

## Breaking News

### Tourism Management to Assist Marketing; Hallab Leaving CoB

HATTIESBURG – Staffers at USMNEWS.NET have received word that, with the shortfall in marketing faculty for the 2007-08 academic year, faculty in the CoB's Tourism Management Department will be allowing marketing students to substitute TM courses for courses that would otherwise have been offered through Management & Marketing. Over the past several months a number of marketing faculty have announced their resignations from the CoB, including Barry Babin (Professor & Chair), Laurie Babin (Professor) and Tara Lopez (Assistant Professor). These three are going to Louisiana Tech, Louisiana – Monroe, and Southeastern Louisiana, respectively. Their departures, along with Alvin Williams' move into the Interim Dean position and Tony Henthorne's move to chair both MGTMKT and TM, mean that the H-BURG marketing group consists of only Dolly Loyd, Talai Osmonbekov, Bill Smith, and Michael Wittmann. No source we spoke with about this situation can recall the marketing group being as depleted as it is now.

This nugget of news merges with our second item. Reports coming out of JGH indicate that associate professor of tourism management Zaher Hallab will be departing the CoB before the 2007-08 academic year. Hallab (shown below) has been the subject of recent reports here at USMNEWS.NET, one of which listed his refereed publications. As a forthcoming news report will



Zaher Hallab

show, Hallab's departure increases the number of refereed publications that will be leaving the CoB (since Feb-07) to around 110, an amazing number for such a brief period. How the TM Department, which had planned to assist marketing before Hallab's surprise announcement, will be able to make the assistance plan work without Hallab remains to be seen. In Hallab's absence, the TM faculty consists of just Sherylynn Becker, Evelyn Green, and Catherine Price – a group that recently consisted of Becker, Price and five (5) other faculty – for a total of seven (7) faculty.

As a possible indication of the CoB administration's thinking about TM's diminished capacity to assist marketing, one source tells USMNEWS.NET that the CoB's former Alternative Learning Coordinator (ALC), Katie Pounders, may be joining MGTMKT as an instructor for the 2007-08 academic year (and possibly beyond). Sources say Pounders, a recent USM MBA grad, just completed a year of PhD work at LSU. As previous reports here have indicated, Pounders is the girlfriend of Henthorne, the Chair of both MGTMKT and TM.<sup>1</sup> Thus, her employment as a

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<sup>1</sup> Sources indicate that the two became a couple during a Caribbean Studies trip in 2004. See the USM Press Release insert for more information about that trip.

marketing instructor would continue the “‘significant other’ supervising ‘significant other’” situation that some would say has plagued the CoB for a number of years, dating back to the Tyrone Black administration. As marketing chair, Barry Babin was in a supervisory role over his wife, Laurie. If the hiring goes forward, Henthorne would find himself in a similar position with Pounders, though without the marriage certificate, though sources tell USMNEWS.NET that the two were engaged before the 2006-07 academic year began.

Reporters are still piecing together the details of the news items above, so look for additional reports in the near future.

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#### **BUSINESS STUDENTS RESEARCH JAMAICAN TOURISM INDUSTRY DURING CARIBBEAN STUDIES PROGRAM**

**HATTIESBURG** -- Research conducted by business students participating in The University of Southern Mississippi's Caribbean Studies program last month could help the Jamaican government shape its tourism policies.

Sixteen undergraduate and graduate students from the College of Business and Economic Development spent more than two weeks in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, interacting with locals and studying the attitudes of tourists and business people.

In one project, students interviewed local restaurant managers, artisans and market owners to gauge their opinion on the impact of "all-inclusive" tourist resorts on the local economy. In the other, students surveyed the level of commercial harassment experienced by cruise ship passengers during shopping expeditions in Ocho Rios. When completed, the findings of these studies will be presented to the Board of Tourism in Kingston.

"Jamaicans have a reputation for harassing tourists on the streets, trying to get them to buy things, and to a large extent, that's justified," said marketing professor Dr. Tony Henthorne, who just completed his 62nd trip to Jamaica. "We wanted to see if that was a global perception, and to see if there was a correlation between the level of harassment felt by tourists and the money they spent shopping there."

MBA candidate Katie Pounders said many of the cruise ship passengers she interviewed felt so harassed while on shore leave that they were eager to get back to their docked ships. "People who have gone on cruises before are used to it, but a lot of people who are (employed) in the tourism industry for the summer are not used to it," Pounders said.

A side trip to Kingston, the country's capital and financial hub, allowed students to visit the national stock exchange and the Bank of Jamaica, similar to the United States' Federal Reserve. Business students also met with the director of human resources for Sandals Resorts, which operates 11 ultra-inclusive luxury resorts in the Caribbean, including six in Jamaica. Sandals, a Jamaican-owned company, mostly hires locals for jobs that pay well above the wages earned in typical Jamaican towns, where the per capita income is about \$3,000 U.S. dollars.

Henthorne said, "The locals who work at these all-inclusive resorts are highly trained. Jamaicans have done a very good job promoting the industry. In fact, there are billboards around the country saying, 'Be nice to our guests. Remember who's paying your bills.'"

The Caribbean Studies program offers a unique opportunity for business students, Henthorne said. "Jamaica is like any developing world country, but because they speak English, it makes it easier to interact," he said. "Plus the beaches make it easy to recruit students."

Of course, the trip wasn't all research and studying, Pounders said. During their free time, students lounged next to crystal clear oceans, climbed waterfalls, shopped and dined. There was, Henthorne added, an occasional adventure or two.

Returning to Ocho Rios from their trip to Kingston, the business students learned the road connecting the two cities was closed. So on the return journey, what had originally been a smooth two-hour trip became a five-hour scenic tour through the back roads and hillsides of Jamaica. "We got to go over and through places most tourists never see," Henthorne said.

Program-wide, 74 people participated in the Caribbean Studies program, which began in 1985. Students in social work, psychology, criminal justice and community health also made the trip to Jamaica from May 17-June 2.