

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY: NON-ACADEMIC ANNUAL REPORT
Academic Year 2006-07

I. Unit Title: Office of Special Projects

Division or School/College: President's Office

Unit Administrator: Myrtis Tabb, Senior Administrator

II. Educational Program Learning Outcome Assessment Plan

*(These are Learner Outcomes identified for the **current** year. Contents of the table should be very brief. Footnotes may be included for items needing explanation or documentation. Not all units have direct student impact. Those that do should have clear learning outcomes developed. Those with no student contact may indicate that this section is not applicable.)*

<p>A. Learning Outcome <i>What should a student impacted by this program / unit / function know, value, or be able to do at graduation and beyond?</i></p>	<p>B. Data Collection and Analysis <i>1. What assessment tools and/or methods will you use to determine achievement of the learning outcome? 2. Describe how the data from these tools and/or methods will be/have been collected. 3.Explain the procedure to analyze the data.</i></p>	<p>C. Results of Evaluation <i>What were the findings of the analysis?</i></p>	<p>D. Use of Evaluation Results <i>1.List any specific recommendations. 2. Describe changes in curriculum, courses, or procedures that are proposed or were made/ are being made as a result of the program learning outcome assessment process.</i></p>
<p>The Office of Special Projects focuses on the community and does not have direct impacts on DSU students.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">N/A</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">N/A</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">N/A</p>

III. Division/Department/Unit Goals for the Current Year

*(This is a report on progress towards goals for the **current year**. These are operational goals for the unit that are NOT tied directly to student learning outcomes which are reported in the table above. An example might be the implementation of a personnel development plan to enhance the skills of the staff in a unit. For each of the goals, be specific about what you actually did or intended to do with each initiative.)*

A. Goal # 1 – Mid-South Delta Leaders Program: To create a network of leaders throughout the tri-state Delta region of Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi who are willing to work together towards positive change.

1. Institutional Goal which was supported by this goal:

SP#5: The citizens of the region will benefit from increases in university outreach, service and partnership initiatives.

2. Evaluation Procedure(s):

Qualitative interviews were conducted with participants to ascertain the context in which they operate as leaders. The pre-interviews provided information as to how program participants currently view their leadership activities and what impacts they anticipate involvement in MSDL will bring. The post interview process provides details as to how the MSDL program structure has impacted leadership skills and knowledge, networks and their resolve to lead within the Delta. It also explores the context in which these leaders are using their skills, resources and networks obtained during the course of the program.

Pre and post surveys explore the mean change on variables of interest. The analysis of these items is similar to the original research conducted at the University of Missouri—Columbia (Pigg, 2001) which used factor analysis with the survey items and found five factors. These factors are community knowledge, community commitment, shared future and vision, civic engagement and personal growth and efficacy. These factors are applicable to the intended outcomes of the Mid-South Delta Leaders program and thus will be explored as part of this evaluation process.

Focus groups are conducted at two points during the evaluation process. A mid-point focus group explores the participants experience within the program to that point. This exercise determines any areas within the program structure that need further attention. The participatory nature of this exercise allows participants to express and make known those content areas which they would like to revisit or issues that need to be discussed.

A second focus group is conducted at the end of the program. This focus group is used to explore what “next steps” are needed in terms of their leadership involvement in the Delta now that they have graduated from the program. It also provides an opportunity to discuss how they may utilize the networks created during the course of the program.

3. Actual Results of Evaluation:

Each year, a comprehensive external evaluation is conducted on MSDL by Dr. Kenneth Pigg and Ms. Donielle Lovell, University of Missouri-Columbia¹. Key Findings for Year III include:

¹ Lovell, Donielle M. and Kenneth Pigg, “Year III Evaluation Report,” Mid-South Delta Leaders, February 2007.

- The Mid-South Delta Leaders program succeeded in recruiting a diverse class for Class II. Diversity is evident in race, gender, residence, income and participation in numerous community activities.
- Initial evaluation research shows that the program created an environment that participants felt safe to express their ideas.
- Statistical evidence shows that the Mid-South Delta Leaders program increased participants' leadership skills and knowledge. Focus group data confirm this finding.
- Statistical evidence shows that the Mid-South Delta Leaders program encouraged participants to become civically engaged. Focus group data confirm this finding.
- Statistical evidence shows that the Mid-South Delta Leaders program empowered participants to become engaged in community and economic development activities.
- The Mid-South Delta Leaders program staff has a healthy working relationship which directly impacts the outcomes of this program. Focus group data confirm this finding.
- The Mid-South Delta Leaders program is engaged in important advocacy work for the Delta as shown by the successful Delta Summit.
- The Mid-South Delta Leaders program is responsive to class member and evaluator ideas as demonstrated by the changes undertaken in the curriculum for Class III.

There are seven Mid-South Delta Leaders outcomes that are addressed in this report. Some outcomes are readily assessable at this point in the class, but for others it is too soon to report any impacts. This section highlights participant and evaluator comments in achieving the outcomes. Recommendations are also provided for each outcome.

Outcome 1. Did the Mid-South Delta Leaders program recruit a diverse group of leaders to the program?

The following is a summary of the demographics of those participants who responded to the Mid-South Delta Leaders Pre-Survey. Survey results show that as of July 2006 sixty percent of the respondents were female while forty percent were male. Twenty-two participants indicated they were African American, fourteen indicated Caucasian decent and three indicated other races/ethnicities such as Native American and Belizean-American. Most participants indicate being married.

Respondents were asked to classify their job or professional affiliation. The class members seem to represent several different professional arenas. Seventy percent of respondents have a college education. Table 1 summarizes all demographic statistics for the beginning of the program.

Table 1. Demographics for MSDL Respondents Year 2005					
Variable	Frequency	Percent	Variable	Frequency	Percent
Gender			Job		
Male	15	38.50%	Faith-Based	3	7.70%
Female	24	61.50%	For-Profit	7	17.90%
Ethnicity			Higher Education	7	17.90%
African-American	22	56.40%	K-12 Education	3	7.70%
Caucasian	14	35.90%	Government	7	23.10%
Other	3	7.70%	Non-Profit	9	23.10%
Marital Status			Other	3	7.70%
Single	6	15.40%	Education		
Married	26	66.70%	High School Graduate	2	5.10%
Divorced	5	12.80%	Some College	5	12.80%
Widowed	2	5.10%	Associates Degree	3	7.70%
Income			Bachelor's Degree	15	38.50%
Less than \$15,000	2	5.10%	Professional Degree	14	35.90%
\$15-30,000	7	17.90%			
\$31-50,000	6	15.40%			
\$51-75,000	1	2.60%			
\$76,000 plus	7	17.90%			N=39

Diversity can also be defined through the participants' activities and interests within their community. During the interview process class members were asked to discuss current community and Delta wide involvement.

In this process participants defined their community involvement in two ways. First, their community involvement was tied to their private life. Second, they tied their community work to current employment.

In regard to the private life, most participants cited involvement within their respective churches. Activities included youth development, working with the elderly, and various technical items such as televising the services. Participants are also highly active in national civic organizations such as the Rotary, Exchange, Pilot, and Kiwanis Clubs. They also cited participation in organizations such as the Red Cross, Multiple Sclerosis Society, Habitat for Humanity, and the American Cancer Society.

During the interview process many participants discussed activities and organizations that are locally based with few ties to county, state or national groups. Mostly these were community founded and funded groups. These activities include working at the local food pantry, community betterment groups (i.e. playground revitalization, beautification projects, festivals, etc.), and facilitating a neighborhood children's reading group.

Participants also cited instances where they volunteer their professional services on a pro bono basis to the community. These activities include legal services and grant writing.

Next, many participants are highly involved in their local school district. Some belong or are leaders in formal groups such as the Parent Teachers Association. Others discussed their involvement more in terms of an active interest in the school system where they drop by the schools to see how the day is progressing. There are also some participants involved in after school programs. On a political level, several class members sit on educational committees within their community.

The local history, arts and culture were also cited as important activities among the class. Many are involved with tourism boards. In fact, two class members serve on the same board within their county. Others discussed involvement in activities to promote the arts. Furthermore, many participants cited involvement with organizing events for Black History Month within their communities.

Class members are also highly involved within the political arena. Activities include voter registration drives, active membership in a political party, running election campaigns and running for office. Many participants discussed the importance of understanding the political process and their desire to inform and engage others within their community.

Participation in activities surrounding economic development is also high among participants. Many are involved in their local Chamber of Commerce. Others serve on economic development committees, industrial park committees and foundations set up to serve the economic interest of the community.

When asked about their community involvement, many participants were careful to delineate between their personal community involvement and that involvement that is directly tied to their employment. These employment classified activities include affiliation with foundations such as the Kellogg Foundation through the Mid-South Delta Initiative and the Mid-South Delta Youth Initiative. Many are involved with national and state small business associations, technology councils, economic development committees, and executive boards for various organizations. Furthermore, there are three participants who currently serve as the mayor of their town and cited involvement in a host of activities that are directly tied to that position. Given the demographic data as well as the varied interests of the participants, it appears the Mid-South Delta Leaders staff has recruited a diverse group of Delta participants.

During Class II several class members left the program due to time constrictions. Only one individual was released from the program due to attendance issues. Table 2 provides the final demographics for all participants of Class II.

State Represented		Gender	
Arkansas	15	Female	23
Louisiana	10	Male	11
Mississippi	9		
Race			
African American	21		
Caucasian	10		

Other	3		
Total	34	Total	34

Outcome 2. Did the Mid-South Delta Leaders program create a forum for participants to share ideas?

As discussed in the introduction, the six month interviews will be used to gather information about the interaction and networking experience among the class members. This question could have been asked during the focus groups. But, the evaluator made the decision not to for various reasons. The most important reason being that with the observed conflict a focus group may not allow for certain class members to openly share thoughts and ideas.

However, the topic was brought up by some participants in the focus groups. For example, one participant commented on the refreshing nature of the discussion.

“I had worked at a federal/state agency and so much of what I saw on a day to day basis was people who had little in common with the people but they go behind close doors, meet and make decisions. They had a solution for black women, they had a solution for this group and that group and had nothing in common with the people. [This class] helped me to see that people know their communities and know the solutions and we talk about them. Just listening to them talk about their dreams and knowing they are going to be there with the people. It was so refreshing instead of sitting with the suits with their legs crossed just talking, demagogging. It’s just so insulting of the people the way they [the suits] think. They had control over money and were clueless about what the needs are. They call all the shots and couldn’t survive in these actual communities. [This class] was a reminder of the “real leaders.” It just helped me to be around these people every three or four months. These are the people getting it done, not the suits. It was refreshing to be around the people doing the work. That is good energy for me. [The suits] read some research report and come back and that is the only touch [they have with the people]. They base policy on some of this weird stuff. The good thing about this group is we have the ability to say what we need and we know what it takes where as other people never come into contact with the people. I could not see it was getting done two years ago. I just knew something was missing.”

The 10 individuals in this focus group heartily agreed with the participant in the comments.

Furthermore, participants were asked in several of the retreats about the discussion environment during the course of the retreat. This was especially a crucial component of the diversity retreat. Participants needed to feel comfortable with the environment in order to share and learn on such sensitive topics. Almost 80 percent of the respondents attending this retreat felt the program created a safe environment for this topic. Furthermore, 50 percent of the respondents felt they were closer to their class members following the weekend activities. Therefore, at this point it appears most class members believe a safe environment was created to share ideas. Further research will expand on this outcome.

Evaluation of Outcomes 3-5

The Community Leadership Assessment Survey constructed at the University of Missouri—Columbia was used to partially assess outcomes 3-5. Focus groups were also used to garner information about the outcomes. Finally, the six month interviews will aid in understanding the long term impact on participants in these areas.

- *To what extent has the Mid-South Delta Leaders participants increased their leadership skills and knowledge?*
- *Does the Mid-South Delta Leaders program encourage participants to be civically engaged?*
- *To what extent has the Mid-South Delta Leaders program empowered participants to become engaged in economic and community initiatives?*

Qualitative Results: Leadership Skills, Knowledge, Civic Engagement and Community and Economic Development

One participant stated the following”

“I was thinking along the lines that I think one of the things MSDL does is to look beyond the traditional leadership type participants and I think that gives a lot of us an opportunity to be involved that would not have been otherwise. It looks beyond the traditional leader that you would think about and allows others to participate and find out that those are some of the most dynamic leaders there are. You don’t have to fit into the mode with them and be a leader. You don’t have to figure out how to fit in there.”

The participants in this particular focus groups spent a great deal of time discussing the statement. The program has instilled in participants that all leaders do not look alike or even act alike. This is an important realization that impacts the ability of the program to increase leadership skills, encourage civic engagement and empower participants to become involved in community and economic development.

In each focus group, discussions, at some point, centered on how the program has built their skills and knowledge. Most participants seemed to agree that the “The Great Heritage” tour played a vital role in the increase of community knowledge. One individual stated,

“It was a long trip, but it was really a great experience going through the small towns and even though I had been through some of them I wasn’t aware of what was there and it was as an eye opener. We are the Delta and we think we know the Delta and we don’t even know. We need to know all of the history.”

The fact the heritage tour garnered so much positive conversation was surprising. The results of the tour evaluation were not all positive. There were many statements about the length of the trip. However, time allowed the participants to really see the value of the activity and appreciate what they learned. The time lapse between the retreat and reflection proved to be important for many class members in regard to this retreat.

Many participants discussed how the program has changed the way they operate as leaders. One class member commented how the program helped them learn about their skills.

“I learned that some of my faults that I thought were leadership skills are not leadership skills. So it helped me on a personal level and on a business level.”

Furthermore, participants centered conversation on the tools they have received in the program. In a conversation about ways to improve the program with the inclusion of a “class project” one participant was noticeably frustrated with the strain of conversation. She commented,

“I think it is a need, but I think what this class is about is so much more than that [a project]. I think this class is about giving the tools to do that—To go into our individual community and use the leadership and motivational skills to put together a group to go somewhere and meet with the correct authorities to propose the project.”

The conversation then proceeded to talk about the motivation they have received and skills learned. This discussion, was in some ways, replicated in all three focus groups. Participants really felt they had grown as leaders as a result of the Mid-South Delta Leaders program. This seemed especially important as they talked about staying civically engaged in their community following the program.

“I’ve gone through seminars and workshops about [community] change but we hear it, but we don’t do it. And yesterday he [Randy Frazier, speaker for the last treat] motivated us to quit saying we need to make a change and do it. Even at our table he asked me what are some of the things you want to as a “turnrow” in your community and of course I just told him two or three things and he said, “so why aren’t you doing them” and I said I’m going to and he said “write it down.” He motivated me. We always talk about change but never actually implement the change and we never go out and do it. But, I realized that nothing is holding me up but to just do it.”

Many participants believed they had a renewed spirit to continue engaging in community initiatives.

Retreat III focused on community and economic systems. The results from this retreat also indicate that participants believe they increased their knowledge about community and economic development. In fact, for that retreat almost 90 percent of respondents indicated they had a greater understanding of the two processes and how it impacts the Delta region. Furthermore, the retreat expanded the participants’ knowledge of the place of the Delta in a global context.

MSDL class members also believe the state capital tours increased their knowledge of the public policy process and its impact on community and economic development. On average, 75 percent of respondents believed the activities positively impacted their knowledge base. Many indicated in the evaluation of this event, that they planned to share the information they gained with others in their community.

Outcome 6: To what extent do Mid-South Delta Leaders program participants utilize the resources and networks created by the program process?

The intent of this objective is the evaluation of the expansion of the participants’ professional network and the participant views of the impact of the program regionally. The evaluation of this outcome will largely be evaluated through the six month interviews. However, program participants did make comments regarding the networks created through the program.

Several participants noted the importance of the tri-state focus. They discussed the significance of meeting people from the other states that they would not normally come into contact with. Several participants also noted they were going to miss the program participants once it ended.

Outcome 7. To what extent has the Mid-South Delta Leaders curriculum process and staff been successful in carrying out their purposes?

Interviews were conducted with the MSDL partners in January 2007. Partners were asked to discuss their impressions of MSDL Class II as well as the relationship among the partners over the past year. In regard to the working relationship, the partnership appears very healthy. As one partner discussed, it really is one of the success stories of the Mid-South Delta Leaders process. Each mentioned that their relationship is now like a well oiled machine. They have constructive debate, know each other's strengths and weaknesses which allow them to strengthen each other and really have reached the performing stage of the group development process. One partner stated, "Openness, honesty and trust characterize our relationship." The evaluator has observed this process among the partners many times and the strength of the relationship is a real asset to the program.

The partners feel their relationship has grown much stronger over the last year. The issues experienced with Class II caused the partners to really dialogue over the situations and possible solutions. They also noted the constant communication that characterizes their relationship. There is constant use of the internet and face to face meetings. However, it was also noted several times during the interview process that their communication has become about much more than just MSDL. They contact each other with opportunities that may interest the others. One stated, "We support and broaden each other's network."

However, a well-oiled machine only remains so as long as the group acknowledges there is always room for improvement. Therefore, the partners were asked to discuss ways the process could be improved. One individual noted he/she would like to see the inclusion of either a former or current class member in at least part of the team meetings in order to receive participant feedback as well as evaluator feedback. Furthermore, they suggested the inclusion of the past facilitators in some of the meetings to receive their impressions of the process. Next, it was noted that though the decision making process works well within the group, sometimes there is need for a more logical decision making process. At times, the partner feels more information or time is needed to make decisions about certain elements of the program. Finally, the partners are seeking for not only the MSDL class members to be a learning community, but also the partners take part in this process. Therefore, over the next year they predict even more use of technology through the new Delta Connection component of the curriculum.

The interview concluded by allowing the partners to share other issues they felt was pertinent to the evaluation process. The fact that there is a three state partnership was once again noted as a positive element to the program. This was noted in last year's evaluation report as well. They feel this partnership greatly enhances the ability of the program to recruit and make connections for publicity. Furthermore, the partners noted they are discussing ways to continue the program and partnership after the conclusion of the Kellogg Foundation funding.

4. Use of Evaluation Results:

The Mid-South Delta Leaders program is progressing toward achieving the set outcomes. Program staff has recruited a diverse group of leaders to participate in Class III. They are not only diverse in terms of demographic data, but also in their scope of interest. But, as noted in the report, outreach should occur to organizations which serve Latino populations to begin understanding issues facing this new and increasing Delta population.

In terms of creating a forum to share ideas, MSDL has successfully achieved this on numerous occasions through its weekend retreats. Participants have commented on these interactions in a positive manner. Furthermore, activities facilitated in sessions have allowed for creative brainstorming in regard to Delta issues and solutions. The continuation of this trend is highly encouraged.

Class II participants have noted increased awareness to not only their personal leadership style, but also recognizing the styles of colleagues. During evaluation activities participants discussed how they implemented the knowledge garnered at the retreat. Thus, MSDL is well on its way to meeting this program outcome.

Retreats were well received and rated by participants. The responsive nature of program staff to participant issues and needs is a marker to meeting outcome five. In addition to the positive feedback from Class II, former class members continue to recommend the program to others. This is a direct measure of the effectiveness of the curriculum and program staff. Former class members would not encourage colleagues to spend valuable time on this process if they did not feel it was beneficial. From interviews conducted with the leadership team, it appears the relationship is healthy and progressing.

Retreat surveys, observation and post interviews will be conducted in 2006. However, there are concerns over the timeline of evaluation activities for 2006. Class II concluded in November 2006, and Class III began in January 2007. Post interviews with Class II will be held in July and August 2007.

B. Goal # 2 – Mississippi Delta Technology Council The mission of The Mississippi Delta Technology Council is:

To enhance the strengths of the Delta by promoting, celebrating and leveraging successful applications of technology.

1. Institutional Goal which was supported by this goal:

SP#5: The citizens of the region will benefit from increases in university outreach, service and partnership initiatives.

2. Evaluation Procedure(s):

Evaluation efforts focus on the accomplishment of the MDTC goals:

- To dissolve the “low tech” image of the Delta;
- To play a role in the economic growth of the Delta – in growing, improving, attracting, developing and retaining businesses regionally;
- To foster entrepreneurial efforts and to foster lucrative networking;
- To market the Delta through regional, state and national publications; and,
- To play a positive and integral role in job creation in the Mississippi Delta.

The evaluation of these goals is based on the accomplishment of the following strategies:

1. *Implementation of the Certified Technology Communities initiative;*

2. *Completion of the comprehensive MDTC web-portal;*
3. *Production of a marketing video, which highlights the existing tech infrastructure of the Delta;*
4. *Recognition and strengthening of the existing partnerships and development of new ones;*
5. *Recognition and leveraging of the current membership as well as increasing the memberships.*

3. Actual Results of Evaluation:

The five strategies are underway during the 2006-2007 program year. The results will be used to strengthen and improve the strategies.

4. Use of Evaluation Results:

The results collected will be used to develop future goals and strategies for MDTC.

C. Goal # 3 -- Economic and Community Development for Public Officials and Community Leaders: to implement a pilot program in which the partners work closely with two communities to develop an economic development plan.

1. Institutional Goal which was supported by this goal:

SP#5: The citizens of the region will benefit from increases in university outreach, service and partnership initiatives.

2. Evaluation Procedure(s):

As a method of evaluation of the accomplishments of the pilot program thus far, the original outcomes in the proposal are listed. Each outcome has a statement that the partners agree indicates the status at this time.

1. Successful selection of pilot communities and formation of the community team of public officials and community leaders.
(Accomplished)
2. Two communities will commit to an intensive economic development process and create a community economic development plan.
(Accomplished)
3. Quarterly reports will be prepared to measure progress toward the achievement of the economic development goals established by the community. (Accomplished)

4. An economic champion for each goal will be identified to lead the progress toward achievement of the goal. (Accomplished)
5. Each community will develop a cadre of well-informed citizens who will participate in an economic development activity. (Ongoing)
6. A case study on economic development in the Mississippi Delta will be developed by the partners. Economic development tools, which can be utilized by other communities, will be developed. (Ongoing)

3. Actual Results of Evaluation:

The process to select the communities was intense and required individual meetings with key leaders before any group meetings could be held. The partners determined that they would look for a community and/or county that had already expressed a desire to succeed and that this would not be viewed as a program that was imposed on the community. The partners were methodical about talking to private and public leaders from perspective locations. Intensive work was done with one community which decided that the timing was not right for that community to participate in the program. At that time, the selection process was started again to approach another community about its interest in this initiative. Even though this was time consuming, it was necessary for a successful foundation to insure the program would move forward upon the completion of the retreat and the development of the economic strategic plan.

The community and the county were selected and a retreat, facilitated by Phil Hardwick with the John C. Stennis Institute of Government, was held with each one. The Mississippi Delta was represented geographically with the county in the northern part of the Delta and the city in the Southern part of the Delta. A community profile was developed for each community by the Delta Council Economic Development Department, and a sample of each profile is attached to this report. A copy of the profile was given to each person at the retreat, and the information was used to assist with data collection, assets identification and demographics of the community. All of the participants commented on how beneficial and useful the profile was as they developed the economic development goals for their community or county.

4. Use of Evaluation Results:

Lessons Learned During the 2006-2007 Pilot Program

1. The methods utilized in the selection process need more than a 12 month period to implement, particularly for a pilot program involving three partners.
2. Getting commitment and bringing the local leaders together in agreement takes time. The partners recognize that each location has its own set of issues, turf barriers and land mines that must be handled effectively before engaging the broader community.
3. Even after the intense selection process, the stated commitment of local leaders and the identification of champions for each economic goal, it is difficult to hold volunteers accountable for the accomplishments of the outcome of the goal.

4. The partnership has proven to have a successful one with certain advantages. The partner that is not a resident of the Delta does not know the issues within the community and county. Therefore, Phil Hardwick brings a set of expertise that is not influenced by local concerns. He serves in the role of an outside consultant that brings new ideas and challenges local thinking. The two local partners are aware of many of the complexities in each location. Thus, two local partners are trusted in the region and bring the ability to make the connections with the appropriate organizations and leaders.
5. The partners first worked with staff in the local organizations to assist with evaluation and assessment of the accomplishment of the goals. This method has not proven satisfactory so it is now believed that community volunteers should be the primary contact to determine the achievement of the goals.

IV. Data and information for department: *(include narrative of programmatic scope; data)*

The Office of Special Projects operates through several grant-funded projects as well as coordinates special events on the DSU campus.

Grants:

- Mid-South Delta Leaders (2002-2008), Funded by Mid-South Delta Initiative/W.K. Kellogg Foundation for \$1.2 million
- Mississippi Delta Technology Council (2004-2007), Funded by Small Business Administration for \$247,369
- Economic Development for Public Officials in the Mississippi Delta (2005-2007), a pilot program funded by the Robert M. Hearin Support Foundation for \$184,000

Special Events:

- Delta Council Day, May 2007
- DSU's Annual Year of Emphasis, August 2006-Present
- The Mississippi Delta Women's Leadership Conference, February 2007

V. Personnel- Noteworthy activities and accomplishments:

Myrtis Tabb, Senior Administrator Special Projects, Accomplishments:

- Panelist, Mississippi Delta Grassroots Caucus Annual Meeting in Washington, DC
- Selected as recipient of the 2nd annual "Leadership Award" from the Women in Higher Education Mississippi Network;
- Past State Coordinator of the Women in Higher Education Mississippi Network (WHEMN), a group committed to identifying, developing, advancing and supporting women's leadership in higher education;
- Program Leader of the Economic Development for Public Officials in the Mississippi Delta, a program funded by the Robert M. Hearin Support Foundation;
- Executive Director of the Mississippi Delta Technology Council, funded by the Small Business Administration;
- Tri-State Leader of the Mid-South Delta Leaders, funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation/Mid South Delta Initiative;

- Chair of the Mississippi Delta Women’s Leadership Conference held in February 2007;
- DSU Coordinator of the Annual Delta Council Day held each May;
- Taught Leadership Development in Theory and Practice, Sociology 424/624;
- Appointed as a Board Member for the Bolivar County Community Action Agency;
- Board Member for the Mississippi Delta Empowerment Zone Alliance;
- Board Member for the Delta Arts Alliance;
- Advisory Board Member for Merchants & Farmers Bank;
- Staff Chair of DSU’s annual emphasis, *The Year of Health & Wellness in the Delta*; and,
- Member, Mississippi Delta Region Revitalization Task Force, in which she was appointed to by Mississippi Speaker of the House.

Christy Montesi, Assistant Director, Special Projects:

- Promoted to the position of Assistant Director in the Office of Special Projects, in which she provides oversight of the day-to-day operations of the Special Projects’ Department to ensure that programmatic and support aspects of the department operate effectively and smoothly;
- Appointed as the Chair of the Staff Development Committee of DSU’s Administrative Staff Council. In this position, she spearheaded the following:
 - Staff Textbook Loan Program that awards up to \$100 each semester to DSU full-time staff who are taking classes that helps in the purchase of books;
 - DSU’s participation in the *Mississippi Business Journal’s* Best Places to Work in Mississippi competition in which DSU was selected as a finalist; and,
 - The annual Staff Development Day held each May. The theme for this year was “Hats Off to Health,” which coincided with DSU’s year of emphasis. The day was arranged in conference style and included a keynote speaker and 10 breakout sessions focusing on various aspects of health. Approximately 170 staff members participated.
 - Secured \$700 in funding through the DSU Health & Wellness funds to purchase 160 first-aid kits to be distributed at Staff Development Day.
- Tri-State Director of the Mid-South Delta Leaders program funded through the W.K. Kellogg Foundation/Mid South Delta Initiative;
- Selected as one of 20 Mississippi Delta residents to serve as a Community Consultant for the Mississippi Delta Leadership Design Workgroup for the W.K. Kellogg Foundation/Mid South Delta Initiative’s Phase II;
- DSU’s Co-Site Champion for the *Motivating MS: Keys to Healthy Living*, program; and,
- DSU’s Co-Coordinator for the *Mississippi In Motion* program.

Recommended change of status

Effective July 1, 2007, Dr. Myrtis Tabb has been promoted to the Assistant Vice President for Partnerships and Special Projects. In this role, she will manage the University's outsourced areas, including information technology, food services and the bookstore. She will also serve as the Interim Director of Human Resources. She will also continue to oversee the Office of Special Projects.

VI. Division/Department Goals for Coming Year

All Programs in Special Projects Department focus on SP#5: The citizens of the region will benefit from increases in university outreach, service and partnership initiatives.

Note: The goals for each of our programs are defined when we apply for a grant. The goals extend from year to year for the life of the grant. For example, with MSDL, we are funded through 2008. We have the same goals from year to year, because our classes repeat.

1. Institutional Goal(s) supported by this goal 2. Expected Results 3. Evaluation Procedure(s): 4. Use of Evaluation Results:

A. Goal # 1 – Mid-South Delta Leaders Program

- Empower participants to become actively engaged in community initiatives and to use the available resources and talents;
- Include both traditional and non-traditional leaders in creative learning environments;
- Build regional networks of resources through participants and graduates to help Delta communities improve their economic position;
- Equip leaders with better understandings of national and global trends and how these trends influence the quality of life and community development in the tri-state Mississippi Delta;
- Link leaders with other educational programs and action strategies; and,
- Help leaders develop life goal plans and community development projects.

B. Goal # 2 – Mississippi Delta Technology Council

MDTC will continue to work with local and regional leaders from all sectors to develop the infrastructure that is essential to the success of a region in the knowledge economy. This includes ensuring that the human capital of the Delta is prepared for the jobs of the 21st century, that the resources of the region are sufficient for the knowledge economy and that the quality of life in the Delta remains high enough to recruit and retain the best and brightest.

C. Goal # 3 -- Economic and Community Development for Public Officials and Community Leaders

This program is a pilot program in which the partners will work closely with two communities in the Mississippi Delta to help them develop economic development plans. The strength of this program is the collaboration between and synergy of the three partners to focus on an intensive economic development technical assistance program with two communities. Initial work has begun with the two communities that were selected for the program, Coahoma