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DEADSPIN.com Paints Ugly Picture of Past Year at USM

HATTIESBURG – A 29-Nov-2012 [story by](#) Barry Petchesky for DEADSPIN.com paints what sources are calling an ugly picture of the past year at USM. Sources also add that this story is “a must read” for members of the USM community, particularly faculty and staff on both USM campuses in Hattiesburg and Long Beach. The story chronicles USM’s “debt-ridden athletics department” and how USM athletics director Jeff Hammond recently “sold” USM’s upcoming home football game against Nebraska back to those same Cornhuskers. As it now stands, USM’s AD will be paid \$2.125 million by Nebraska for the venue change, just enough to cover the \$2.1 million buyout of recently-fired USM coach Ellis Johnson.



Petchesky’s story covers the “forced retirement” of Richard Giannini as USM’s athletics director, as well as the process that resulted in hiring Hammond to replace Giannini. Also discussed in the story is Doug Rouse, the IHL board member who “had it out for Hammond,” and who attempted to inject undue influence in the process to replace Giannini. Diane Stark’s harassment complaint against Hammond, the replacement of former head football coach Larry Fedora with Johnson, the unexpected resignation of former USM president Martha Saunders, and the idea that Saunders was forced into resigning by the IHL Board are all staples of Petchesky’s exposé.



As members of the USM community digest Petchesky’s story – one that received a response from Giannini – it is worth noting that the folks at www.fireellisjohnson.com are very relieved (see insert above) with Hammond’s decision to terminate Johnson just days ago.