



## Education opportunity broadens for technical graduates

A new 2 Plus 2 partnership with Mississippi University for Women will give Hinds Community College sophomore Dorothy Thompson an opportunity she didn't think she would ever have.

A nontraditional student with a husband and an 18-year-old son, Thompson plans to graduate in May with an Associate of Applied Sciences degree in business marketing and fashion marketing. Without leaving home, she can then pursue a Bachelor of Technology degree at MUW through the Columbus university's new V<sup>3</sup> online college.

MUW is partnering with the technical programs of the 15 community colleges to offer the opportunity to all students who graduate with the Associate of Applied Sciences degree. Hinds and MUW officials signed the agreement on Sept. 10.

Hinds President **Dr. Clyde Muse** said such a program has been needed for many years.

"This is truly breaking new ground and giving opportunity to people who deserve so much," he said.

V<sup>3</sup> College offers degree completion programs to community college students who have an associate's degree in applied sciences. The new college provides students a path to finish their bachelor's degree in as little as 18 months and stay in their home communities.

"A lot of students today can't just pick up and move to a university to finish their bachelor's degree," said Dr. Bill Mayfield, director of V<sup>3</sup> College. "We give students a way to accomplish their goals and do it on their own schedules."

MUW will accept up to 43 credit hours of technical credit toward their bachelor of science degrees. Initially, MUW has offered four bachelors degree program options – Business Administration, Entrepreneurship, Management Information Systems and

Human Resources Management. Culinary Arts will be offered beginning in January.

"The opportunity for our two-year program graduates to transfer credits earned at Hinds Community College to a prestigious business degree with MUW is an outstanding opportunity," said **Pam Perry**, Rankin Campus Business and Office Technology instructor. "Hinds instructors prepare students well following a state-based curriculum. I have no doubt that students who perform well in their two-year program of study at Hinds will also perform well for their four-year degree with MUW."

Dr. Hal Jenkins, who is currently serving as MUW's interim provost and vice president for academic affairs, says he's waited his entire career to see a program like V<sup>3</sup> College.

"This is truly a significant event," Jenkins said. "In my 40-year career, I've always asked why more partnerships like this aren't formed. The most important thing we can do is work together to educate our citizens and help further our state and its economy. I'm so glad to see this partnership and I hope there will be many more in the future."

First term classes at V<sup>3</sup> College are under way, and more than 50 students are enrolled.

"It is a very great day for career and technical education in the state of Mississippi.

It's especially gratifying to see our university system recognize the value of the Associate of Applied Science degree and the quality preparation that these graduates bring to the universities," said

**Dr. Sue Powell**, vice president for the Rankin Campus and Career-Technical education.

Thompson was laid off in March 2009



Hinds President **Dr. Clyde Muse**, seated left, and Dr. Hal Jenkins, MUW's interim provost and vice president for academic affairs, signed an official agreement Sept. 10 for a new 2 plus 2 partnership that allows technical graduates to transfer to MUW's V<sup>3</sup> online college to get a baccalaureate degree. With them are, back, **Dr. Sue Powell**, vice president for the Rankin Campus and Jackson Campus-Academic/Technical Center and director of Occupational Programs; Raymond Campus student Dorothy Thompson and Dr. Bill Mayfield, director of V<sup>3</sup> College.

after 17 years of employment with the same company.

"I was the product of a failing economy and a company downsizing," said Thompson, whose son Tari is a theatre major on the Raymond Campus. "With this bad news my husband and I decided not to just allow me to sit on my hands but to turn this bad news into something positive."

Thompson and husband Jarvis hope to start their own business some day. While she is pleased with the education she is getting at Hinds, Thompson also believes the bachelor's degree in technology would further her skills level.

"The program will present a prime opportunity not only for myself but for my son and for our classmates," she said. "It will not only give us a chance to further our educations but to make a better future for ourselves."

V<sup>3</sup> College is now accepting applications for the second term; classes begin Dec. 27. For more information, visit [www.v3college.org](http://www.v3college.org). ■