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## UM Earns Highest Graduation Success Rate in School History

Four Rebel teams post perfect scores

NOVEMBER 15, 2016 BY JESSICA EVANS



Ole Miss recorded its highest GSR in school history at 81 percent. Photo by Robert Jordan/Ole Miss Communications

OXFORD, Miss. – Coming on the heels of a successful weekend on the football field and basketball courts, the University of Mississippi has received more great news, this time on the academic side of things. In the most recent NCAA Graduation Success Rate Report released Tuesday, Ole Miss student-athletes recorded the highest GSR in school history at 81 percent.

Additionally, UM is graduating student-athletes at a rate nearly 2 percent higher than the general student body for the first time since

2009. This is just one of many accomplishments Ole Miss student-athletes have had in the last year. In the spring, they posted a collective 3.0 GPA for the first time.

Ross Bjork, vice chancellor for intercollegiate athletics, is pleased with the progress Ole Miss student-athletes are making in the classroom.

"I am extremely proud of our student-athletes, coaches and athletics staff for reaching this new academic threshold," Bjork said. "Our biggest responsibility in college athletics is teaching, educating and providing leadership opportunities for our students who compete in athletics. Our intentional approach to enhance our academic performance is now paying off with the best graduation success rate on record.

"Earning a college degree is the ultimate measure of success in higher education and we are extremely proud of all of our Ole Miss Rebels who have received their degree and allowed our university to enrich our academic profile. While we have come a long way in a relatively short amount of time, our work in this area is never complete, and we will continue to strive for academic excellence for our entire athletics program. We must continue to fulfill our purpose by providing every opportunity for our student-athletes to reach their full potential."

Derek Cowherd, senior associate athletics director for student-athlete development, is equally impressed by the dedication of the student-athletes, coaches and **FedEx Student Athlete Success Center** staff to achieve this milestone.

"It has taken a lot of dedication from our students, staff and coaches to move closer to our target of 90 percent graduation success and to see Ross' vision for our department coming true," Cowherd said. "We take the utmost pride in the process and the way we do things with integrity and within our core values.

"It's very rewarding to see so many of our student-athletes graduating and having a plan for their lives after their collegiate days are done. I'm thankful for this talented team who works tirelessly to reach our goal of being in or near the upper third of the SEC in federal and graduation success rates."

The women's basketball, women's golf, volleyball and rifle teams each posted a perfect 100 percent GSR. This will be the eighth consecutive year the women's golf team has posted a perfect GSR, while volleyball achieves the feat for the sixth straight year. It's the fourth year in a row with a perfect score for women's basketball and the third for rifle.

In 10 years, Ole Miss' graduation success rate has improved from 69 percent to its current 81 percent, and the Rebels are graduating 2 percent higher than the overall university population and the federal graduation rate.

Additionally, Ole Miss is making strides among its SEC counterparts, continuing to climb into the upper

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echelon of the SEC.

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