

## UGA's Bennett Leader for USM Presidency

HATTIESBURG – Rodney Bennett, the vice president for student affairs at the University of Georgia, has been named by the Mississippi IHL as the preferred candidate to replace Martha Saunders as president of the University of Southern Mississippi. The announcement was made at 2:00 pm on 1-Feb-2013 in Jackson, during a press conference led by IHL Board president Ed Blakeslee.



*Rodney Bennett*

If he replaces Saunders, USM's first female president, Bennett would become the institution's first African-American president. According to Blakeslee, Bennett earned undergraduate and master's degrees from Middle Tennessee State University, and a doctorate degree in education from Tennessee State University.



Sources tell USMNEWS.net that the press conference, conducted mainly by Blakeslee (above, left) and IHL Commissioner Hank Bounds (above, right), was somewhat bizarre. First, Bennett was not in attendance. Second, only two questions were asked by media in attendance, and these questions came from a single reporter. Stay tuned to USMNEWS.net as this story develops further.