

FROM THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS FUTURE

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

School of Accountancy . . .

Dear First-Year Business Students,

Congratulations on choosing Southern Miss' College of Business for your educational pursuits. The faculty in each of our four departments and schools think with one mind, so you won't face any confusion from the diversity of thought that is often encountered by students majoring in one of USM's four other colleges. As you progress in your academic careers, some of you will meet with varying degrees of success, while others of you will fail. Should you become one of the students who faces academic suspension at some time in your career here, please don't hesitate to stop by and talk to me, regardless of your choice of major. The COB's Undergraduate Services Director is Gwen Pate, and she has the final say in overturning the college suspension committee's decision to deny your hardship appeal. Gwen is also an associate professor of accounting, so she works for me. I can talk to her for you and we can have that suspension committee's decision overturned. (Don't worry, Gwen is known around Greene Hall for caving.)

While the above is all well and good, that's not why I am writing you today. I am writing to ask that over the next few weeks you make accounting your major degree plan of choice. As you consider my request, *you should know* that all of the accounting faculty in the sOais are good teachers. As you progress through your business preparatory courses I think you will not only experience that, but you will also see that we all love teaching. I don't believe you'll get that sense from any of your instructors in business statistics or management. Most of them actually despise being in front of a class room. I would also like to say that, with the exception of accounting instructors Charlie Jordan and Marvin Albin, all of the sOais accounting faculty are full-time residents of Mississippi. I am told by some of my faculty that instructors in some of the COB's other areas live in other states. I would exempt Charlie from such criticism because he currently holds the ATT Outstanding Faculty Award. And Jim Crockett, one of my sOais director predecessors, tells me that Marvin is the best accounting faculty the college has ever hired.

As you consider your options, I also want *you to understand* that the accountants in the sOais are good researchers. We know what's relevant, we write about it, and we publish those writings -- plain and simple. I understand that you might be hearing that we lost our accreditation. That's not true, just a Greene Hall rumor. You may have also heard that the AACSB said that our intellectual activity had fallen dramatically over the past several years. While that one is true, I can proudly say that in a matter of just a few weeks we corrected that problem for good. If you would like to know more about that, please drop by my office and I will be happy to provide you with a two-page table that shows how productive sOais accountants are. No problem.

I get that some of the more discerning among you may want to know more about our accountants' research credentials. Unfortunately, I can't provide much in the way of that. Like you, I am new here. But I can tell you right off the bat that I know that the sOais accountants have published more than 100 accounting articles because one of our own, Reverend Rod Posey, has done that all by himself. For more details about that, please take a look at Rod's bio on the CoB website. I also get that some of the more discerning among you may have concerns about some of the things you've heard or have seen on the internet about the sOais. One of these so-called controversies is Marvin's multiple counting of an accounting article. That all supposedly happened before I got here, so I don't have a dog in that fight, and neither do any of you. Second, though others may have had some additional articles on SEDONA that did not belong, I can't speak for them. As for myself, I removed a double-counted article from my SEDONA during the summer of 2007, and I did so right before my 2007 merit raise went into effect that August. So, nothing I may have counted more than once was still being counted that way by the time my raise went into effect. As for the other hot button issue in the sOais, the so-called AACSB plagiarism thing, it's over and done. Charlie contacted Central State U of Missouri after all that hit the fan, they contacted the original author who by then was at Illinois Western, and he sent down permission to use the report without some citations. AACSB went along with everything and that's all behind us now, except for the malcontents who still bring it up from time to time, but they are leaving us.

So, as you can see there's no reason not to choose accounting. If you would like to hear more, or you want to discuss your academic suspension, please feel free to drop by and see me. I might take the opportunity to bend your ear about something I'm putting together as well.

Thank you for your time,
Steven R. Jackson, Director