

Vice President's Letter



There have been many recent changes in the administration of the Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine at Mississippi State. Dr. Vance Watson has assumed the duties of interim president of MSU, following the resignation of Dr. Robert Folgesong. On April 1, I assumed the duties of interim vice president of the division, as well as interim director of the MSU Extension Service and the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station. I am also serving as interim dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

While this is a period of transition for the division, it is also a time of great opportunity. MSU's enrollment reached a record level for the spring 2008 semester, and part of the growth in student enrollment has been in the academic units of the division: the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, the College of Forest Resources and the College of Veterinary Medicine.

The strength and diversity of the division's academic programs is expected to continue to attract not just strong enrollment, but also some of the top high school graduates from throughout Mississippi and other states. The Focus section of this issue of *Landmarks* profiles some of the courses of study in the division and some of the students currently excelling in those programs. Academic programs are extremely important at MSU, but as a land-grant university, its mission extends to all areas of the state. MSU researchers and support staff work at 16 off-campus locations on projects that support the broad range of Mississippi's food and fiber industries.

The public can see some of that work at a host of field days and other events throughout the year. Research results also are made available through the MSU Extension Service. Extension Service personnel also provide programs dealing with health, youth development, food and nutrition and other topics.

There is an Extension office in each of the state's 82 counties. Iuka in Tishomingo County is home to one of those offices, and you can read about the county on page 26 of this issue of *Landmarks*.

During my 25 years at MSU, I have had the opportunity to visit almost all of the 82 counties and many of the communities in the state. I am looking forward to visiting many more during the months ahead and learning more about Mississippi's most valuable asset: its people.

Melissa J. Mixon

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