

The TBR Vice-Chair Addresses Project M.O.S.T.

Project M.O.S.T. (Men of Southwest Tennessee) converged on their Union Avenue Campus meeting room, which has become known as the “M.O.S.T. Haven of Success” (MHS) located in C-204, for their first Fall 2012 Success Meeting. Following the successful two-week Summer 2012 Leadership Series launched with an inspiring talk by Southwest President Nathan Essex, the highlight of the meeting was a dynamic, down to earth, and insightful talk from the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) Vice-Chair Gregory Duckett.

Duckett, also senior vice president and corporate counsel for Baptist Memorial Health Care System, shared with the men of M.O.S.T. how his career started from very humble beginnings as a young boy growing up in a South Memphis community considered, to be low-to-medium income. Emphasizing the many challenges that he faced and struggled to overcome, Duckett indicated he never imagined he’d accomplish the many things he has, but he never stopped struggling. “Never let your past or present circumstances dictate your ability to succeed in the future,” stated Duckett.

Among some of his other notable accomplishments, Duckett served as:

- Director of Memphis Housing and Community Development
- State Counsel to U.S. Senator Albert Gore, Jr.
- Clinton-Gore Transition Team Member
- Chief Administrative Officer for the City of Memphis
- One of only two TBR Board members to be appointed to serve full terms by both Democratic and Republican Governors
- Shelby County Election Commission Chairman
- Board Member of the Memphis Branch, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis

The M.O.S.T. meeting room reached a near capacity crowd of highly enthusiastic African-American male students who committed to put forth their best efforts to be the best students they can be. Program Director Kariem-Abdul Salaam noted that the roughly sixty (60) men in attendance

represented only about 25 % of those who have agreed to be a part of M.O.S.T. “Due to conflicts with class and work schedules, many of them could not attend, but have affirmed their commitment to the program,” said Salaam. Among those in attendance, he said, “there was overwhelming support to build upon their intrinsic motivations, rise above mediocrity, and set a higher standard of academic achievement and leadership skills development that serve to enhance retention and graduation efforts.”

Project M.O.S.T. Success meetings will be held regularly throughout the semester featuring targeted seminar topics that are congruent with the program’s vision and mission.

“The M.O.S.T. staff, Danesha Ward, Verties Sails, III, and Paul Robinson, deserve to be recognized for the great job they’re doing to ensure the success of the program,” said Salaam.

Ward, Counselor/Case Manager with the M.O.S.T. program, presented an informative discussion on How to Be a Successful College Student. “She also recently developed our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/stccprojectmost, to establish more communication opportunities with our students. Please visit the site and “like” us. Many of our upcoming events and program services will be listed on this website,” said Salaam.

M.O.S.T. has experienced tremendous growth and garnered outstanding support from senior staff, administrators, faculty, and staff from across the college as well as from the broader community.

For more information call 901-333-5469 or send an email to ksalaam@southwest.tn.edu.



Gregory Duckett (standing) discusses the challenges he faced during the early years of his career pursuits.