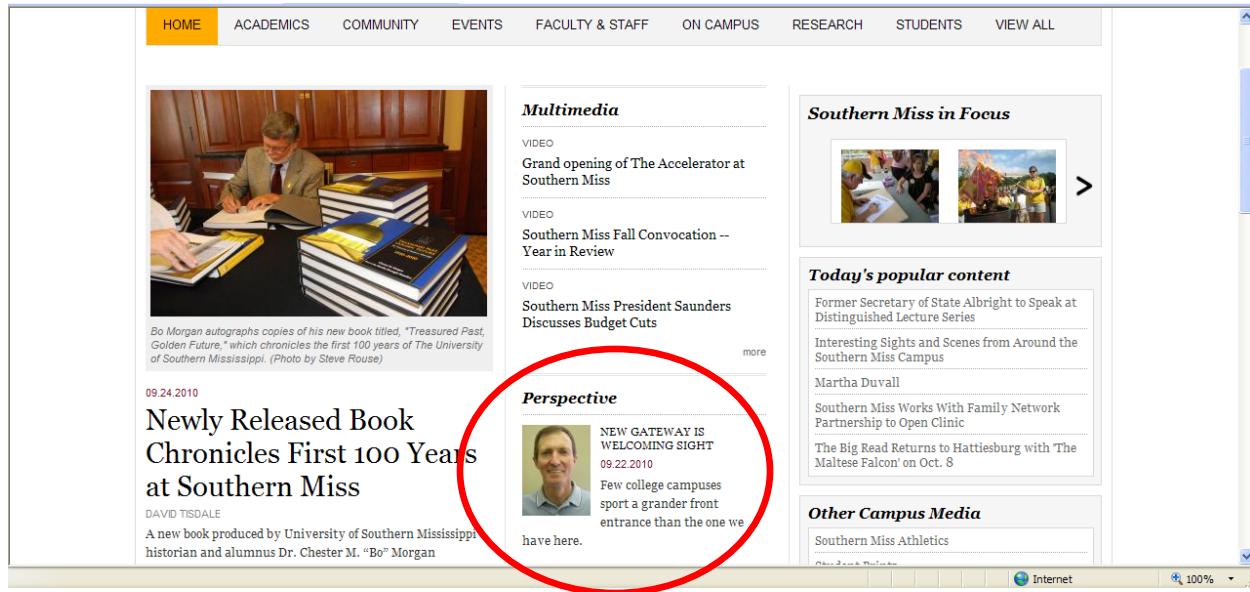


Aren't You Happy that Van is Happy?

A Guest Editorial

Below you will find a recent screenshot from the Southern Miss public relations [webpage](#).



The **circled portion** of the screenshot above highlights Van Arnold's recent "Perspective" on the Southern Miss Centennial Gateway entrance to the campus. Arnold is one of the public relations writers for President Martha Saunders. The brief intro to Arnold's 9-22-2010 essay about the gateway says:

"Few college campuses sport a grander front entrance than the one we have here."

When you click the [link](#) to Arnold's essay, you are greeted with the following screen.



In his essay on the screen above, Arnold describes his daily journey to work in the Southern Miss public relations office. He travels east on Hardy Street to the main entrance to Southern Miss. There he is greeted by the new gateway, one he describes as a “magnificent structure” exuding “scintillating newness,” even though “it has been several months since the unveiling.” Arnold goes on to describe the gateway as “an ideal spot for members of the Southern Miss family . . . to pose for still photographs or video.” As Arnold so passionately writes,

“The architectural design is contemporary, yet not overbearing or ostentatious. I think it works as the perfect complement to the renowned rose garden that sits nearby.”

This is exactly how many Southern Miss staff people see the university – as stately bricks and mortar, and beautiful grounds. For them, it’s one of the major benefits of working for the university. Faculty, though, will likely forever see the new gateway as a symbol of the 29 tenured or tenure-track faculty who have been relieved of their teaching and research duties by President Saunders and the rest of her administration. For them, there is very little that scintillating or magnificent about the “structure.”

Like some, Arnold believes that Southern Miss “has matured into a vibrant, respected beacon of education” primarily because of brick gateways and New Orleans Bowls. It is all a whitewash of the fact that Southern Miss is a bottom-tier institution that is made, over and over, a national laughing stock by terrible decisions coming from its administration. USM may or may not have one of the “spiffiest” entrances of any college campus in the country. What it certainly doesn’t have is Latin or Greek or Religion or Economics, facts that call into question whether Southern Miss is actually a collegiate institution in the first place. I’m afraid there is a beacon shining on Southern Miss, and what is being illuminated isn’t worthy of our admiration.