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## **Project M.O.S.T. Moves Forward During Summer Sessions**



**Southwest President Dr. Nathan Essex gives motivational talk to M.O.S.T. participants.**

Project M.O.S.T. (Men of Southwest Tennessee), the college's new program aimed at addressing the needs of its African-American male students, has made progress in providing essential knowledge and support to a significant number of men within its first year by hiring additional staff, giving career assessments and conducting leadership seminars. Since its start on March 1, nearly 30 students have received training and guidance that will prove to be valuable as they pursue their goals.

The endeavor, headed by Director Kariem-Abdul Salaam, is also staffed by Case Manager Verties Sails III and Counselor Danesha Ward, and Secretary-III Paul Robinson.

The seminar series began with a visit from Southwest President Nathan Essex on June 21, at which time he greeted each participant as they entered the workshop area. Later he gave a very inspiring talk and related that he strongly supports their efforts. Project M.O.S.T. conducted its "Introduction to College Excellence" series of leadership seminars from June 22 – 29 covering

topics: *Learning About the College Environment, The Importance of Communication, Restoring Your Intrinsic Motivations, The Importance of Maintaining Self-Esteem, How to Manage Change, Rudiments: Social and Sexual Interaction, Dressing for Success, and No More Excuses*, among others. Along with Salaam, the members of Southwest faculty and staff that led these discussions included Cheryl Bingham, Dr. Osborne Burks, Willie Burley, Oyama Hampton III, Jessie Lipford, Clinton Metcalf, Verties Sails III and Dr. Robert Walker. Local attorney Robert Gatewood and sex educator, David Sabir, rounded out the list of presenters.

Participants in the seminars were given a range of assessments to assist the staff in understanding each student's needs. Amy Shead, director of Workforce Development Support, administered the Test of Adult Basic Education and the Vocational Preference Inventory designed to reveal individual skill levels and occupational preferences. Project M.O.S.T. staff oversaw the O\*NET Career Interest Inventory to further assist participants in identifying their interests as it relates to different professions. The students also were given the Tennessee Employment Readiness Scale, which highlights barriers or challenges to obtaining gainful employment. These assessments will give the staff a foundation on which to begin working with each student in the program.

To promote the program, Project M.O.S.T. will continue its commitment to being a visible and active organization across the Southwest campus community. The first plan is to increase recruiting efforts by attending all remaining New Student Orientation sessions on both the Union Avenue and Macon Cove campuses. "In attending these sessions, we look to reach out to potential candidates, and welcome them to our institution. We hope to make these young men aware of the vast assortment of services that Project M.O.S.T. can offer them as well as its proactive approach to guiding them throughout their college experience," said Salaam. Secondly, the plan is for the staff to make in-class visits to as many developmental-level sessions as possible. And finally, the program will extend recruiting efforts to the many local high schools in the Memphis area. The goal is to develop a strong presence on Southwest's campuses, and then to allow Project M.O.S.T. to be seen as a positive entity for the entire community.

Interested persons are welcome to visit the Project M.O.S.T. offices in C204 on the Union Avenue Campus, call 901-333-5469 or contact the office via email at [ksalaam@southwest.tn.edu](mailto:ksalaam@southwest.tn.edu).

View more photos of [Project M.O.S.T.](#)

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