

Some Presidents *Emeritus* are More Valuable than Others

At its September 20, 2012 meeting, [the IHL designated](#) newly retired Shelby Thames as Distinguished University Research Professor Emeritus and Professor Emeritus of Polymer Science. (See insert below from 20 - September -- 2012 IHL Board Book. Along with this change, no mention is made of any salary or payment to Dr. Thames.

Shelby Freland Thames; *former position*: Distinguished University Research Professor and Professor of Polymer Science; *re-employment position*: Distinguished University Research Professor Emeritus and Professor Emeritus of Polymer Science; *re-employment period*: October 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013 (Rehired-Retiree NOT on contract)

Aubrey Lucas, on the other hand has proved to be a rather expensive Emeritus Professor.

Let's go to October 2010 when the Mississippi IHL [renewed the contract](#) of Aubrey Lucas as president *emeritus* of USM. In doing so, the IHL also raised Lucas' annual salary to \$100,000. It was only recently that USMNEWS.net reported that Lucas was earning between \$70,000 and \$80,000 per year to serve as its *emeritus* president. Thus, in giving Lucas this \$20,000 to \$30,000 raise, it increased Lucas' E&G-supported salary by *at least* 20%.

Less than two years later, at its May 17, 2012 meeting the IHL removed Aubrey Lucas' "President Emeritus" title and replacing it with one referred to as "[Executive Transitional Officer](#)," effective 1-May-2012. Along with this change (see insert below from 17-May-2012 IHL Board Book), the IHL raised Lucas' salary to an *unspecified/yet to be determined* level – yet to be specified/determined by IHL commissioner Hank Bounds – that also became effective (retroactively) 1-May-2012.

Aubrey K. Lucas; *from* President Emeritus and Professor; *to* Executive Transitional Officer and Professor; an appropriate salary should be set by the Commissioner on behalf of the Board, such salary should be reported back to the Board as an information item at a subsequent meeting; effective May 1, 2012

Don't forget that on May 1, 2012, Martha Saunders was still drawing pay as president of the University. Effectively, Southern Miss had two presidents each making an appropriate salary. Even though the IHL has yet to report what Lucas' current pay is, presumably stepping into the positions of Executive Transitional Office then Interim President carried with it a sizeable pay raise.

At this point, Thames' unpaid emeritus position looks like quite a deal for the University, the taxpayers and tuition paying students.