

Capitol Day press conference
Remarks by Marilyn Young, EMCC
Feb. 24, 2009

“Good morning and welcome to Capitol Day for Mississippi’s community and junior Colleges, hosted by the Mississippi Faculty Association of Community and Junior Colleges in conjunction with many friends and supporters.

“I am Marilyn Young, English instructor at East Mississippi Community College, where I have been a full-time faculty member for 13 years.

“Two years ago, our legislators passed a historic bill – Mid-Level Funding -- which they have continued to show support for and have continued to strive to achieve. For their concerted efforts in phasing in this funding, we folks at the community and junior colleges are greatly appreciative. And we have gathered today to express gratitude and thanks for their work.

“But we are also here today to tell you our community and junior college stories -- stories of hope, stories of success and stories of growth and expansion.

“Looking behind and around me, you see representatives of those stories -- you see our community and junior college students -- students of all ages, both genders and diverse backgrounds. Our students come from all walks of life -- some directly from high school graduation with the world before them -- some without high school diplomas but realizing the value of furthering their education -- some from years of experience in the workforce but have now found themselves in need of greater training -- some now without jobs or the means to support their families as our economy has taken a turn downward.

“Without doubt, I could point to any one of these students and you would hear a story.

“You also see faculty members -- instructors with a passion to guide these students toward their respective success stories -- instructors who devote their days, nights and weekends to giving to their institutions to ensure quality teaching and instruction – often without the equipment, technology, or materials needed -- or often having purchased those needed items themselves. In addition to the faculty members here today, there are approximately 2,500 more full-time and thousands more part-time instructors in their classrooms as I speak sharing their passion, motivating and pushing our students and knowing that we are inevitably helping our state as we teach Mississippians -- Mississippians who will be better prepared to enter the workforce and to become more productive citizens in these times of economic downturns.

“Again, I am confident that I could ask any community or junior college instructor to step to this podium and you would hear a story of diligence, devotion and dedication.

“As you hear these stories, I ask that you keep a few statistics in your minds:

- Seventy percent of all freshmen college students are enrolled in community or junior colleges.
- CJs are on average at least \$2,500 less expensive per year than our public university counterparts.
- Our one- and two-year vocational/technical programs are constantly pumping qualified workers into our state’s economy
- Ninety-seven percent of our students are Mississippians
- Our faculty members earn approximately 9 percent less than the mid-point salary between K-12 teachers and university instructors
- Our CJs trained 145,439 individual workers in fiscal year 2008, served 778 companies and businesses and conducted 23,705 workforce training classes
- Current figures show us that spring 2009 enrollment is up 10 percent over spring 2008 and ...
- Our CJs do all this and so much more on less than 7 cents of every dollar spent on education in the state of Mississippi.”

