

Southern Miss Still Ranked Near the Bottom

HATTIESBURG – Here's something you won't see in *The Hattiesburg American* or on Southern Miss' website -- a national organization has once again placed the university near the bottom of the nationwide rankings.

[College Factual](#) has ranked Southern Miss as [#1081 out of 1393](#) colleges and universities. That is a drop of 54 places in a single year. In 2015, College Factual ranked Southern Miss as [#1027 out of 1394](#) colleges and universities. To make the picture even worse of fifteen public and private colleges and universities in Mississippi, College Factual ranks Southern Miss as #8. Seven Mississippi colleges and universities are ranked ahead of Southern Miss:

- Millsaps College (#381)
- University of Mississippi Main Campus (#456)
- Mississippi State University (#544)
- William Carey University (#696)
- Mississippi College (#809)
- Tougaloo College (#898)
- Blue Mountain College (#1066)
- University of Southern Mississippi (#1081)

Underscoring the woeful position in which Southern Miss finds itself is the fact that it falls 15 places after Blue Mountain College. As one source commented, "I didn't even know Blue Mountain College existed."

There is some local good news. William Carey University moved to fourth place in Mississippi while improving its national ranking from #806 in 2015 to #696 in 2016 -- an improvement of 110 places.

Sadly, Southern Miss' position in the bottom tier has become commonplace, even expected. Southern Miss first fell to the bottom tier in 2006 under former president Shelby Thames, but that was temporarily rectified in the first year under current president Martha Saunders. However, just after Southern Miss rose above the bottom tier under Saunders, it returned there and has remained throughout the subsequent portion of Saunders' 2007-12 tenure as USM's ninth president. The bottom tier was next held under the watch of interim president Aubrey Lucas. Now, as tenth president Rodney Bennett holds the dubious distinction of presiding over a bottom tier university.