

# ‘Pretty Boy’

## Patrick Magee’s Story on Larry Fedora’s \$35,000 Raise Causing Stir

If asked to describe USM’s defenses under head football coach Larry Fedora using only the name of a color, many USM fans would likely choose soft pink or powder blue. That would be due to the way in which they are made to look porous, almost without regard to the quality of the opponent in question. Just this past weekend (30-Oct-2010), the USM defense was so bad that USM dropped a home game to lowly UAB, *even though* the Golden Eagles put 49 points on the M.M. Roberts Stadium scoreboard. Given this, it must have been disheartening for Eagles fans to arrive at the stadium for the UAB game to see Fedora wearing a pink USM visor (see picture below), even knowing the pink was meant to express support for breast cancer awareness and research.



Since coming to USM to head the football program, Fedora’s Eagles are only 19-15 overall (wins-losses), despite having played a schedule almost devoid of what college football aficionados would describe as major programs. The 15 total losses include two against UAB, a program that USM had never lost to before Fedora’s arrival. Also included in the losses list are Middle Tennessee State, Memphis, and Rice. Thus, it is not surprising that the USM family is not thrilled to see that *The Hattiesburg American’s* Patrick Magee contributed a [news story](#) in its 5-Nov-2010 edition explaining that the Martha Saunders administration decided to reward Fedora’s performance with a \$35,000 raise, taking his *base salary* up to \$685,000. With the raise came a one year contract extension, taking Fedora’s time with USM out through 2013, another facet of the story that is raising the ire of Eagles fans.

Interestingly, the information provided by Magee’s article, which is entitled “USM coach receives pay raise,” is *not* new. The raise was approved by the Mississippi IHL months ago, and USMNEWS.net [reported this information](#) back on 19-Aug-2010, or about 12 weeks ago. Still, the news is not sitting well today with many in the USM family, as *THA’s* report had more than 50 online comments by noon on 5-Nov, indicating to sources the possibility of a record number of comments, at least with regard to a relatively recently-published item. Among the many complaints about this news being put forward by *THA* readers is the fact that no raises should be handed out during an economic crisis that has reportedly led to the delivery of almost 50 terminal contracts to tenured and tenure-track USM professors. Fedora’s 2010 *raise* of \$35,000 could pay for all, or a large portion, of the *yearly salary* of several of the faculty who have been told by Saunders that 2010-11 will be their final academic year with USM. This type of angst is, however, what sources are saying is behind Magee’s

belated release of this salary information. Reports coming into USMNEWS.net say that Magee is close with segments of the USM fan base, much of which is “fed up” with Fedora’s football philosophy. By releasing this news now, Magee’s article could serve to stir up those in the USM family who have been hesitant to criticize Fedora and/or Richard Giannini, USM’s director of athletics.

If sources are on point, the pressure on Saunders is mounting. *THA*’s higher education reporter, Ed Kemp, has penned a number of investigative reports about mismanagement and plummeting faculty/student morale on campus. USM’s only public comment on these reports has been to accuse Kemp of “doing a job” on the USM administration. Such displeasure [was expressed](#) by USM provost Robert Lyman, along with one USM faculty senator, at the Oct-2010 USM faculty senate meeting. Sources tell USMNEWS.net, however, that a case of “jobbing” against USM is easier to make with regard to Magee’s recent story on Fedora’s raise than with any of the reporting of the financial and academic troubles that Kemp has been doing in recent months. As such, the USMNEWS.net report linked above begs the question: Will USM administrators now consider Magee as simply another *THA* “jobber” when it comes to reporting on USM’s sports programs?

The answer to the question above remains to be seen. In the meantime, displeasure with Fedora’s performance is boiling over on Internet [message forums](#). USM fans there are complaining about Fedora’s “[finesse](#) philosophy” and porous defenses, as well as his “arrogance” and “pretty boy” image. Judging by some reports, Fedora is difficult to stomach during “Eagle Walk,” the pre-game ritual wherein he supposedly sports Armani suits, dark shades, and smoothly-gelled hair, all playing the rock star part, as in the photos below.



USM fans are also upset with some of Giannini’s quotes provided for the Magee article. In particular, Giannini’s comment that “[w]e’ve just got to stay competitive with our peers in Conference USA,” has many fans – who see the likes of Rice, Tulane, and UAB as unworthy of USM’s praise – upset with what look to be the prospects for the future. One of Magee’s statements – that Giannini also hopes to promote an environment of stability through giving Fedora an extension – will likely upset many on the academic side of the USM ledger. USM has slashed a number of academic programs since 2009, including economics, philosophy, and religion. A number of USM students have made known to various media outlets their intentions to transfer. Thus, the academic side is anything *but* stable. Sources also say that, in the end, Magee’s article for *THA* not only stirs up the sports supporters, it also, thanks to Giannini’s mouth, proves the points made to *The Student Printz* by USM political science professor Kate Greene, [who eloquently described](#) the Saunders administration’s operating assumptions in dealing with \$25 million in budget cuts to date.