

*Dear usmnews.net*

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Dr. [Bennett's claim](#) that "our (students') average ACT score has moved to just under 23" doesn't ring quite true. It isn't what I'm seeing in my classes. What do you think?

Name withheld

Dear Name withheld,

If Dr. Bennett's claim is true, it is certainly good news for USM. However, based on what I'm hearing from campus, the statement may be nothing more than PR, based on a carefully chosen subset. (And, we have seen a lot of PR and puffery over the past several years.) For example, does the average include all students, including graduate students and upper division students? If so, students with lower ACT scores, who might be expected to struggle academically, probably dropped out. Obviously, that should raise the average ACT score. However, given his carefully chosen phrasing, we won't know what it really means until the official numbers are released. Also, as nationally reported, [the average ACT score in Mississippi](#) is 18.9. This is a long way from 23 on the ACT measurement scale.