

BSUs across Mississippi revving up for new school year

By Tanner Cade
Correspondent

In a year recognizing 100 years of ministry through Mississippi Baptists' on-campus collegiate ministries known as the Baptist Student Union (BSU), leaders across 29 campuses are opening their doors to literally thousands of college students.

In fact, the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) Collegiate Ministries Department expects nearly 20,000 students to interact with BSUs during this season.

"Welcome Week" is a common annual moment in the life of any collegiate campus. After a summer season of sparse population in Mississippi college towns, the avalanche of footsteps and energy quickly return to campuses across the state.

The high-energy season of new and returning students on campus is a critical time in the life of a BSU ministry.



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“The more ways that we can connect with students during this time, the more potential we have for reaching students and providing a strong Gospel witness on campus,” he points out.

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“College students are going to decide what they fill their time and schedule with within the first two to three weeks of the beginning of the semester. The first week is crucial. BSU directors are trying to make contact with the student, reach out to their families and their churches and show them that they have a place where they can plug in and know Christ and make Him known through their entire career here at college,” Ivy says.



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“After we get the contacts we spend a good bit of the rest of the semester trying to reach out to them to set up Gospel appointments. The beginning of school year events have to happen in order for us to get the contacts of new students,” he stresses.

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The Baptist Student Union at the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg opens for students with the first

BaBible study of the fall semester. (Photo credit: Tanner
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Baker describes the Ole Miss BSU program as providing opportunities for “several smaller events to serve, reach, and involve new students.”

“Ultimately, we want students to know that there is an active BSU on our campus, that the BSU is a place for spiritual growth and community, and we want to connect our upperclass leaders to new students so that faith-building relationships and encouraging friendships can form,” he says.

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“Our desire is that the theme would be something that would address new students coming to campus, not knowing where they are spiritually but hopefully allowing this to be a beginning point. If they’re not saved, it will be a chance to help them to understand the Gospel [and] if they are saved, to be able to find a place that they can serve, grow, and take the action to become a disciple.”

Ball adds that the theme and activities during Basic Training and other events in August are conducted by returning BSU

student leaders.



RENEWING FRIENDSHIPS – The Baptist Student Union at Mississippi State University in Starkville opens for students with BASIC Training for new students (Photo credit: Tanner Cade)

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“With this coming off COVID the past couple of years, it’s regained momentum,” says Ball. “The desire is for students to know there’s a place where people care about them and they don’t have to be perfect here. We’re wanting to help them grow and mature,” he says.

Capturing the attention of new students and encouraging them to join the ministry of BSU on their campus doesn’t stop at campus boundaries. BSU directors encourage students to get involved in local churches, the cornerstones of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

“One of the things that I love about Mississippi BSUs is that throughout the entire state, these campus ministries are helping point our students to the local church,” says Ivy.

‘It’s our hope they serve and be a part of what God is doing as we seek to know Christ and to make Him known on the campus, in the community, and all around the world in our mission efforts.”

Cade is MBCB communication services director. He may be contacted at tcade@mbcb.org. For more information on collegiate ministry opportunities, Ivy may be contacted at sivy@mbcb.org.

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