

Faculty Leaders Express Surprise Over Lyman Resignation

HATTIESBURG – Late on 16-Nov-2011, USM public relations [officials announced](#) that USM provost Robert Lyman has resigned his administrative position and moved to the faculty ranks. Citing “personal reasons” for Lyman’s resignation, USM president Martha Saunders noted that Lyman helped move the academic side of the USM house through some rough times in recent years. Saunders also announced that new USM vice president for research, Denis Wiesenburg, would fill Lyman’s provost post on an interim basis, effective immediately, at least through the end of 2011-12. USM’s *The Student Printz* also [added to the story](#) on 17-Nov-2011, when Mary Margaret Halford and Jonathan Andrews reported that Wiesenburg was approached by Saunders after Lyman resigned, and that Wiesenburg told Saunders that he “. . . would do whatever was needed of [him] for the university.”



Lyman



Saunders



Wiesenburg

Still, USM faculty leaders do not seem to be buying Saunders’ official version of events. USM [faculty senate president](#) Timothy Rehner told Halford and Andrews, “I was absolutely surprised . . . I don’t believe he [Lyman] expected to do this when he came to work this morning.” Rehner added that the transition to a permanent successor will be tough, and that Wiesenburg will have his hands full juggling both major positions for USM.

Former faculty senate president [David Beckett](#) told *The Hattiesburg American’s* higher education reporter Ed Kemp that “. . . [he] didn’t see [Lyman’s resignation] coming,” and that “. . . [he] was surprised that if [Lyman] were no longer provost, [Lyman] wouldn’t just leave the university.” Lyman added to the mystery of the situation by informing Kemp that he (Lyman) felt “pretty bad” about resigning as provost, and that his bad feelings were in no way health related. Lyman, 64, also informed Kemp that he would likely remain with USM as a faculty member in psychology through 2013, though he did not say what he would do at that point. Sources tell USMNEWS.net that Lyman, a veteran of higher education, would likely head into retirement, perhaps in Tuscaloosa where he maintains a home. Lyman was hired as provost at USM in February of 2008, when he signed on at a salary of \$235,000 per year.

Meanwhile, 20th-ranked Golden Eagles travelled to historic Legion Field in Birmingham on 17-November-2011 to take on UAB, winners of only 2 games since the beginning of the 2011 season.

Shocking the college football world, UAB defeated USM by a score of 34-31, extending their winning streak over USM to three years.



UAB's Marquis Coleman intercepts a pass intended for USM's Quintin Pierce.

The loss to UAB will almost certainly expel USM from the top 25, given UAB's 3-8 record. The loss is being felt in a very negative way over at BigGoldNation.com, where USM fans are [using apocalyptic language](#) to describe what transpired in Birmingham. A sampling of the thread titles there is presented below:

- I am ashamed . . .
- Three straight losses to uab
- Most Humiliating Loss in SM history
- What's really Sickening
- Wow . . . newest loss? Newest level of pain . . .
- THE WORST loss in the history of the program. Bar none.
- wow that one hurt
- what a charade! we had everyone fooled!
- Owned!
- Typical . . . Southern Miss . . . football . . . it never fails year in . . .
- 98 UAB fans in the stands. 3,000 USM fans. must have been intimidating.
- nice job fedora!

Sources tell USMNEWS.net that one poster – the author of “what a charade! we had everyone fooled!” – is perhaps on the mark, given USM's 2011 football schedule:

Louisiana Tech	6-4	Won
Marshall	5-6	Lost
Southeastern Louisiana (FCS)	3-8	Won
Virginia	7-3	Won
Rice	3-7	Won
Navy	4-6	Won
SMU	6-4	Won
UTEP	5-5	Won
East Carolina	4-6	Won
Central Florida	4-6	Won
UAB	3-8	Lost
Memphis	2-9	

As the insert above shows, the combined record of USM's 12 opponents in 2011 is currently only 52-72. USM's 9 victims carry a combined record of only 42-49, while its two conquerors are a

combined 6-14 outside of their victories over USM. The Eagles' final opponent is a 2-9 Memphis squad that just might be the worst team at the FBS level of college football. Lastly, Larry Eustachy's perennially underachieving USM basketball program [also saw action](#) on 17-November-2011, losing 59-52 to Denver to fall to 1-1 on the young 2011-12 season.

All of these events come on the heels of another race scandal that has been dogging USM since the beginning of the week (14-November-2011), when it was discovered that six members of USM's Phi Mu sorority dressed in blackface for a 1980s-themed costume party. Reports are that they were attempting to portray the Huxtable family from the retired television comedy, *The Cosby Show*. Regular readers of USMNEWS.net are aware that this situation has been a hot topic here since the story broke earlier this week. Of course, this confluence of troubles at USM has the Saunders administration reeling again, at least for the moment.