

*Guest Editorial*

“Raises at USM – the first in years”

The Hattiesburg American reported recently [“Raises at USM – the first in years.”](#)

HA says “In a letter to faculty and staff, Southern Miss President Rodney Bennett said he and the seven other university presidents in the state College Board system had decided to advocate to the Legislature for an appropriation to cover raises at 1 percent to 5 percent levels.”

“It is important to understand that raises will not necessarily be across the board in every area,” Bennett wrote. “These funds will primarily be distributed on the basis of merit (performance) and market ... or equity issues.”

Do taxpayers understand the deception? Those rare Southern Miss pay raises are even more rarely based on what taxpayers would characterize as “merit performance” or “equity.” In my experience, the largest pay raises go to faculty that administrators consider to be deserving. Too often faculty receive substantial pay raises if (1) they are administrative toadies – obsequious yes men/women who are likely to be lousy teachers and incapable of doing research, or (2) they publish large numbers of articles in vanity journals that add little or no value to their discipline or the public benefit.

If outsiders considered the details, they would rebel in the face of so much deception and waste.

Why does Southern Miss remain mired in the fourth tier? The answer to the question is quite simple. Far too many bureaucrats who are in charge of the University and its various colleges and departments are more interested in building personal fiefdoms than advancing Southern Miss as a quality educational institution.