

Breaking News

Recent MBA Grad to Join CoB Faculty Ranks

HATTIESBURG – Staffers at USMNEWS.NET have learned that Interim CoB Dean Alvin Williams has hired a recent USM MBA grad to fill the marketing faculty slot vacated by Tara Lopez (PhD, Louisiana Tech), an assistant professor of marketing who recently accepted an offer from Southeastern Louisiana University. That hire is reported to be Amber Rivers, a 2006 graduate of USM's dual MBA/MSM program. As described in the press release below, Rivers has been serving as an Intern for NASCAR.

New Dual Degree Program Targets Careers in Sports Industry

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Contact Jana Bryant 601.266.4491

Hattiesburg—Graduate student Amber Rivers plans to be one of the first students to earn a new master's degree being offered at the University of Southern Mississippi and hopes that it will be her ticket to a career in the sports business industry.

"This is the door opening up for my dream," says Rivers, who would like to work in sport marketing with an organization like NASCAR. "The internship is going to get my foot in the door, and once I'm there, the rest is up to me."

An internship component is a hallmark of the new Master of Business Administration/Master in Sport Management dual degree program, a 60-hour, high-intensity program that combines courses from both the existing MBA and sport management degree programs from the College of Business and the School of Human Performance and Recreation, respectively.

Dr. Lou Marciani, associate professor and director of the School of Human Performance and Recreation, said the Southern Miss program will be one of only three such university dual degree programs in the country. A handful of others offer MBA degrees with an emphasis in the sport management area.

"The sports business arena is more competitive and demanding than ever. Every team, league, athletic department, conference and organization needs new and better talent, both on the playing field and in the executive suite," said Marciani. "Graduates of this program will be extremely marketable with a sophisticated knowledge of business fundamentals and a comprehensive understanding of the multibillion dollar sport business world. They'll have a skill set necessary for any executive suite."

The industry demands have changed and created a need for more individuals with a solid business background, says Marciani. The *Sports Business Journal* estimated the size of the industry at \$213 billion in 2002. Marciani says that figure now is above the \$400 billion mark.

Career opportunities exist throughout the country in a variety of organizations, including intercollegiate sports, event and facilities management, sport marketing and public relations, and corporate sports, said Dr. Dennis Phillips, the program's coordinator and associate professor in the School of Human Performance and Recreation.

"Our goal for the MBA program has always been to produce graduates with more than just technical knowledge, but also with other skills that will separate them from the rest of the pack. This is a great partnership that will be a huge benefit to students seeking careers in the sports industry," said Dr. Francis Daniel, director of Graduate Academic Programs in the College of Business.

Sources tell USMNEWS.NET that Rivers taught courses in the marketing department while enrolled at USM, and she will join MgtMkt on a full-time visiting basis at the beginning of 2007-08.

Rivers' hire makes for an interesting AACSB situation, given that she replaces a terminally qualified faculty (Lopez) without being terminally qualified herself. She is also replacing someone in Lopez who was Academically Qualified by research, according to the CoB's AACSB definitions. Sources also point out that the addition of a recent MBA grad highlights the shortcomings of the CoB's mission, "Developing Careers," given that (1) Rivers does not hold the usual terminal degree for teaching marketing students, and (2) unless there are plans to bring her on board on a full-time basis, perhaps after "going off" and getting a PhD, Rivers' own career is being further delayed in order to bail the CoB out of a disastrous human resources situation.