

## Hammond Gets the Call

HATTIESBURG – USM named interim athletics director Jeff Hammond as its new permanent athletics director at a press conference on 6-June-2012 (see photo below from *The Hattiesburg American*). [According to](#) *THA*'s Patrick Magee, Hammond received “a warm reception,” one included a standing ovation, from members of the USM community who were gathered in the Trent Lott Center when his name was called by Aubrey Lucas, USM's newly-hired [executive transitional officer](#). Hammond is expected to earn a salary in the neighborhood of \$300,000 per year, a sum similar to that earned by his predecessor, Richard Giannini.



Lucas, who is [set to become](#) interim president of USM on 1-July-2012, “admitted that Hammond had made some mistakes during his two years of working in the USM athletic department,” yet he (Lucas) also added that he “believes [Hammond] has learned from those mistakes.” Sources tell USMNEWS.net that it is likely that one of those referenced mistakes is Hammond's [reaction](#) to [his detractors](#) in the USM community regarding the search for a permanent AD and the athletics department's financial woes. Of course, Magee's report specifically refers to the harassment complaints filed against Hammond by [Diane Stark](#) and [Sonya Varnell](#), two [high-ranking females](#) in the USMAD. Either way, Lucas' tone seems, to sources at least, to be one of reluctance when it comes to the selection of Hammond as USM's new AD. Meanwhile, Stark's attorney Kim Chaze told Magee that nothing has changed regarding Stark's complaint with the Mississippi Equal Opportunity Commission, and that a court remedy would be sought by Stark if the MEEOC complaint does not produce a favorable outcome.