississippi.
- This is a great day for education in Mississippi, and we look forward to the work ahead as we define a vision and direction for higher education in the State of Mississippi.