

Student orientation leader loves his job

BY CHANING GREEN
NEWS WRITER

Ole Miss soon-to-be senior Cole Putman can be seen almost anywhere on campus this week. He can be found getting snacks together, giving directions, and giving tours of the University of Mississippi from a student's perspective. Putman is a student orientation leader, and he loves his job. He's majoring in social work at the university and said that he truly enjoys giving people the tools they need to succeed in life, and that includes university life. The Brandon native took a short break from the heat and walking to sit down with reporter Channing Green earlier this week.

CHANING GREEN: How long have you had this job?

COLE PUTMAN: This is my second summer serving as an orientation leader. I love it. I eat it for breakfast, lunch and dinner. I love it so much.

GREEN: What does a typical day entail for you here?

PUTMAN: It just depends on what role I'm serving in that day. I can serve as an orientation leader for students, or I'm serving the leaders and the students by doing things like setting up snack breaks, breaking down or setting up check in and such. Those are different roles we have. On a normal day when I have a group, we'll have our intro at Fulton where we'll have our dance, we'll get someone from the Lyceum to come and speak, our ASB president will come and speak then we'll break up into groups. I'll lead my group and we'll play some fun games where we get to know each other and then we'll go through the guidebook. We then go to lunch together followed by sitting through different sessions such as respecting the M and campus involvement. We're just getting them acquainted with the university. We have another small group session followed by dinner and then what's called the Hotty Toddy Hangout. We just all dance and eat now



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Cole Putman is a rising senior at Ole Miss and serves as a student orientation leader.

cones and take pictures in a photo booth for an hour and a half.

GREEN: How did you originally become involved in this?

PUTMAN: The summer before my sophomore year, I had seen so many of my friends serving as orientation leaders and I just thought it was such a special job, just getting to be the first person that welcomes people into the university. I just wanted to be a part of it. I applied in October of my sophomore year, 2014, and I got it. I started working in the summer of 2015 at orientation. It was the most amazing thing I've done with my life so far, honestly. I know that sounds ridiculous, but I've never been more myself than I was during orientation, and I was the best

version of myself, I feel like. After my first summer, I realized that if I ever wanted to do anything else during my time at Ole Miss, it was to be an orientation leader again. So I applied for it again and got it. That's what I'm doing this summer.

GREEN: Why do you love it?

PUTMAN: I think my favorite thing about it is that it couldn't be less about me. The college lifestyle is so self-gratifying and so about you, and my entire job here is to serve and love someone else. Whether they are a freshman student, a teammate, my GA, my director or whoever, it is my job to serve and love them well. In doing that, I think I learned to serve and love myself better.

GREEN: Why did you choose to study social work?

PUTMAN: I think it goes back to why I love being an orientation leader. I love to see people thrive. The

thing is, I can't make them thrive. I can only give them the tools to do so. Social work is all about empowerment. I love that. I love making people believe the best of themselves and

helping them see what in them is good and using that good to bring out the best.

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