

A Walk Through the History of Southern Miss

Part 5

usmnews.net continues a new series revisiting nationally embarrassing events in the history of Southern Miss. This morning we continue with [Sham \(Presidential\) Search at Southern Miss](#). The IHL seems surprised that searches conducted in secret ending with presentation of their “preferred” candidate repeatedly ends in disaster.

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[Sham Search at Southern Miss.?](#)

By THOMAS BARTLETT and JULIANNE BASINGER

A REAL SEARCH? Mississippi is overflowing with presidential finalists this month.

Members of the state's higher-education board are seeking new leaders for three public universities, and trustee committees have picked finalists for two of them. But the search at the University of Southern Mississippi is controversial. Faculty members protest that an insider has clinched the job and that the search isn't serious. Shelby F. Thames, a professor of polymer science at the university, has been endorsed for the job by an influential local businessman and by athletics boosters. Mr. Thames declines to comment.

The local chapter of the American Association of University Professors and the Faculty Senate have written to the board to complain that the search is an empty formality. They also protest that the interview schedule does not give professors time to compare the candidates.

Virginia Shanteau Newton, the trustee overseeing the search, denies that a decision has already been made. The other finalists are Terry L. Hickey, provost of the University of Akron, and Ann Weaver Hart, provost of Claremont Graduate University. Ms. Hart is also a finalist in the presidential search at the University of New Hampshire.