

**A Proposal from Mississippi University for Women to Continue, and to Grow, the Partnership with
the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science on the MUW Campus
Submitted to the State Board of Education, February 25, 2025**

The Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science (MSMS) was established by an act of the Mississippi Legislature in 1987 as a “residential school for eleventh and twelfth grade high school students” for the purpose of educating “the gifted and talented students of the state.” The designated primary academic emphasis is mathematics and science, but provision is also made for an emphasis on arts and humanities. The law establishing the school specifies that it is to be located on the campus of Mississippi University for Women (MUW) and that it will be governed by the State Board of Education. The Board is also charged with developing a plan for funding the school and preparing an annual budget for the school.

Strengths and Distinguishing Capabilities of MUW that Benefit MSMS

Experience. MUW is in its 37th year of a partnership with MSMS. MUW faculty wrote the Rationale, the Proposal, and the Plan for establishing MSMS. MUW faculty and staff understand the special needs of gifted students and have worked with MSMS to establish a safe, supportive environment that will allow these special students to thrive, both academically and personally. Students are never more than five minutes by foot from their classrooms, library, dining hall, health center, and recreation center, and the campus police, in close proximity to residences and classes, know them and watch out for them. MUW will continue to work with MSMS to address the evolving needs of the MSMS students as the school grows.

Expanded Academic Support. MUW and MSMS have had a dual-credit and dual-enrollment partnership for almost 30 years. For the 2025-26 academic year we have increased course offerings available for dual credit/enrollment to 41. All current MSMS students are enrolled as MUW dual-credit students. MUW has always provided MSMS students with tuition waivers for all dual-credit/enrollment courses and will continue that practice. MUW will also waive tuition for summer courses for MSMS.

Expanded research/course opportunities. MSMS students have long had research opportunities at MUW and MSU, but MUW is also facilitating partnerships with other research institutions in the IHL system (Jackson State University, University of Mississippi, and University of Southern Mississippi) that will allow increased research, mentoring, and course opportunities for MSMS.

New Agreements with MSMS. MUW is proposing, among other programs, a **joint honors experience** with The W’s Ida E. Gordy Honors College; access to MUW’s **Artificial Intelligence Lab** for faculty and students; **mentorship** opportunities with various campus departments; opportunities to earn **Academic Certificates** after completing 12 semester hours of courses in a variety of specialized fields; **MSMS Saturday Institute**, a monthly enrichment program on special topics; expanded joint educational experiences in the **fine and performing arts**; and access to the **Plymouth Bluff Environmental Center**, a 190-acre nature and research facility for hands-on, field-based environmental science study.

Facilities. For the past two years MUW and MSMS have worked together on MUW’s new Master Plan to ensure that MSMS’s present and future needs are being addressed. Currently MUW provides MSMS with 164,519 square feet of dedicated space in ten buildings, including residence halls, classrooms, and offices for faculty, staff, and administration. There is also 242,528 square feet of shared space in six buildings. The Master Plan provides for growth for MSMS, including space for new buildings and/or renovation of existing buildings, for both residential and academic purposes. There is space for MSMS to continue to operate on the MUW campus while construction takes place so that there is no disruption to the academic year. Funding for MSMS has not kept pace with the school’s needs; MUW has space for the Board of Education and the Legislature to address the facility priorities of MSMS.

Although there is political pressure to relocate MSMS to Starkville with connections to MSU and, possibly, the Starkville-Oktibbeha schools, we urge the State Board of Education to move beyond the narrowly focused politics and act in the best interests of the MSMS students. As gifted as they are, they are still high school students. The partnership between MSMS and MUW is a proven success; the decision to keep MSMS at MUW rather than start over in another location is both fiscally responsible and academically sound and will continue to provide a safe, supportive environment in which these students can thrive and prepare themselves for lives of influence and service.

Scope of Work/Area of Focus

1. Academics

Objective: Enhance the high school's academic offerings through access to adjunct faculty and additional research opportunities. Implementation should include, but is not limited to:

- *Tuition waiver for dual-credit classes*

MUW and MSMS were pioneers in dual-credit and dual-enrollment programs. Since 1998 MUW has provided MSMS students with both dual-credit and dual-enrollment options. There are no restrictions on the number of hours MSMS students may earn at MUW while enrolled at MSMS. MSMS students may enroll in any MUW course for which the student meets the prerequisites or, as appropriate, by permission of the instructor. MUW has always provided tuition waivers for MSMS students enrolled in courses for both dual credit and dual enrollment. Over the past ten years, MSMS students have earned over 16,500 credit hours with a tuition value of over \$5 million. Presently all MSMS students are enrolled at MUW for some form of college credit. MSMS students have never had to pay tuition at MUW while enrolled at MSMS, and that policy will continue as MSMS expands its enrollment and MUW expands its course offerings for MSMS. For additional information, see *Articulation agreements for coursework* below.

- *Access to professors of the arts as adjunct faculty*

When MSMS first opened, an MUW art professor served as an adjunct at MSMS. MSMS has had a full-time faculty member in art since the fourth year of the school. MSMS also has a long-time, full-time faculty member in music. However, MUW offers dual-credit and dual-enrollment in art and music classes, including studio art and music ensembles. As the need arises, MUW could consider an adjunct arrangement for designated MSMS courses. MSMS students may also participate in MUW theatre productions through the normal audition process.

- *Network support for required assessments*

MUW provides WConnect portal access to all MSMS students and staff, granting them access to essential university resources. Through WConnect, users can utilize Banner Self-Service applications; stay informed with Campus News feeds; navigate Library Resources; access Campus Maps; access Canvas (the learning management system), including assessment processes; and use the WConnect Mobile app for streamlined connectivity to university services. The W provides Office 365 and GSuite (Gmail and Google Productivity Apps) to MSMS students enrolled in MUW dual-enrollment courses. All MSMS students are presently enrolled for college credit at MUW.

- *Access to research labs*

MUW has six well-equipped science labs that support the research of seven faculty members. MSMS students have had the opportunity to work with MUW faculty on their research, and MUW faculty are eager to have MSMS students involved in their work. In addition to MUW research, MSMS students historically have had research opportunities at MSU, but new agreements will also facilitate partnerships with the University of Mississippi, Jackson State University, and the University of Southern Mississippi for research, mentoring, and courses.

- *Access to college library*

MUW's Fant Memorial Library is also the MSMS library. MSMS has full use of the 50,000-square-foot facility, including the study rooms and technology labs. The library is open seven days per week (except holidays), but students have card-swipe access to a designated space during closed hours. MUW has installed a designated WiFi network for MSMS throughout the library.

Fant Library has fourteen ADA-accessible, reservable study rooms, equipped with modular seating, whiteboards, touch screen monitors, airplay monitors, and HDMI monitors. In 2024, 4501 reservations for

study spaces were made by MSMS students. MSMS students are frequent users of the Library Fabrication Laboratory's ("FabLab") with its 3D printing and scanning technologies. MSMS Students account for about 25% of the usage of the Creator Studio (media content creation lab). They have assignments that require their use of that space, and MSMS faculty coordinate with us.

MSMS students have been given the full borrowing privileges of undergraduate students, which gives them access to the catalogs of dozens of libraries, including northeast Mississippi public libraries and libraries of Delta State University, EMCC, and Mississippi State University. Students can borrow an unlimited number of items, and there are no late fees. MSMS students have full access to interlibrary loans free of charge, and they are heavy users of the system. MSMS students who are dual enrolled have full access to our 119 online databases and thousands of proprietary and open-access journals; presently all MSMS students are dual enrolled.

MUW library faculty provide instruction to MSMS classes on request. In 2024, 16 MSMS classes (with 255 students total) requested a library instruction session, wherein a librarian taught their students how to access and use the in-person and online resources and services.

MUW Archives houses the MSMS collections. MSMS students have used the MUW Library Archives for research for their Tales from the Crypt research and presentations. Students also use the archives for research related to their "Hometown Heroes" project. For these projects, classes come to learn about the archives and how to use them before making individual research appointments.

MSMS students are able to participate in the MUW Office of Undergraduate Research's annual on-campus symposium to present in-progress and completed research. Students print black and white and color prints in the library free of charge. They also have access to the wide-format printer for large posters for their research presentations. We work with the administration to cover those costs so that the students do not have to bear them.

MSMS students attend and participate in frequent (at least 2 per month) co-curricular and extra-curricular events in the library, such as "Music in the Library" concerts, author speaker series, and literacy events. MSMS students also participate in National History Day, hosted by MUW and located in the library, and students and staff have collaborated on planning campus events, such as Banned Books Week and the Community Read project.

- *Articulation agreements for coursework.*

MUW has regularly provided fourteen **dual credit** courses for MSMS students, most of which meet standard general education requirements at universities. MUW and MSMS have been working for months to expand these offerings; to date, forty-one courses have been designated as dual-credit options. MSMS students also may enroll in any MUW course for which they meet the prerequisites while at MSMS; all MSMS students receive tuition waivers for any MUW courses they choose to take.

MSMS teaches courses at the Honors level or above. MUW proposes to offer MSMS students a **joint honors experience** through the Ina E. Gordy Honors College, with a transcript honors designation if they complete three sections of HO 101 Honors Forum, a one-credit-hour evening class featuring invited speakers, films, and performances, along with special activities that expose students to the history, culture, and opportunities for engagement that exist locally and on campus.

MUW proposes to allow MSMS students and faculty to use its **Artificial Intelligence Laboratory**. The lab is equipped with workstations, each equipped with 12-core Intel Xeon W5-2545 processors, NVIDIA RAM, and 27-inch dual monitors.

Students who complete 12 credit hours through dual enrollment at MUW in a specialized field will be recognized with an **Academic Certificate**, acknowledging their focused collegiate studies. Possibilities for areas might include Biochemistry, Business Administration, Calculus, Civics, Communication Skills, Field Biology, Global Perspectives, Health Science, Inquiry-Based Learning in Biology, Inquiry-Based Learning in Chemistry/Physics, Inquiry-Based Learning in Mathematics, Music, Pre-Engineering, Research Design, Science Research, and Wellness.

The W proposes to offer the **MSMS Saturday Institute**, once-a-month enrichment opportunities for MSMS scholars during the academic year. These sessions will focus on hands-on learning, service-based

projects, and interdisciplinary exploration, allowing students to apply their knowledge in STEM, humanities, and leadership development. Possibilities for Institutes might include Mississippi's Scientific Heritage, Cybersecurity & AI Ethics, Creative Digital Arts & Storytelling, CPR, Forensics & Criminal Investigations, and others. Through its Culinary Arts Institute, The W proposes to offer 1-2 hour Saturday classes demonstrating culinary techniques.

MUW proposes to provide at least 20 MSMS students with **mentorship** opportunities across various university departments. This initiative will allow students to explore potential career fields, gain valuable insights into their intended college majors, and engage in experiential learning with university faculty and professionals. Through mentor visits, departmental engagement, and structured reflection activities, MSMS students will develop a deeper understanding of their academic and professional aspirations, ensuring they are well-prepared for future educational and career opportunities.

MUW currently allows MSMS faculty and students to utilize our **Learning Management System (LMS)**, Canvas, for all dual-enrollment courses. The W proposes to host ALL MSMS courses on this LMS. Through the LMS, MUW will extend access to its secure online testing platform, Respondus, ensuring MSMS students can complete assessments in a controlled environment that prevents unauthorized browsing and external resource use. Currently all MSMS students are enrolled in MUW courses.

MUW proposes to provide MSMS students with access to the **Plymouth Bluff Environmental Center**, a 190-acre nature and research facility located along the Tombigbee River. The center offers hands-on learning experiences in environmental science, ecology, and outdoor education, with dedicated classrooms, laboratories, and miles of trails for field-based study. By utilizing this resource, MSMS students can participate in research projects, ecological studies, and immersive learning experiences that complement their academic coursework in the sciences.

MSMS has been recognized as having the best public high school faculty in the nation. On multiple occasions, individual faculty members have been recognized at both the national and state level for teaching excellence in their disciplines. The W proposes to engage MSMS teachers with MUW's **Connie & Tom Kossen Center for Teaching & Learning**, according to their interests, to participate in faculty development workshops and to provide a space for the outreach programs to Mississippi teachers that MSMS faculty lead.

MUW's **Department of Music** welcomes MSMS students' participation in a variety of musical activities and ensembles. MSMS students have previously joined the Community Band, which is open to all participants without formal course registration. Additionally, MSMS students are invited to audition for and participate in The W's Wind Ensemble, Jazz Ensemble, and Chamber Singers choir. Several MSMS students have also taken piano and voice lessons through The W, and the department offers brass, woodwind, guitar, and composition lessons, which are available to MSMS students who express interest. These opportunities allow students to develop their musical talents in a collegiate setting while engaging with experienced faculty and fellow musicians. All MSMS students enrolled in MUW music courses have access to the practice rooms in Poindexter Hall.

MUW's **Department of Theatre** has provided performance and technical support to MSMS students. The department makes its theatre space available for the MSMS spring production. Additionally, faculty and staff have assisted MSMS students with lighting, scenery, and stagecraft, including preparation for competition. Beyond performance opportunities, The W's theatre faculty have also provided mentorship in technical theatre, allowing MSMS students to gain hands-on experience in production design, stage management, and technical operations for university productions.

MUW offers the advanced mathematics and science courses that students need for applying to **engineering** programs. MSMS has a full-time instructor of engineering on staff.

2. Residential Life and Facilities

Objective: Provide a structured and supportive residential experience for high school students while ensuring safety and integration within the college setting. Implementation should include, but is not limited to:

- *Designated modern dorms for high school students only*

Two residential facilities continue to be designated for MSMS students. Goen and Frazer Hall are both 46,437 square feet. These facilities were built in 1967 and 1968 and can house 200 students each, including the Residential Director and Assistants. Both facilities had major bathroom renovations in the summer of 2024 with new interior paint in Goen. In the summer of 2025, Frazer will receive new interior paint.

MSMS has been an active participant throughout MUW's Master Planning process. In the Master Plan two spaces have been identified for new facilities. One or both could be residential. There are also two vacant residential facilities that could be renovated and dedicated to MSMS, Fant and Peyton Halls. The approximate cost to renovate one of these buildings is \$22 million. A new residential facility that houses approximately 400 students is estimated at \$35 million.

- *Support from the university's housing and recruitment offices for MSMS residential staff*

MSMS maintains completely separate operations from MUW's Housing and Residence Life Office. MUW and MSMS collaborate on the use of residential facilities for summer camps, and MUW has provided space for MSMS students when MSMS facilities are under construction. MUW has explored cost savings through contract sharing, but to date, no housing related contracts have been joined. MUW is open to developing a closer relationship with MSMS for residential staff.

- *Cross train MSMS residential life staff with the university's residential life staff*

MUW provides training and professional development as needed, but this is currently done in a very limited capacity. MUW is willing to expand opportunities for collaboration in training and professional development as appropriate and specific to MSMS's needs.

- *Student access to campus mental health counseling and services*

A Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner has recently joined the health center staff and is providing at least one full day of mental health resources to all those on campus, including our MSMS partners. These services are free to MSMS students. MSMS also currently contracts with an outside firm for counseling services.

The MUW Counseling Center would need additional staff to serve the MSMS population. This could be accomplished through contracting with MUW for specific services annually or through an increase to the Health Fee that is currently applied to the Campus Health Center. Either option would provide access to a licensed professional counselor dedicated to serving MSMS students and housed in MSMS facilities. Best practice standards suggest that three licensed counselors would be needed to provide full-time access and 24/7 emergency on-call response. The estimated cost is \$160,000 to cover salaries and fringe benefits of three licensed counselors (\$52,000 ea.), and an additional \$4,000 for professional development, equipment, and supplies. There would be no cost to the students.

- *Specific residential area with dedicated security*

At this time, there is not a demonstrated need to provide additional security on the MUW campus for the MSMS residential areas as they are situated in the South campus residential footprint that is patrolled by campus police. Additionally, the residence halls are staffed 24/7 with resident assistants. However, additional growth and construction could result in the need for additional staff in the coming years. As we evaluate needs annually, we are willing to add staff and/or services if MSMS secures funding required to do so. Funding for each additional certified officer would be about \$65,000.

- *Opportunity to reserve meeting spaces on campus as needed for outreach and summer activities*

In addition to MSMS's designated spaces, all university spaces are available for outreach and summer activities, as well as routine programs and special events throughout the academic year. Reservations are made through an on-line system that allows the user to see what is available and to make a request. MSMS is not charged for the use of MUW spaces for these activities. Spaces include, but are not limited to, Nissan Auditorium (seats 444); Rent Auditorium (seats 1,218); Pope Banquet Hall (capacity 225); Stark Recreation

(41,584 sq.ft. with rooms of various sizes); Pohl Gymnasium (47,662 sq.ft.); Cochran Ball Room (capacity 150); residential space for summer events; W Room event space; Plymouth Bluff Conference Center; MUW classrooms.

- *Provide facility support for plumbing, HVAC, electrical, locksmith, carpentry, custodial, technology, etc. as needed along with summer maintenance support*

MUW provides plumbing, HVAC, electrical, locksmith, carpentry, and custodial services for year-round services. Based on Association of Physical Plant Administrators (APPA) maintenance standards, the maintenance levels for the facilities available to MSMS and the age of the structures are recommended to be at a Level 2 Comprehensive Maintenance at \$6.00 a square foot with a regional adjustment of up to 5%. Level 2 maintenance is for high-use facilities and ensures preventive maintenance is present and proactive repairs. It does not include technology support.

APPA's maintenance standards focus on keeping a facility in operational condition and do not include capital improvements. Maintenance (covered in APPA levels) includes routine upkeep (e.g., HVAC servicing, plumbing repairs, painting, and lighting maintenance), preventive maintenance (e.g., inspections, filter changes, and lubrication of equipment), minor corrective repairs (e.g., fixing leaks and replacing worn-out parts), and custodial services and general upkeep. Capital Improvements (not covered in APPA levels) include major renovations or system replacements (e.g., full roof replacement and new HVAC system), structural upgrades (e.g., foundation reinforcement and seismic retrofitting), expansions, redesigns or major remodels, and energy efficiency projects requiring significant investment.

Maintenance costs (APPA levels) are operational expenses handled within the annual budget. Capital improvements are typically capital expenses requiring separate funding sources such as bonds, grants, or capital reserves.

MUW has an on-campus networking team and would be willing to discuss the needs of MSMS and how we could partner to produce efficiencies with asset sharing. MUW and MSMS have common platforms that could be leveraged as cost sharing, such as residence hall management software, and the Canvas Learning Management Systems. MUW can also provide additional network support, desktop support, Internet circuit, and VoIP support on a negotiated cost and needs basis.

- *Designated parking for students and staff including meeting the parking needs of potential expansion of enrollment in the future*

MUW provides dedicated parking spaces for residential students around student housing. MSMS students have parking in close proximity to their residence halls. Faculty and staff also have dedicated spaces that are delineated from student parking. Any new facility built on campus will include designated parking near the facility. As a result of the new Master Plan for campus, the campus will have designated pedestrian zones and will increase parking spaces by 10%.

- *Landscaping and grounds support*

MUW provides general grounds maintenance and landscaping. MUW has a Grounds department with a Grounds and Landscaping Manager and eight employees that maintain 140 acres. General maintenance is a part of the APPA maintenance levels which include routine lawn care, basic tree and shrub maintenance, and seasonal upkeep. Major landscaping renovations such as new irrigation systems, large scale tree removal, new hardscape installations, and extensive redesign are not covered in the APPA standard cost per square foot.

- *Access to the campus post office*

MUW has an on-campus, centrally located post office that provides dedicated mailboxes to MSMS and MSMS students. Post boxes are provided to MSMS students through an arrangement with MSMS so that MSMS students do not have to pay for the mailboxes. MSMS can send and receive USPS mail and

packages, purchase stamps, and send items via postal service priority packaging. The post office is also a pickup and drop off point for FedEx and UPS.

- *Support from campus police for security, emergency calls and support*

MUW employs state-certified police officers that provide 24/7 campus patrol and emergency response to the campus, which includes MSMS. Officers are members of the campus crisis action team and Health & Safety Committee (which also include MSMS representation), and they provide the campus with consultations, program partnerships, and regular safety bulletins. They provide security and parking assistance for campus events, as well as ID card services and swipe access to multiple buildings. Officers also provide after-hours security escorts upon request. Security is also supported by a campus closed-camera system. Staffing is assessed annually and adjusted as needed based on campus data. MSMS currently pays an annual Security Fee of only \$32,000. The cost of a full-time officer is \$65,000. Safety Data is available at <https://www.muw.edu/police/clery/> (Note: 2024 report isn't published until Oct. 1).

3. Food Services

Objective: Ensure that high school students have access to nutritious and age-appropriate meal plans. Implementation should include, but is not limited to:

- *Collaborate with college's food service provider to create a specialized meal plan for MSMS*

Food services at MUW is an outsourced enterprise with Sodexo, which has exclusive food service rights on the university campus. Meal plans can include options for students to have flex dollars in addition to cafeteria meal swipes. Sodexo can offer flex dollar usage at the Fant Memorial Library coffee shop, Common Grounds; Subway in the Hogarth Student Union; and vending areas on campus. Sodexo also provides access to a registered dietitian who will meet with students individually to determine dietary needs. Sodexo is committed to offer nutritious meals to the university community and to take extra steps for people with special dietary needs.

The cafeteria serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner Monday through Friday, and on weekends serves brunch and dinner. The lunch and dinner meals include healthy options of fresh fruit, a salad bar, a soup option, a meat and vegetable option, a grill line, a sandwich line, a selection of pizzas and pasta, and a dessert bar. In addition to the unlimited daily food options, MSMS has a variety of hot and cold beverages to choose from. A trip to the cafeteria allows the students to eat as much as they like while they are there.

Sodexo can offer different plans that include a certain number of meals in the cafeteria and some flex dollars. Meal Plan options include unlimited meals in the cafeteria, 18 meals per week and \$75 flex dollars, 15 meals per week and \$250 flex dollars, or 12 meals per week and \$375 flex dollars.

- *Establish a dining schedule that integrates into MSMS academic schedule and weekend schedule*

Sodexo is required to provide food services for residential students based on the academic calendar.

- *Consider a card swipe system for food services per meal rather than a prepaid plan*

Food services at MUW is an outsourced enterprise with Sodexo, which has exclusive food service rights on the university campus. Sodexo is willing to offer a variety of meal plans for MSMS to choose from.

- *Identify location of food services for high school students*

Food service locations on the MUW campus include the Hogarth Dining Services cafeteria, Subway, and Common Grounds. The university can continue to provide a dedicated space of 4,200 sq.ft. exclusively for MSMS in the main cafeteria. MSMS also has access to shared areas with MUW students that currently include Subway and Common Grounds.

4. Student Affairs

Objective: Enrich student life through participation in extracurricular activities while maintaining high school identity and traditions. Implementation should include, but is not limited to:

- *Access to Campus ID system for students*

MUW manages ID printing services for MSMS students, ensuring they receive identification cards for use in on-campus retail spaces, including the cafeteria, coffee shop, and library. These ID cards allow students to seamlessly access campus amenities while integrating with existing university systems.

- *Access to career center*

MSMS students have full access to the comprehensive career services of MUW's Career Services and Professional Development Center (CSPD Center), including career assessments and advising, résumé and cover letter reviews, interview preparation, employer connections, and professional development workshops.

The Strong Interest Inventory is utilized to provide in-depth career assessments. This tool analyzes students' interest patterns to identify academic, vocational, and leisure pursuits aligned with their strengths and preferences.

Workshops are designed to enhance career readiness competencies as identified by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE). Key topics include workplace communication, professionalism, networking, business etiquette, and best practices for résumés and cover letters. These workshops can be customized to meet the specific needs of various student groups.

The CSPD Center places a strong emphasis on emotional intelligence (EI), a critical set of emotional and social skills that influence self-awareness, relationship management, adaptability, and decision-making. EI has gained significant importance in the business sector, with 75% of Fortune 500 companies incorporating it into hiring and training processes. Furthermore, a Forbes study of over 2,600 hiring managers found that 71% value emotional quotient over IQ. As artificial intelligence becomes more integrated into the workforce, the importance of emotional intelligence continues to rise, as it represents a uniquely human capability. EI often serves as a key factor in promotion decisions.

In addition to workshops, students have the opportunity to enroll in a specialized course offered by the CSPD Center: *Career Readiness through Emotional Intelligence*. This course leverages the EQ-i 2.0 inventory to assess students' emotional intelligence competencies and provides training to develop these skills for practical application in the workplace. CSPD Center staff contextualize these competencies through a workforce lens, demonstrating their relevance to real-world situations.

The CSPD Center maintains strong relationships with employers around the State of Mississippi, providing students with valuable opportunities for networking, internships, and employment. Events such as career fairs, employer on-campus presentations, and visits to employer facilities are regularly organized to connect students directly with industry professionals. Through these engagements, students, faculty, and staff gain insight into industry trends, learn best practices from professionals, and develop meaningful connections that support their career growth. Employer Partners include Ingalls Shipbuilding, Columbus Air Force Base, PACCAR, The Dutch Group, Baptist Memorial Hospital – Golden Triangle, Mississippi State Capitol Visitor Services, Columbus Housing Authority, and other organizations local to Columbus, Mississippi.

Training in emotional intelligence is a valuable complement to the rigorous academic environment of MSMS. Emotional intelligence has been identified as the strongest predictor of individual performance and leadership potential. By integrating emotional intelligence training with academic learning, the CSPD Center aims to bridge the gap between academic success and professional performance, equipping students with essential skills for the modern workforce.

- *Access to campus events*

MUW's public and student events, such as speaker series, book talks, concerts, fairs, and athletic events, are open to MSMS students at no cost, subject to approval by MSMS. MSMS has opted for programming to remain separate with limited exceptions. We have discussed the possibility of shared contracts for events through meetings with chief student affairs officer. To date, MSMS has not asked to explore this option further.

If MSMS desires to develop programming beyond the current model or enhance the MSMS leadership experience, we could create pathways for more collaboration in campus-wide events such as MSMS membership on subcommittees for the Student Programming Board. Student involvement in these elevated leadership roles can result in learning outcomes related to leadership, project and time management, critical thinking, and student advocacy. Joint sponsorship of events might require some programming funds from MSMS.

- *Access to Health Center*

The Campus Health Center is centrally located in the Eckford Building and provides health services to the University community and their families, as well as MSMS students, faculty, and staff. Ambulatory care and health education are the goals of the Campus Health Center. No fee is charged for routine visits of MSMS and MUW campus students, faculty, or staff. There is a nominal charge to cover the cost of medications, supplies, labs, and complete physical exams if needed for those using the Health Center. It is staffed by nurse practitioners who are faculty members in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences. The nurse practitioners in their expanded role are licensed to diagnose and treat health-related conditions and are able to order tests, write prescriptions, and refer to specialists as needed. The protocols for treatment are developed in conjunction with the Mississippi Board of Nursing and a collaborating physician. A psychiatric nurse practitioner has recently joined the health center staff and is providing at least one full day of mental health resources to all those on campus, including our MSMS partners. The hours of operation for the Health Center are 8:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday through Friday. The RN / Health Center Coordinator, staff, and a nurse practitioner are available during these hours of operation. The Health Center has five patient rooms, an office for the nurse practitioner on duty, a front desk, an office for the nurse coordinator, and a small laboratory for onsite testing.

Currently, the campus Health Center has a very open and supportive relationship with MSMS and its staff and students. They receive a schedule of our providers as well as communicate with the clinic regarding student appointments, referrals, and payments.

- *Access to wellness center with possible designated times and supervision for high school students*

MSMS students have full and unlimited access to the Stark Recreation Center (41,584 sq.ft.) and Pohl Gymnasium (47,662 sq.ft.) during the regular hours of operation with an option to reserve additional hours as needed. Stark Center has an indoor swimming pool, exercise equipment, free weights, and a basketball court. The gymnasium has two basketball courts and an indoor walking/running track. MSMS students have access to group fitness classes, free of charge, which are held in designated rooms in the Stark Center. Indoor facilities have accessible staff to serve all patrons during hours of operation. In FY24, MSMS students used the indoor facilities 4,746 times, which does not include times when facilities were reserved for special events, practices, and fairs. The Campus Recreation office communicates with MSMS on space utilization and assists in reservation of Recreation Center facilities. Athletics facilities used by MUW Athletics are also used by MSMS and booked through an online event management system. Campus Recreation personnel provide consultations with MSMS staff for health-related programs, such as intramurals, that are organized by MSMS.

Under the current model of operation and enrollment, there is not a demonstrated need for additional Campus Recreation staff to oversee MSMS activities. To provide designated times and supervision specifically for MSMS students would require additional personnel at an estimated cost of \$72,000.

Restricted hours and/or access would reduce this cost but would significantly limit the access to which MSMS students currently are accustomed.

- *Access to campus shuttle system*

MUW does not have a campus shuttle system, nor is there a need for one. MSMS students are never more than a five-minute walk from their residence halls to their classrooms, the library, the post office, the cafeteria, the health center, the recreation center, the gymnasium, or the MUW labs and classrooms. Facility access is both safe and convenient, and the students do not have to spend their valuable time in transit.

- *Access to sports fields for practice and events*

MSMS students have free access to the same campus sports facilities as MUW students.

5. Human Resources and Business Support

Objective: Ensure appropriate staffing and administrative oversight to support high school students on a college campus. Implementation should include, but is not limited to:

- *Act as a fiscal agent for MSMS including payroll, accounts payable and purchasing cards*

MUW serves as the fiscal agent for MSMS, which includes accounts payable, accounts receivable, public procurement law processes, procurement cards, and maintaining grant financial transactions. MSMS will have access to their budget in MUW's ERP, Ellucian Banner. MSMS can request purchase requisitions in Banner based on MUW's procurement processes that adhere to Mississippi procurement laws. MUW maintains contract management software that MSMS uses to house and manage all contracts and related legal processes. MUW issues purchase cards to MSMS upon request and provides training for the proper use of such cards. As the fiscal agent, MUW processes all payroll and payments of invoices for MSMS.

- *Provide human resources support*

MUW will continue to provide human resources support for payroll, onboarding employees, offboarding employees, issue employment letters on behalf of MSMS for staff, and counsel new hires on eligible benefits. MUW can handle all payroll deductions, benefit payments, and garnishments. MUW utilizes a talent management system to post positions, track applicants and to approve hires, and perform annual performance review. Background checks incur an additional fee per individual based on the current market rate.

- *Allow staff to participate in university's employee benefits program*

MUW will continue to offer MSMS the same benefit programs as university employees. These benefits include, but are not limited to, Mississippi State and School Employee's Health Insurance, Mississippi Workers' Compensation Insurance, Mississippi employee retirement options available at the time of hire, Employee Assistance Programs, Supplemental Insurance options, Tax Deferred Annuity options, medical and child/dependent care reimbursement accounts, access to the MUW Employees' Federal Credit Union, a Sodexo meal plan ticket, access to Stark Recreation Center, on-campus Health Center, MUW Tuition Fee Waiver Plan, and Faculty/Staff Apartments. Stark Recreation Center membership is offered at a 67% discount from community rates. Faculty/Staff Apartments are available to rent at the same below-market rates MUW faculty/staff pay for the first three years. Although the Tuition Fee Waiver for faculty/staff is available to MSMS, they have chosen not to participate. A full listing of benefits can be found at <https://www.muw.edu/hr/employees/benefits/>.

- *Include MSMS staff on the campus crisis action team*

MUW operates under the National Incident Management System (NIMS) Incident Command Structure (ICS). ICS is a critical component of NIMS and is used to manage all incidents. ICS is used to organize on-scene operations for a broad spectrum of emergencies from small to complex incidents, both natural and man-made. The field response level is where emergency management/response personnel, under command

of an appropriate authority, carry out tactical decisions and activities in direct response to an incident or threat. Resources from the federal, state, tribal, or local levels, when appropriately deployed, become part of the field ICS as prescribed by the local authority. MUW has two response teams, the Crisis Action Team (CAT) and the Incident Response Team (IRT). MSMS will continue to be included in both teams. One or both teams are activated as needed to respond to all types of emergencies and scheduled campus drills. MUW also utilizes an emergency response notification system that includes text messaging that will continue to include MSMS and campus guests.

- *Identify a communication liaison from the university to MSMS*

MUW will provide a single campus liaison for planning purposes and to escalate issues that cannot be handled through primary communication channels. At a minimum, MUW will schedule quarterly meetings with MSMS leadership to assess and address any issues that may arise. Primary communication channels include the Campus Police Department, facility maintenance issues work order system, reservations request system, and the contract management system.

Established timeline for implementation.

All additions and revisions to an MUW – MSMS partnership can be implemented in the 2025-2026 academic year, with the exception of facility construction.

Budget detailing funding sources outside of the annual legislative appropriation.

MUW does not have funding sources for MSMS outside of legislative sources and funding through the State Department of Education, although the discounted services that MUW provides to MSMS should be considered as a “funding source.” MUW has provided a significant service to the State of Mississippi by partnering with MSMS on the campus of MUW, and this partnership is one that MUW greatly values. It is also a partnership that MSMS has benefited from because of MUW’s operating efficiencies and the availability of space.

MSMS’s budget for FY2025 includes a business maintenance fee to MUW of \$113,000, a health fee of \$42,075, a library fee of \$42,075, an accounting fee of \$32,000, a security fee of \$32,000, and a wellness facility fee of \$10,250. These fees were the same for FY2024. MSMS has 164,519 dedicated square footage; the **maintenance fee calculates to 69 cents per square foot**, well short of the \$6.00 per square foot recommended by the Association of Physical Plant Administrators standards. MSMS also shares 242,528 square feet of space with MUW; the 69 cents per square foot does not cover shared space. Not one of the other fees covers the cost of a full-time person in any of the areas. The overall cost of hosting MSMS is discounted by almost 90%.

MUW has also provided tremendous benefits to the students of MSMS through dual-credit and dual-enrollment programs for almost 30 years. Over the last 10 years, for example, MSMS students have earned 16,529 credit hours of university courses with a tuition value of \$5,071,427.

MSMS is woefully underfunded when compared with comparable programs in neighboring states; MSMS’s funding is **\$16,000 less per student** than the average funding of programs in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Alabama (2 schools). We are hopeful that the Board of Education and the Mississippi Legislature are committed to funding adequately the facilities and programs of MSMS. We are confident that MUW will be the most cost-effective place for MSMS to continue its highly-successful educational programming.

Contact information for a primary point of contact within the institution.

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