

## Counting Students at USM

### How USM does it Versus How it Should be Done

Recent reports here at [www.usmnews.net](http://www.usmnews.net) have highlighted the various methods used to compute enrollment at the University of Southern Mississippi. This report sets up a hypothetical scenario that shows how the "duplicated headcount" method that is favored by USM public relations officials and USM President Martha Saunders compares with the "unduplicated headcount" method, which is favored by other organizations, such as the Mississippi IHL, *The Hattiesburg American*, and [www.usmnews.net](http://www.usmnews.net). As pointed out previously, the DHC method used by USM counts a student each time he or she enrolls in a class (or classes) at one of USM's main locations.

An imaginary Fall 2006 CoB student cohort consisting of 10 juniors is introduced in Table 1 below. Each student is given a hometown, a local (Hattiesburg) residence designation (yes or no), and a USM (CoB) course schedule. The course schedule is described in the "Comments" column in Table 1 below.

**Table 1**  
**Description of Hypothetical CoB Student Cohort, Fall 2006**

<b>Student</b>	<b>Hometown</b>	<b>Local Residence</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Ainsley	Sumrall	yes	full-time student at CoB-H
Canton	Hattiesburg	yes	full-time student at CoB-H
Fairley	Wiggins	no	full-time student at CoB-H; commutes from parents' home in Wiggins
Garth	Hattiesburg	yes	full-time student at CoB-H
Larson	Gulfport	no	full-time student at CoB-GC
Nelson	Mobile, AL	yes	full-time student at CoB-H
Porter	Jackson	yes	full-time student at CoB-H
Richeaux	Metarie, LA	yes	full-time student at CoB-H
Simpson	Laurel	no	full-time student at CoB-H; commutes from parents' home in Laurel
Terrebonne	Biloxi	yes	full-time student at CoB-H

The cohort above includes eight in-state students and two out-of-state students. All but one of the students (Larson of Gulfport) is enrolled full time at the Hattiesburg branch of USM's College of Business. Larson is enrolled full-time at the Gulf Coast branch of the CoB. Seven of the nine full-time CoB-H students maintain a local (Hattiesburg) residence.

According to the data in Table 1 above, using the DHC method, USM/President Saunders would compute the CoB's enrollment as 10. Likewise, Mississippi's

IHL, *The Hattiesburg American* and [www.usmnews.net](http://www.usmnews.net) would compute an enrollment of 10, though by using the UDHC method instead.

Table 2 below follows our imaginary CoB student cohort into Fall 2007. As shown below, three of the 10 students have transferred to other universities, all citing the CoB's current AACSB Maintenance of Accreditation issues. These three students -- Nelson, Porter, Richeaux -- represent some of the CoB students overheard by Interim Dean Alvin Williams discussing the CoB's current AACSB trials before various undergraduate class meetings. This follows Williams' comments to CoB faculty at the CoB's 31-Aug-07 convocation. Two of the three transferring students, Nelson and Richeaux, comprise the entire out-of-state portion of the imaginary cohort. Thus, the remaining students are all in-state students.

**Table 2**  
**Description of Hypothetical CoB Student Cohort, Fall 2007**

<b>Student</b>	<b>Hometown</b>	<b>Local Residence</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Ainsley	Sumrall	yes	full-time student at CoB-H
Canton	Hattiesburg	yes	full-time student at CoB-H
Fairley	Wiggins	no	takes 1/2 load at CoB-H and 1/2 load at CoB-GC; commutes from parents' home in Wiggins
Garth	Hattiesburg	yes	full-time student at CoB-H
Larson	Gulfport	no	takes 1/4 load at CoB-H and 3/4 load at CoB-GC; commutes from parents' home in Gulfport
Nelson	Mobile, AL	no	transferred to University of South Alabama after hearing about CoB's AACSB problems
Porter	Jackson	no	transferred to Ole Miss after hearing about CoB's AACSB problems
Richeaux	Metairie, LA	no	transferred to Southeastern Louisiana University after hearing about CoB's AACSB problems
Simpson	Laurel	no	full-time student at CoB-H; commutes from parents' home in Laurel
Terrebonne	Biloxi	no	takes 1/4 load at CoB-H and 3/4 load at CoB-GC; commutes from parents' home in Biloxi

Using the DHC method for computing CoB (USM) enrollment, USM/President Saunders would arrive at a Fall 2007 enrollment of 10. The loss of the three transferring students is offset by the decision of three others in the cohort -- Fairley, Larson, and Terrebonne -- to split their Fall 2007 schedules between CoB-H and CoB-GC. The NDHC method, on the other hand, does not offset the loss

of the three transfers with the enrollment splitting done by the students from Biloxi, Gulfport and Wiggins.

Table 3 below shows what happened to the CoB's enrollment from decisions made by the imaginary CoB student cohort from fall 2006 through fall 2007.

**Table 3**  
**2 Ways to Tell a Hypothetical Story**

<b>Enrollment Reporting Period</b>	<b>USM/Martha Saunders</b>	<b>IHL/Hattiesburg American</b>
Fall 2007	10	7
Fall 2006	10	10
Change from F06 to F07	0	-3
%-Change from F06 to F07	0%	-30%
Reporting Technique Used:	"duplicated headcount"	"unduplicated headcount"
Conclusion:	Things are Level/Solid	AACSB Probation Woes Felt

According to the DHC method favored by USM and President Saunders, the CoB's enrollment was "level" over the Fall '06–Fall '07 period. Based on this change of 0% (see Table 3), USM officials such as Saunders and Williams might conclude that "things are solid" in the CoB (at USM).

The UDHC method favored by the IHL and others tells a different story (see Table 3). According to the UDHC data, the CoB's enrollment has fallen by 30% from the fall of 2006. As the "Comments" in Table 2 point out, a portion of the CoB student cohort has transferred out to places like Ole Miss and South Alabama as a result of the CoB's current AACSB woes.

As this report shows, USM's choice to use the DHC method to measure enrollment works to mask declines in enrollment, whatever the cause. This report uses an imaginary cohort to show how the CoB's AACSB woes might be seen through various methods of computing enrollment at USM (in the CoB). According to Interim Dean Williams, CoB students and BAC supporters are concerned about the so-called AACSB 6th Year Review that is facing the CoB. How these concerns are playing out might not be seen given USM's penchant for relying on "duplicated headcount" numbers to measure enrollment.