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**Statement from Commissioner of Higher Education and Executive Director of Mississippi Community College Board**

In 2017, the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning and the Mississippi Community College Board launched the Complete 2 Compete (C2C) program focused on increasing the degree attainment rate in Mississippi.

The initiative concentrated on removing barriers that keep adult learners from returning to complete their degrees. Within a year, a new university degree program and renewable C2C Grant were established to facilitate adult learners returning to complete their degree. Mississippi's public community colleges and universities expanded the number of online classes and many developed student services tailored to provide working adults with greater access. Additionally, teams of coaches were commissioned across all the institutions providing greater coordination, streamlining the review of transcripts, and maximizing application of earned credits.

In just over two years, the program assisted more than 2,100 former students in returning to complete their degrees. In addition, more than 4,000 former students, who had not been enrolled in classes for more than two years, were enrolled on a fast path to degree completion. In October of 2020, complicated by the pandemic and funding challenges, the program was temporarily suspended.

Today we are delighted to announce the re-launch of the C2C program, with a renewed focus on reaching those adults most in need. Our goal remains steadfast, to reach out and welcome back students who left without a degree, providing them the support and resources they need to finish what they started.

Expanding career and wage opportunities are just two of the many benefits of C2C. The generational impact of degree completion can be truly transformational for families in our state. We invite you to visit the C2C website ([www.msc2c.org](http://www.msc2c.org)) and read about the available program resources and the lives they have impacted. Without the partnership and efforts of many, this initiative would not be possible. We look forward to the positive impact our collaborative efforts will have on individuals, employers, and Mississippi's economy.

Dr. Alfred Rankins Jr.

Commissioner of Higher Education

Dr. Andrea Mayfield

Executive Director, MCCB

