

## USM Remains in Bottom Tier of *U.S. News* Ranking

HATTIESBURG – With the release of the 2012 edition of *Best Colleges* from *U.S. News & World Report*, USMNEWS.net has learned that USM remains in the bottom tier of national colleges and universities in the United States. The top tier includes America's 202 best (national) colleges and universities. Among those are Ole Miss (143<sup>rd</sup>) and Mississippi State (157<sup>th</sup>), Mississippi's top two national universities. These schools have maintained similar rankings for a number of years. USM's position in the bottom tier is also becoming commonplace. USM first fell to the bottom tier under former president Shelby Thames, but that was temporarily rectified in the first year under current president Martha Saunders. However, just after USM rose above the bottom tier under Saunders, it returned there and has remained throughout the subsequent portion of Saunders' 2008-present tenure as USM's ninth president.



The 2012 edition of *Best Colleges* reports a 4-year graduation rate of 22% for USM (not ranked), and a freshman retention rate of 74.2%. No information is provided as to the size of USM's endowment. USM's enrollment is listed as 15,778. Ole Miss (143<sup>rd</sup>) is reported to have a 4-year graduation rate of 34%, a freshman retention rate of 79.7%, and a total enrollment of 17,085. As with USM, no information is given about Ole Miss' endowment. Mississippi State (157<sup>th</sup>) is reported to have a 4-year graduation rate of 28%, a freshman retention rate of 83.0%, and a total enrollment of 19,644. MSU's endowment is listed as \$291,434,083. Finally, joining USM near the bottom of the national university rankings is Jackson State, though little in the way of institutional details is available for JSU.