

Dear usmnews.net

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I was looking through the February [20, 2014] [IHL Board Book](#) [pdf page 81] and I noticed something interesting. Southern Miss just hired Bryan, Nelson, PA as legal counsel. Did you know that John Mark Weathers [current University Counsel] used to be a partner with that firm? Another example of the good old boy network in action?

Name withheld

Dear Name withheld,

Thanks for the heads up. The Board Book says:

1. USM – APPROVAL TO HIRE BRYAN NELSON, P.A. AS OUTSIDE COUNSEL

The University of Southern Mississippi requests Board approval to hire the law firm of Bryan Nelson P.A., as outside counsel to perform services as necessary and render legal advice in the practice areas of higher education law; employment law including EEOC, ERISA and employee benefits litigation; interpretation and enforcement of construction contracts; drafting and review of complex contracts; interpretation of contractual language, negotiation, and possible litigation relating to insurance issues; litigation of contract disputes and other matters not covered by the Mississippi Tort Claims Act; and disability law. The request includes the use of any and all attorneys employed by the firm, at the discretion of the firm, whose expertise and experience is required to assist in the representation of the University pursuant to the agreement. The hourly rate to be charged will be \$165.00 per hour for attorneys and \$65.00 per hour for the time expended by paralegals. The approval will be for a period of time beginning on March 22, 2014, and expiring on March 21, 2015. The maximum amount budgeted for payment of legal fees under this agreement would be \$50,000.