

# 31<sup>st</sup> & Pearl

## Separate Worlds

While Hattiesburg's William Carey University is [set to launch](#) a new medical school (new med school facility is pictured below), its University of Southern Mississippi appears to be gearing up for life without economics. How could two universities be headed more rapidly in opposite directions than these two cross-town rivals? If it's possible, it's sure difficult to imagine.



USM has been rated as a Tier 4 institution by *U.S. News & World Report* – the lowest rating that periodical offers for so-called national colleges and universities – since August of 2010, and there has been nary a mention of this fact by the local media. The new, 2011, ratings are due in about six weeks. All bets are on remaining at that lowest designation, at least for another year. If so, will anyone speak out? Not hardly. The USM faculty senate is a mere shell of what it was at the beginning of the Glamser-Stringer firing near the midpoint of the controversial Shelby Thames administration (2002-07) of USM. Back then, it fought the good fight. No so much these days.

Meanwhile, down U.S. Hwy 49, WCU is buzzing. President Tommy King is building a medical school, to which students are coming from all over the nation. It won't be long before there are doctors around the country whose WCU degrees are hanging on exam room walls. As their patients take note of the WCU credential, the institution's reputation will climb higher and higher. At some point, WCU will be looking down on USM from above.

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*31st & Pearl is a series housed at [usmnews.net](http://usmnews.net) that features commentary on aspects of life in the CoB from a variety of columnists.*