

Giannini Out as USM AD

HATTIESBURG – According to [afternoon reports](#) (on 8-Dec-2011) from *The Hattiesburg American*, embattled USM athletic director Richard Giannini was set to step down from that high-level position on 9-Dec-2011. By the evening of 8-Dec-2011, that story had changed to [one indicating that](#) Giannini would retire in Jan-2012, after assisting USM with the transition from former head football coach Larry Fedora to Fedora’s successor. Given the details of the later *THA* report, Giannini appears to have used the late afternoon of 8-Dec-2011 to dress up his explanation of events by later telling the public that four years ago he (Giannini) promised Fedora that he (Giannini) would hang on another four years so that he (Giannini) could support Fedora in winning the C-USA football championship. As Giannini indicated to the *THA*, at that point he would retire. In conjuring up this story, sources point out that Giannini presents himself as a sort of Nostradamus who predicted back in 2007 that his retirement and USM’s next C-USA football championship would coincide in 2011. An additional *THA* [report on the evening of](#) 8-Dec-2011 indicates that Jeff Hammond, currently a senior associate athletic director at USM, will take over Giannini’s post on an *interim* basis in Jan-2012.



Richard Giannini

Giannini is the fifth high-level USM administrator to leave his administrative post at USM in the last month. USM provost Robert Lyman resigned his position in recent weeks, only to be told later that he was being placed on administrative leave by the Martha Saunders administration. Joining Lyman on administrative leave were USM chief information officer Homer Coffman and USM procurements director Mike Herndon. These three officials were all caught up in USM’s *Tabletgate* scandal. These decisions were followed by one from Fedora to accept the head coaching position at the University of North Carolina. Of course, it is in the wake of that decision that Giannini’s “retirement” occurs. Sources also tell USMNEWS.net that Saunders is not out of the woods, having presided over numerous scandals since taking over the USM presidency in 2007. This latest series of issues appears to be as bad as any that have arisen before

during Saunders' presidency. Finally, the fallout surrounding Fedora's decision to depart USM continues to develop. An early evening (on 8-Dec-2011) *THA* [report indicates that](#) Barry Farrar, the USM director of high school relations and player development, is joining in-state rival Ole Miss in that same capacity.