

Editorial

A Disgrace for a University

In June, 2013, usmnews.net [received a letter stating](#), “Looks like men's basketball is teetering on the edge of NCAA postseason requirements. Unless Tyndall can get the graduation rate up, there is no postseason for men's basketball moving forward.”

It was an open secret. Southern Miss' basketball team was not doing well academically. Many said the coaches were recruiting from the bottom of the barrel. JUCOs which were little more than mills to create the appearance of having the minimum standards necessary to join the team. To quote [Jeff Goodman of ESPN](#), there was a question “... regarding the legitimacy of their academic work to qualify to play...”. What we didn't know was that even after hanging out at a Florida JUCO, some players could not meet the very minimum academic standards set out by the NCAA. Yet, these, and other, academically ill-equipped students were brought to Southern Miss and given object lessons in cheating. Southern Miss also found itself [being investigated](#) for “... how tuition, living expenses and other fees were paid for 'Prop 48' recruits who signed with the Golden Eagles but were academically ineligible out of high school or junior college.” In recognition of the violations, and an apparent effort to minimize penalties, Southern Miss self-imposed a [meaningless ban](#) from post season play. (It worked for [Tyndall at Morehead State](#), so maybe it will work for Southern Miss.)

Getting punished so quickly by the NCAA signals not just cheating, but cheating that cuts to the heart of any claim Southern Miss might have to academic integrity. Southern Miss has tacitly acknowledged academic cheating to field a team AT A UNIVERSITY. It's a double-whammy: corrupting academics at a university to field a less than mediocre basketball team AND doing it so ineptly the university easily gets caught.

We can't help but ask, did no one on the faculty notice that Suarez's, a junior, and Eason's, a senior, academic preparation was so poor that the NCAA declared both ineligible because of questions about “the legitimacy of their academic work?” It seems fair to say that these young men were brought to the University with the sole purpose of playing basketball. They were never intend to be students in any meaningful sense of the word. Let's just ask the question, even though we probably won't like the answer. How many faculty and administrators knew? The answer -- enough to corrupt the University.