

College and University Endowments USM Needs More Than A “Helper”

USM needs more than wishful thinking to improve its woefully funded Endowment. The IHL’s solution? Rodney Bennett. The [IHL carefully characterizes](#) the “preferred candidate’s” fund raising experience as: “**He [Bennett] has helped raise funds** to enhance student life on campus and improved communications with faculty, staff, students and parents on the Athens campus and three UGA extended campuses. (Emphasis added.)

In order to get an idea about what is needed, let’s take a look at USM’s Foundation in comparison with endowments at other colleges and universities (Note that we are providing comparisons so that readers may have a basis for their opinions. The IHL offers one and only one “preferred candidate” for your consideration—typical IHL secrecy and iron handed “leadership.”):

The Chronicle of Higher Education recently listed 833 endowments. Where does USM stand?

Of course USM is not in the top hundred or so endowments. They are the elite schools that have billions in their endowments. You know the names. I don’t need to mention them. At the bottom of the heap of the top hundred schools are places like Washington State University (\$737,409,000) and University of Louisville (\$726,244,000).

Louisville? You ask? USM must be close? Forget it. USM isn’t even on the same planet.

Well, USM must be in the top two or three hundred. Surely. You might get that impression because USM’s public relations machinery (expensive machinery, by the way) is always bragging about USM or one of its colleges being in the top hundred or so of some list of accomplishments. Forget that nonsense. Those lists, like those reported by *US News and World Report*, are merely a way to sell magazines and are frequently based on [fabricated information](#), if not totally inadequate information, from universities.

So, who’s in the top two hundred?

In the top two hundred you'll find schools like Hamilton College (\$635,235,000) and Saint Olaf College (\$333,460,000).

Yeah, I never heard of them either. Oh well, let's go to the top 300 endowments. Coming in at 227 is Scripps College (\$256,997,000) and at 297 is Mills College (\$165,450,000). Never heard of them, either.

USM must be in the top 400, aren't they?

You must be joking. We're not even close yet. Coming in at 345 is Hampdon-Sydney College (\$128,988,000). Hampdon-Sydney College must have a big football program. You think?

The suspense must be killing you. So, let's zip past Coe College and Linfield College and Hamline University and Guilford College and lo and behold coming in at 520—drum roll please: University of Southern Mississippi Foundation at \$61,447,000.

\$61,447,000! Keep in mind that the Foundation declined in value by \$2.5 million over the previous year. A decline! When the stock market is at a near historical record high! Regardless of all the USM PR blather about the success of recent fundraising. **A decline!** Let me say it again. When the stock market is at a near historical record high!

USM doesn't need a "helper" fundraiser. It needs—among other qualities such as being an academic published in the best journals—tried and true significant fundraising experience.

Note: [The table](#) from which the above information was drawn showed the market values of 833 endowments serving institutions in the United States and Canada for the fiscal years ending June 30, 2012, and June 30, 2011. One-year change reflects the net impact of donor gifts, investment gains or losses, and expenses paid out by the endowment. Endowments for Canadian institutions are expressed in U.S. Dollars. We combined figures for multiple endowments that support the same institution. When systems report separate endowments for the system as a whole and for individual institutions within the system, we have listed them separately.