

Guest Editorial

I have read this blog from time to time actually thinking the information presented was fair, accurate and relevant to what transpires at the University.

I have read this more often since the budget crisis than before but lately one subject has popped up that makes me realize the information published here is no more credible and as is one sided as the "job" done recently by the Hattiesburg American.

With regards to the athletic fee that has everyone in an uproar, I paid it as a student. I pay it now as the parent of a senior and with my youngest entering USM next fall will pay it for another 4 years. I have less problem with a fee my child makes use of than some of the other hidden fees that are included.

When your guest and yourself make comparisons to what USM and other schools such as Miss State does regarding fees. Do yourself a favor and do more research on the subject so you can compare apples to apples. Just yesterday, you suggested that USM should award faculty bonuses from its "espn" funds as state has recently started doing. You ignore two very important facts when you make this comparison. First off, as a member of the southeastern conference state shares revenue from the schools that actually have strong programs and go to bowl games and such. That is the source of their "espn" funds. They receive over \$12 million a year in conference revenues as compared to \$2.5 that USM receives from Conference USA. The question you really should ask is why has state JUST started doing this instead of having done it for the past 10 years or so?

Also, with regards to the athletic fees. State charges a similar fee that is \$30 less than what USM charges, but that does NOT include football tickets. State students must pay for tickets on top of the fees they are charged and transferred from E&G to athletics. Why do we only have outrage here in Hattiesburg?

The main area I would like to respond to was the [WALKING THE TALK](#) article written by Susan Greene-Lewis this week.

She shows her lack of athletic knowledge and lack of investigation when she mentions one sport. That is Lady Eagle basketball which is led by Joye Lee McNelis.

While mentioning her "dismal" 29-33 record over 2 years and 9-21 last year, simple math tells me she was 20-12 in 08-09 and in 07-08 she was 21-14. Please inform me how that is "dismal"?

You mention her attendance, The following links will show you that the Lady Eagles led CUSA in home attendance in 08-09 and in 09-10 were second in home attendance while they were first in total attendance. Someone is watching them; it has to be a combination of students and ticketholders.

<http://conferenceusa.cstv.com/sports/w-baskbl/stats/2009-2010/confldrs.html>
<http://conferenceusa.cstv.com/sports/w-baskbl/stats/2008-2009/confldrs.html>

Joye is putting fans in the seats, had her budget cut by 10% before last season and had to depend on over \$25,000 in privately raised funds thru her booster club to cover other athletic dept shortfalls.

She does all of this despite being the LOWEST paid head women's coach in CUSA. Yet you cry for more of her funds to be taken. Her dismal program has managed to amass a recruiting class for the current year ranked 41st by ESPN. Including 3 of the clarion ledgers "Dandy Dozen". No instate school has done that in over a decade.

Over this same amount of time her program has graduated 6 young ladies from Kendra Reed who is in graduate school at USA awaiting admission to medical school to Pauline Love. Pauline overcame more obstacles than anyone on our campus in order to earn her degree. She arrived in Hattiesburg with everything she owned in 2 plastic grocery sacks. No money for bedding for her dorm room or school supplies. From a family of over a dozen children she was the first to attend college and the first girl not to become pregnant by the age of 16. She received a degree this past May and if her pro career does not pan out, she will be able to teach and coach and have a better more productive life. Maybe, just maybe she can influence a few young people with her journey.

They call these young people Student athletes for a reason. Keep this in mind while you're clamoring for cutting funds from the evil athletic programs of The University of Southern Mississippi.

Once again, please tell me how this program is "DISMAL".

I have not missed a home football game since I enrolled in the fall of 1980. Lord willing the end of this season I will have 150 straight home games. I've been a member of the eagle club since its inception and of the old Big Gold even before I graduated. I pay the student fee and will proudly pay it for the next four years my youngest is a student. It is football not a liberal arts program that has had our university on national TV 3 out of the last 5 weeks. They support EACH other; they should not fight one another.

Ms Lewis, the next time you want to point fingers and make someone a bad guy, don't point it at Joye McNelis. She is WALKING THE TALK and your way out of your league.

Lindy Tolar

USM 1982
SMTTT