

Welcome from Commissioner of Higher Education Dr. Thomas C. Meredith

Welcome back to Jackson for the 2007 Legislative Session. I look forward to working with you over the next three months to move Mississippi forward.

Business leaders across the state were pleased to host so many of you at the 12 IHL Today luncheons the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning coordinated throughout the state this past fall. It is our sincere hope that you left the luncheon with a better understanding of the important role higher education plays in the success of our state as well as the challenges faced by our university System.

For those of you who were unable to attend a luncheon, we have made the materials available to you on our website, www.mississippi.edu. We will also be mailing you a packet of information.

IHL is committed to changing Mississippi's future through education, and we are counting on you-our funding partners-to help us by fully funding education at every level. We truly believe that an investment in higher education is the best investment you can make for the state and your constituents.

At its most basic, higher education means more money for Mississippi through increased tax revenues, greater productivity, increased consumption, increased workforce flexibility, decreased unemployment rates, and a decreased reliance on government financial support.

Higher education means more money for individuals as well. Data show that a university graduate will make \$1 million more

in a lifetime than someone without a university degree.

The "problems" that plague our state, such as crime, teenage pregnancy, violence and drug and alcohol abuse, can all be lessened with higher education.

Finally, by further educating our citizens, Mississippi will be better able to compete in the increasingly global marketplace by attracting new businesses and increasing opportunities for the people in our state.

Good luck in this Session. We stand ready to provide you with any information you need. We will send you a regular newsletter that should prove helpful in your considerations of legislation related to higher education that will cross your desk during the session. You will also receive the IHL System-wide weekly e-newsletter, the *System Review*, each Friday afternoon via email.

Sincerely,



Dr. Thomas C. Meredith
Commissioner of Higher Education

