

Delta State University Institutional Overview

Historical Sketch

Delta State University was created as Delta State Teachers College by Senate Bill Number 263, Chapter 284, entitled *An Act to Create and Establish the Delta State Teachers College*. Governor Henry L. Whitfield signed the bill on April 9, 1924. Cleveland and Bolivar County provided the College's first physical facilities in the form of three buildings that formerly housed the Bolivar County Agricultural High School. The institution opened for its first regular session on September 15, 1925, with a faculty and staff of eleven and a student body of ninety-seven.

The College's first president, Mr. James Wesley Broom, was succeeded by Dr. W. M. Kethley, who served as president from 1926 to 1956. Dr. James M. Ewing became the third president on September 1, 1956, and served until his retirement on July 31, 1971. Dr. Aubrey K. Lucas served as the institution's fourth president from August 1, 1971, until June 30, 1975. On July 1, 1975, Dr. Forest Kent Wyatt became the fifth president and served until his retirement on June 30, 1999. He was succeeded by Dr. David L. Potter on July 1, 1999, who served until January 31, 2003. Dr. John G. Thornell served as Interim President from February 1, 2003, until August 31, 2003. On September 1, 2003, Dr. John M. Hilpert became DSU's seventh president.

When created in 1925, Delta State was authorized to offer only the Bachelor of Science degree in Education. The first such degrees were conferred in June 1928. Undergraduate degrees are now offered in the arts, sciences, humanities, business, nursing, commercial aviation, and education.

The growth and expanding mission of the institution were evidenced by its name change to Delta State College in 1955. In 1969, Delta State was authorized to reorganize its academic structure into four schools. The School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Business were activated in 1969, and the School of Education and School of Graduate Studies were implemented in 1970. A School of Nursing was authorized in 1977 and began operation in 1978. On March 15, 1974, the institution was officially designated Delta State University to reflect its continued growth and expanded scope.

In 1965, the University initiated a graduate program and the first Master of Education degrees were conferred in May 1966. Delta State University now offers master's degrees in the areas of business, commercial aviation, education, natural and social sciences, and nursing, as well as the Educational Specialist degree and Doctor of Education in professional studies.

From a small teacher-training institution in the 1920's, Delta State has grown into a multi-purpose university which focuses strongly on quality classroom instruction. Enrollment has increased to more than 4,000 students, and corresponding growth has occurred in

physical facilities. The growth and success of the University are tributes to the dedication of the faculty and staff, the hard work of the students, and the strong support of the Delta community and state legislature.

Institutional Mission

As a Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) accredited, regional Carnegie Master's I university located in Cleveland, Mississippi, Delta State University serves as an educational and cultural center in the Mississippi Delta emphasizes service to the northern Delta counties and its campus centers in Clarksdale and Greenville. The University offers undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education programs of study leading to baccalaureate and master's degrees in the Colleges of Arts and Sciences, Business, Education, and the School of Nursing, as well as a doctorate in education. Emphasis is placed on excellence in instruction, followed by service and research, in the creation of a community of scholars. With special attention to small classes, a friendly environment, and a broad liberal arts foundation, the University encourages significant student-faculty interactions. Delta State provides programs and services which promote intellectual, cultural, ethical, physical, and social development. Students from different cultural, socioeconomic, and ethnic backgrounds develop the ability to respect and evaluate the thoughts of others; to develop, assess, and express their own thoughts effectively; and to use the techniques of research and performance associated with their disciplines.

Delta State had an enrollment of 4,217 during the Fall 2006 semester. There has been a 9.2% increase in enrollment over the last five years for the University, with the current enrollment reflecting a growth of 392 students. Of the total enrollment, 1,541 are male and 2,676 are female, while 2,372 are Caucasian, 1,776 are African American and 69 represent other minorities. There are 1,105 students who are dormitory residents, but DSU is considered a "suitcase" college with few students remaining on campus during weekends. The University draws from several community colleges in the region with the number of transfer students representing 14.8% of the student body.

In Fall 2006, Delta State University had 148 full-time faculty members with 106 holding terminal degrees. Thirty-four percent hold tenure and 40% are on tenure track. The remaining 26% are in non-tenure track positions and include visiting professors and experts in a teaching field. Twelve percent of the University faculty are members of a minority group.

Overview of the Unit

Unit Authority, Organization, and Governance

The Professional Education Unit at Delta State University is the College of Education and includes all faculty, staff, and administration engaged in the preparation of educators for initial or advanced programs. Each program maintains a curriculum committee and an advisory council that provide direction for programmatic decisions. The College of Education Administrative Council (CEAC) and the Academic Council also are engaged in the review of unit changes and progress. The unit maintains collaborative structures with the College of Arts and Sciences for the teacher preparation program.

The definition of the unit has remained stable since the inception of the University. During the past four years, however, clarity in role, purpose, and structure of the Teacher Education Council and more definitive involvement with Arts and Science faculty have strengthened both programs and processes. Additionally, clarity of the purpose and structure of the Doctor of Education in Professional Studies degree program has occurred through strengthening of curriculum and assessment processes.

Unit Programs

The unit offers degree programs at both the initial and advanced levels. During the 2005-06 academic year, a decision was made to discontinue the Bachelor of Science in Special Education degree program due to low enrollment. The BS in Business Education was also discontinued for the same reason in 2004-05. BS degrees are currently offered in Elementary Education; Health, Physical Education and Recreation; Mathematics Education; Biology Education; English Education; Music Education; Social Sciences Education; and Art Education. Masters degrees are offered in Elementary Education; Educational Leadership; Special Education; Health, Physical Education and Recreation; and Counselor Education. Additionally, a small Secondary Education advanced degree program incorporates English, Art, and the Social Sciences/History. This program has had little interest from candidates and is being reviewed to determine its fate. The Master of Arts degree, an alternate route program in Mississippi, is also available within the unit. The curriculum and internship components of this program are established by the Mississippi State Board of Education. Specialist degrees are offered in Elementary Education and Educational Leadership, while an EdD is available in Professional Studies. Graduates of the EdD program typically work in junior and community colleges and in administrative positions in entities such as the Mississippi Department of Education. The counselor education program is recognized by CACREP while accreditation has been awarded the music education program and art education program by the NASM and NASAD, respectively.

Several programs within the unit offer on-line courses as well as courses at satellite locations, including DSU sites in Clarksdale and Greenville. At the initial level, the SAFE (Seamless Articulation for Elementary Education) Program, is offered in

Greenville, while no programs are delivered solely through distance learning mechanisms.

Unit Changes

Numerous changes have taken place within both the University and unit since the last accreditation visit by an NCATE team in October of 2001. In 2003, DSU acquired a new president and new deans of the Colleges of Arts and Sciences, Business, Education, and School of Nursing. Additionally, in August 2006, the Dean of the College of Education resigned to become the Assistant Commissioner for Academic and Student Affairs with the Board Office of the Institutions of Higher Learning in Mississippi. Because of the timeframe of her departure, an interim dean was selected to serve the unit for the 2006-07 academic year.

Other changes within the unit since October of 2001 include:

- Development of a new conceptual framework to guide the unit
- Refinement and further development of a unit assessment system for both initial and advanced candidates and unit operations
- Initiation of more frequent, targeted dialogue with Arts and Sciences faculty
- Selection and use of *TaskStream* as a tool for collecting and aggregating data
- Identification of additional strategies for addressing diversity across a broad spectrum of variables including race, ethnicity, language, exceptionality, and socio-economic situation
- Strengthening of relationships with field based practitioners
- Discontinuance of the BS programs in Special Education and Business Education
- Addition of the Master of Arts in Teaching program
- Refinement of curriculum in the doctoral program
- Restructure of the Psychology Department and the Division of Behavioral Sciences to create the Division of Counselor Education and Psychology
- Increase in enrollment in the College of Education from 1166 students to 1350 students during the period of 2003-2005