

# CoB News, 27 August 2008

"A second factor that contributes to the deans' loss of identification with faculty is the role of deans as external fundraisers. To be effective in raising outside monies, deans must 'relate to the business community.' This means relating to CEOs. Because deans aspire to run in CEO circles, they begin to act like CEOs rather than faculty."

Arthur G. Bedeian, 2002

## USM Back to Tier III

The USM family is buzzing about the fact that the university has once again risen to Tier III in the 2009 iteration of *U.S. News & World Report's America's Best Colleges*. In the 2009 edition, USM is ranked 180th in the U.S., placing it near the bottom of Tier III, a place it occupied before the administration of former USM president, Shelby Thames. Former USM provost, Jay Grimes, and former CoB dean, Harold Doty, also presided over Tier IV USM (*USNWR's* bottom designation) in the early part of the 21st Century. This year, Mississippi's other major institutions come in both above and below USM. Mississippi State University and Ole Miss are tied for 155th, while Jackson State University comes in at 250th. There are about 65 schools in each tier, so both MSU and UM are in the top half of Tier III, while USM is well into the bottom half. JSU sits near the bottom of all national universities in the U.S.

Interestingly, Louisiana Tech University is ranked 197th, placing it near the top of Tier IV. This placement means that former CoB MGT & MKT chair, Barry Babin, actually *moved down* when he accepted a position with LTU after the 2006-07 academic year. Tony Henthorne, the former chair of tourism management at USM, also *moved down* after July of 2008, when he took a position with 219th ranked University of Nevada at Las Vegas. Two young rising stars, Brian Gregory and Talai Osmonbekov, also *moved down* by leaving the CoB and going to 217th ranked Northern Arizona University. These moves, according to sources, show what lengths many CoB faculty will go to in order to exit USM safely.

## First the Boudoir, Now the Luxury Suite

After writing that some of the new luxury suites in USM's M.M. Roberts Stadium were not yet complete, *The Hattiesburg American's* reporter, Alan Hinton, [pointed out](#) that USM president, Martha Saunders, didn't seem worried (with just one week before the season's opening date). As Hinton indicated in his 24-August-08 article, "Suites officially unveiled," Saunders didn't seem worried about the 34 suites that are leased for \$26,000-\$31,000, the 500-seat club level, or [her suite](#). Instead, she stated to Hinton, "Look at this picture. It was a gift from students at my inauguration. It's perfect here [in my luxury suite]. And we have a photo on the wall at the other end of the suite. . . ."



"Saturdays with Saunders"

Saunders' preoccupation with the amenities of her luxury suite at "The Rock" harken back to prior reports about the [renovations to the master bedroom wing](#) of the USM president's mansion. As reported here previously, the boudoir renovations will cost Mississippi taxpayers [\\$325,000](#), if not more. If this new report is any indication, the perks of the USM CEO position continue to mount.

## Nail Classing Up "EFIB Fridays"

After being on the job only a few weeks, new CoB dean, Lance Nail, has already classed up Sami Dakhli's weekly EFIB seminar series. Through a co-authorship connection, at the elite-level *Journal of Financial Economics* no less, Nail has secured a fall 2008 date for Bill Megginson, the *Rainbolt Professor of Finance* at the University of Oklahoma. Some of the different journals in Megginson's research portfolio are shown below.



Nail's assistance in the EFIB's weekly seminar series might prove to be the break the series needed to climb out of the abyss. As the *Special Report*, [EFIB Groundhog Days](#), indicated, the seminar series seemed to specialize in the spotlighting of decade-old working papers and the promotion of job market presentations of nearby economics graduate students. Maybe Megginson's participation will breathe some life into the series.

## "Working Every Day to Unman the Frontlines"

The quote above is the tagline in a United States Navy recruitment ad/PSA. For sure, military institutions should work to "unman" combat units when and where possible. Who would have thought, however, that many higher educational institutions would be putting so much effort into "unmanning" their classrooms and laboratories? If Laraye Brown's [25-August-08 article](#) in *The Hattiesburg American* entitled "Online classes popular" is any indication, Mississippi is at the forefront of the unmanned classroom movement. According to Brown, between the fall of 2005 and the fall of 2007, the number of online classes available in Mississippi's university system increased 66%. And, according to Sheri Rawls, Learning Enhancement Center Director at USM, much of the reason for this growth is the fact that traditional-aged college students (18 to 24) are starting to make their presence felt in online education markets.

Table 1 below provides the summary information regarding online courses in Mississippi's public universities that was included in Brown's article in *THA*. Also included in Table 1 is the percentage change in online course offerings for each of the eight public universities in the state.

**Table 1**  
**Online Class Offerings in Mississippi**

<b>Institution</b>	<b># Online Courses</b>		<b>%Change</b>
	<b>Fall 2005</b>	<b>Fall 2007</b>	
Alcorn State University	19	99	+421%
Delta State University	58	36	- 38%
Jackson State University	44	76	+ 73%
Mississippi State University	110	293	+166%
Mississippi University for Women	11	40	+264%
Mississippi Valley State University	7	20	+186%
University of Mississippi	191	192	+ 1%
University of Southern Mississippi	135	202	+ 50%

**Source:** Brown [25-Aug-2008].

As the data indicate, ASU is moving at breakneck speed to put together an online menu. Also moving rapidly are MUW, MVSU and MSU. Both JSU and USM are moving at a fairly quick pace to expand their online course offerings. Interestingly, Delta State University is pulling back on the production of online classes. Online offerings fell by 38% at DSU over the previous two years. It's also interesting to see that Ole Miss, the flagship school of Mississippi, is holding the line on online education. Sources tell USMNEWS.net that Ole Miss' former business dean was recently terminated for attempting to thwart the OM business professors' desire to hold off on the trend to unman OM business courses. According to Table 1, the OM faculty as a whole appear to favor the same course. Sources tell USMNEWS.net that it is not uncommon for OM to quietly ignore IHL wishes that are categorized by many as ill-advised. It appears as though resistance to online education expansion may be another part of that OM program.