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**Caring Campus**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Hinds Community College Fosters Student Success, Connection through Caring Campus**

**LONG BEACH, CA** – Hinds Community College, the largest community college in Mississippi, has embraced Caring Campus as part of its commitment to fostering meaningful relationships between students, faculty, and staff, promoting personal connections, and reinforcing its core values.

Caring Campus helps students get the support they need to overcome challenges by engaging staff and faculty with the tools and commitments needed to establish a culture of care, ensuring all students feel valued, seen, and supported from the moment they step on campus.

Hinds College President Dr. Stephen Vacik introduced Caring Campus to the college after witnessing its success at his previous institution, Maysville Community and Technical College.

“I know how essential it is to build strong connections with our students,” Dr. Vacik said. “That’s what the heart of Caring Campus is all about – relationships – and we’ve seen a very positive response on campus.”

Hinds has taken significant steps to embed the Caring Campus philosophy into daily operations, ensuring its sustainability and institutionalization. New employees are introduced to Caring Campus during orientation on their very first day, ensuring all employees are aligned in their support of students.

The college has also launched a recognition campaign called Caught in the Act of Caring, which encourages staff and faculty to nominate individuals who they have seen demonstrating the college’s values of integrity, diversity, excellence, accountability, leadership, and stewardship while also supporting students.

“Every executive leadership meeting begins with recognition of these standout individuals,” Dr. Vacik said. “I also follow up with a personal email to celebrate those who go above and beyond. Caring for our students is not something we ever have to force – it’s just part of who we are.”

Staff and faculty meet regularly to discuss ways to continue creating a culture of care on campus, including using students’ preferred names and learning personal information about them to establish relationships. Given that many Hinds students are first-generation or come from low-income backgrounds, Dr. Vacik emphasized the importance of ensuring students feel recognized and supported, which is essential for their continued success and persistence.

“Until students know you’re invested in their lives, they’re not going to invest themselves,” Dr. Vacik said. “We want every student to feel like they’re part of the Hinds family.”

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Hinds has also implemented student success centers to complement its work through Caring Campus, further helping to increase student retention, persistence, and success rates.

Looking ahead, Hinds Community College plans to continue building on the successes of Caring Campus, ensuring that faculty and staff remain committed to a culture of care.

“Hinds Community College is a great example of what it means to institutionalize Caring Campus,” Caring Campus founder and CEO Dr. Brad Phillips said. “Their dedication to fostering personal connections ensures students feel valued and supported, which is key to their success.”

#### **PHOTO CAPTIONS:**

**IEBC\_HINDS1:** Hinds Community College has embraced Caring Campus as part of its commitment to fostering meaningful relationships between students, faculty, and staff, promoting personal connections, and reinforcing its core values.

**IEBC\_HINDS2:** Hinds Community College has taken significant steps to embed the Caring Campus philosophy into daily operations, ensuring its sustainability and institutionalization. New employees are introduced to Caring Campus during orientation on their very first day, ensuring all employees are aligned in their support of students.

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