

Muddy Waters

The CoB's Past, Present, and Future All Come Together . . . in a Building

After USM provost Robert Lyman's brief presentation at the 1-April-2011 faculty senate meeting, USM professor of English, Stanley Hauer, asked Lyman the following question:

"We heard on the news this week that we are getting a new business building. That's great. But, when you consider that so many of our departments, noticeably art and music, live in what can only be called 'slums,' why did business get to the top of the list?"

**Stan Hauer
USM Faculty Senator
1-April-2011**

Hauer's question likely hit a nerve or two. It also represented the sentiments of many USM faculty outside of the College of Business. If USM faculty, such as Hauer (pictured below), knew all of the details of [the plans to build](#) a new CoB facility, the level of ire might even be taken up several levels. This report presents some of the story of the CoB's quest for a new building.



Our story begins with the details regarding the currently-planned structure. The USM public relations division [announced](#), on 29-Mar-2011, plans to raise \$10 million from the private sector in order to construct a new, \$33 million b-school facility. According to Van Arnold's presser, \$2 million has been *pledged* to date. Those pledging the money are Louis and Lou Ann Poynter (\$250,000), Tom and Jana McDonnell (\$1,000,000), Carlos and Judy Tolosa (\$250,000), Chuck Atwood (\$250,000), and The Caesars Foundation (\$250,000). The \$23 million in state funds, plus the \$10 million in private donations, will go toward the construction of a 90,000-square-foot building (see rendering below) located on U.S. Hwy 49, next to the Trent Lott Center.



The new building is scheduled to house the Center for Healthcare Sales and Marketing, the Center for Financial Services, student study/gathering spaces, a new student leadership suite, a distance-learning lecture hall, and tiered classrooms with digital media stations.

Interestingly, the CoB community has been down this road before. Former CBA dean William Gunther [announced](#), back in 2002, plans to build a new business school building at USM. Right from the start, Gunther (pictured below) had the support of CBA donors. Fifteen “friends” of the CBA put up \$10,000 each, and \$150,000 was paid for designs for a new building. Sources say that the original design placed the new building next to the Trent Lott Center, and that it would house *both* the CBA *and* the College of Education & Psychology. That proposal fell through. Gunther’s subsequent fundraising plan called for a 50/50 division of public/private funds for a new building plus professorships, not the 70/30 split that is planned now for a building only. Gunther’s facilities committee, which worked with the *CBA Building Founders Society*, was chaired by then-State Auditor Phil Bryant, who many believe will be Mississippi’s next Governor, and David Landrum.

By May of 2003, Gunther’s group had geared up to the point that a press conference was called, and held in the USM president’s office, to announce a \$50 million fundraising campaign for USM’s business school. According to sources, Gunther planned for the state to contribute \$25 million for a new building, while the private fundraising campaign would generate an additional \$25 million for professorships and student scholarships. Gunther was also able to announce that between \$5 million and \$6 million had been pledged from USM supporters toward the \$25 million goal. Thus, while Nail has raised 20% of \$10 million at kickoff, Gunther had raised 20% of \$25 million when his campaign began. Not only that, a 7-May-2003 [USM presser](#) covering the event provided some interesting details. The text of that presser, which was entitled “College of Business & Economic Development Launches Campaign Aimed at Raising \$50 Million,” is inserted below.

HATTIESBURG - Pledges from private supporters totaling more than \$5 million have allowed The University of Southern Mississippi’s College of Business and Economic Development to move ahead with plans for a fund-raising campaign aimed at raising \$50 million to help finance a new state-of-the-art educational facility.

“The campaign goal of \$50 million dollars will not only build a world class facility and provide for the best technology, it will also bring the best students and faculty by providing funds for scholarships and professorships,” Southern Miss President Dr. Shelby Thames said.

Gene Carlisle, a Southern Miss alumnus and owner of Wendy’s franchises throughout Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana and North Carolina, made the initial gift to begin the long-term fund-raising campaign. “I know the value of a quality educational atmosphere,” Carlisle said. “Our students deserve the best. The competitive nature of business demands the best of teachers, facilities and technology.”

The fund-raising campaign was initiated during a news conference in the President’s Conference Room in the Southern Miss Administration Building Wednesday. It is hoped that the generosity shown by initial supporters of the building fund will inspire others to give, leading to a successful private fund-raising effort and the creation of a world-class facility.

“With lagging state funding and challenging economic times, it is more important than ever that we have private support for advancements at our university,” Thames said. “The leadership shown by our initial donors is indicative of the type of supporters Southern Miss is fortunate to have, and they are very appreciated.”

The new 100,000-square-foot building will provide a variety of learning environments, including six 1,600-square-foot classrooms that will accommodate 60 students each. The wireless technology setting of these classrooms will include seats with built-in laptop and internet access capabilities, as well as projection televisions. Other features of the new building, which will be three stories high, will include a 250-seat lecture hall, a room modeled after a Wall Street trading office and a 95-car parking garage.

It will be a much needed improvement over the college’s current home in Joseph Greene Hall, which was opened in 1968 and was named in honor of Dr. Joseph Greene, who was dean of the former business department and the College of Business Administration from 1949 to 1985.

“There is a move away from lecturing toward coaching, and we need our classrooms to be more technologically equipped to do that,” said Bill Gunther, dean of the College of Business and Administration.

A comparison of the details of the currently-planned CoB building with those from Gunther’s ultimate plan, announced back in May-2003, is presented in Table 1 below. Gunther’s building is 11.1% larger than Nail’s, and would have cost 31.9% less on a per-sq ft basis. Not only that, the details of Gunther’s building sound just as interesting, if not more so, than those associated with Nail’s current plan. Easily tipping the analysis in favor of Gunther’s plan is having a \$25 million endowment, which would have been spinning off, for the past five years or so, and into the future, \$1.25 million for professorships and

student scholarships. If managed properly, this aspect of Gunther's plan, which doesn't exist with Nail's, is what would have elevated the USM b-school to new heights.

Table 1 – *A Tale of Two Buildings*

	Nail's Building	Gunther's Building
Cost	\$33,000,000	\$25,000,000
Size	90,000 sq ft	100,000 sq ft
Cost/Size	\$367/sq ft	\$250/sq ft
Details	2 Centers student study/gathering areas Student Leadership Suite distance-learning lecture hall tiered classrooms w/ digital media	wireless classrooms w/ docking stations projection televisions 250-seat lecture hall Wall Street Trading Room 95-car parking garage

What are we to make of all of this? Sources say this story represents another example of how USM officials are behind the times. In terms of faculty count, the current CoB is barely more than half the size of Gunther's CBA. Only [two weeks ago](#) these faculty were [being referred to](#) by USM administrators as "Teachers," not "scholars." Behind the times? It certainly seems so.



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