

# Outreach

Mississippi State University

College of Business



## Leadership Summit

The second annual leadership summit held on September 23 and 24 was even more successful than last year's event. According to Barbara Spencer, the Summit organizer, "about 250 business and professional people along with 200 students participated in our sessions."

One of the highlights of the event was the Distinguished Leaders' Panel discussion. Discussants included Richard Adkerson, CEO of Freeport MacMoRan; Hu Meena, CEO of Cellular South; Ralph Crosby, CEO of EADS North America; Carolynn Shanks, Senior VP of Enexus; and Jim Newsome, CEO of the New York Mercantile Exchange. These leaders traded ideas and stories about topics ranging from the economy to ethics.

The keynote speaker for the Summit was General Colin Powell (Ret.), former Secretary of State under President George W. Bush. Over 4,500 students, faculty, staff, Summit attendees and people from the surrounding community gathered in Humphrey Coliseum to hear him. In his talk,

General Powell encouraged listeners to live a life dedicated to service. "Always make sure you are giving back to your community and society," he said. He went on to discuss several issues requiring attention, including global warming and K-12 education.

## A Student's Perspective

We asked Alex Boyd, a senior Accounting major who is part of our Office's staff, to provide a student's perspective on General Powell's speech. Here are Alex's observations:

"Not only was he a very polished and professional speaker, but Gen. Powell was also humorous in the telling of his life experiences. Following with the theme of the two-day summit, Colin Powell shared his ideas on real leadership. He said that one of the main qualities of a good leader was the ability to make the tough decisions, such as firing someone, for the betterment of the company. Gen. Powell ended his talk with a very moving story about a hotdog vendor on the streets of New York. As he was about to pay the man for a hotdog, the vendor refused to accept the payment, stating that Colin Powell had done so much for the United States and its citizens. It would be difficult to find someone who doesn't agree."

## Tax Update Seminars

It's tax time again. But don't panic, it's not time to file your taxes. It's time for the College to once again offer our tax update seminars.

For over 25 years, we have offered annual seminars for accountants and other tax professionals designed to update their knowledge of the current tax rules and regulations. Last year almost 300 tax professionals from Mississippi and surrounding states participated in this program. We expect even greater enrollment in the upcoming sessions.

This year the Office of Business Outreach will host five Tax Update Seminars. Drs. Edd Milam and Frances McNair will be the session leaders. These "seasoned pros" will provide explanations of recent tax rulings and legislation, an update of significant current issues and developments in federal taxation, and a comprehensive review of 2008 federal tax issues. Those attending any one of these 2-day seminars will qualify for 16 hours of Continuing Professional Education Credit. The fee for each seminar is only \$275 (the "early bird" special, or \$300 regular fee). Walk-ins will be accepted if there is available space.

For additional information, please contact Jeri Mangum in the Office of Business Outreach (662.325.3817, or [bizservices@cobilan.msstate.edu](mailto:bizservices@cobilan.msstate.edu))

### 2008 Tax Update Seminars:

November 13-14	Cleveland, MS
November 24-25	Jackson, MS
December 1-2	Southaven, MS
December 11-12	Hattiesburg, MS
December 15-16	Starkville, MS

## FastTrac

Ever dream of starting your own business? Ever see yourself as a "one person show," braving the business world on your own? Using your own two hands to build the next Apple or Toyota? Well, a lot of people in this state have had this dream. In fact, over 175,000 Mississippians now run sole proprietary businesses, and their annual receipts total almost \$8 billion.

In January 2009, help will be available for budding entrepreneurs. The Technology Resource Institute, the Franklin Furniture Institute, the Office of Technology Commercialization, the Thad Cochran Endowment for Entrepreneurship, the College of Business and Industry, the MSU Small Business Development Center, the Greater Starkville Development Partnership, and the Women's Center for Entrepreneurship at Mississippi University for Women will jointly sponsor the FastTrac program, a nationally recognized program that is supported by the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. This is third time in less than year this program has been offered.

FastTrac is a practical, hands-on business development program designed to help entrepreneurs develop a business plan that will be attractive to funding sources such as banks and venture capitalists. The eight 2-hour modules in this program are devoted to topics such as identifying your market, understanding the legal issues involved in starting a business, and financial planning. Each session includes facilitated discussions and activities, networking, small peer groups, a guest speaker, and coaching sessions by experienced business counselors. Guest entrepreneurs illustrate business concepts and share their real-life business experiences.

Tony Luczak, the MSU Director of Golf and Golf Course Coordinator, is one of the successful graduates of FastTrac. "Fasttrac gave me the business tools to organize, plan and develop my ideas into a true business not just a hobby," Tony says. He found the program's mentors and coaches to be extremely helpful in providing a sounding board for ideas and directions for his new company. Tony sums up the purpose of this program when he says "I would recommend Fasttrac to anyone who wants to start a profitable business."

So far over 18 entrepreneurs have completed the MSU FastTrac program. Of this number, 6 have their companies up and running. The next FastTrac session starts in January, 2009. For more information, please contact Amy Garrard at the Franklin Furniture Institute (662.325.8453; [agarrard@cfr.msstate.edu](mailto:agarrard@cfr.msstate.edu)).

## Faculty Spotlight

## Dr. Rodney Pearson



Dr. Rodney Pearson is the new Department Chair for Management and Information Systems. While new to this position, he is a longtime Bulldog.

Rodney received his Ph.D. in Computer-Based Information Systems from Harvard. After 3 years at Boston University, he joined MSU in 1987. Since then he has been one of the College's most recognized professors. He has received such prestigious awards as Outstanding Undergraduate Teacher, Outstanding Service, Outstanding Faculty Member, the MSU Alumni Association Upper Level Undergraduate Teaching Award, and the University 2002 Grisham Master Teacher Award.

In addition to being excellent in the classroom, Rodney always finds time to help the College in other ways. He developed the college's online course management system that includes online grade books, course web sites, class message boards, a seating chart generator, and an attendance manager. Rodney is also the developer of doSurvey, an online survey system that has been used by such diverse groups as the College of Business Student Recruitment Committee and the Franklin Furniture Institute. This system has been used to collect hundreds of thousands of responses to hundreds of online surveys.

Rodney's service activities are not limited to MSU. He served for ten years on the Board of the Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services, and currently is a member of the state's Council on Educational Technology.

Finally, Rodney runs.....a lot. At last count, he has logged somewhere around 100,000 miles. He has run 85 marathons, with a fastest time of 2:21:40 in the 1981 Boston Marathon. He has held the Mississippi state record in the marathon since 1982 (2:23:40). But he has cut down on his running, and now spends less time by himself and more time with his wife Allison (a Professor of Management at MSU) and their dog Bear. They enjoy hiking and camping in the backcountry, most recently in Alaska.

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