

## *Special Report*

### **Academic Analytics Weighs in on USM** An Investigative Series on CoB Faculty Credentials

A 20-Feb-08 **News Update** posted by *The Hattiesburg American* entitled “Southern Miss science, tech programs in top 10 list,” gave officials in USM’s College of Science and Technology – home of former USM President, Shelby Thames – a golden opportunity to brag about their accomplishments. For CoB officials, news of another’s success couldn’t have come at a worse time, as the week of 18-Feb-08 ushered in a damaging faculty exodus that will be felt by CoB administrators, faculty, and students for years to come. The *THA* update, inserted below, states that findings from fall 2007 by Academic Analytics, a higher education quality watchdog, indicate that USM’s CoST maintains two of the nation’s top 10 programs in the sciences. These are Science Education, a field USM ranks #7 in nationwide, and Polymer Science, a program Academic Analytics ranked #8 in the category “Other” Engineering.

#### **Southern Miss science, tech programs in top 10 list**

From submitted reports

The University of Southern Mississippi College of Science and Technology's science education and engineering programs have been rated in the top 10 nationally, according to an index measuring the scholarly output of faculty members at colleges and universities.

Academic Analytics' findings were the subject of an article in the Nov. 16, 2007, edition of the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. In the article, the most recent index examines the productivity of 164,843 faculty members in 7,400 programs at 357 institutions. The *Chronicle* published data on the top 10 in 172 disciplines.

At Southern Miss, the Center for Science and Mathematics Education was rated seventh in Science Education, and the School of Polymers and High Performance Materials was rated eighth in the category of “other” Engineering. The indicators included publications, citations, number of grant awards and total dollars of grant awards.

“These rankings are particularly significant as Academic Analytics has taken a very quantitative approach as opposed to some other types of rankings that rely more on subjective input,” said Rex Gandy, dean of the Southern Miss College of Science and Technology. “These top 10 rankings are indicative of the high quality faculty we have in the College of Science and Technology.”

For faculty publication information, Academic Analytics used the database Scopus, which counts journal publication and citation data, and for books uses Amazon.com, whose database matches the Library of Congress. Data on grants were taken directly from federal agencies or from their Web sites, and faculty awards and honors impact the rankings.

Bob Lochhead, professor and director of the School of Polymers and High Performance Materials said the school is delighted with the Academic Analytics ranking. “This is a significant milestone,” said Lochhead. “Being ranked within the top 10 programs in the nation attests to the high quality of research and education that is a hallmark of our polymer program at Southern Miss, and it is gratifying when an outside ranking acknowledges our untiring efforts.”

Sherry Herron, director of the Southern Miss Center for Science and Mathematics Education, said the ranking is a testament to the faculty’s commitment to science literacy.

“Southern Miss is rich with faculty who are willing to provide opportunities to enhance the science and mathematics knowledge of K-12 students and their teachers. We look forward to continuing our efforts and having even greater success in promoting science literacy in South Mississippi,” Herron said.

This is the third year the index has been published. The first index included overall institutional rankings on 166 large research universities, categorized as having 15 or more doctoral programs, and 61 smaller research universities offering between one and 14 doctoral programs.

Stefanie Altman, Academic Analytics marketing manager, said having two programs ranked is an accomplishment. “It is great to see that they are showing up well in our analysis and benefiting from the data. For any institution to have two

programs that rank in the top 10 is a noteworthy achievement for them.”

Academic Analytics was founded by Lawrence B. Martin, dean of graduate studies at State University of New York at Stony Brook. Academic Analytics’ rankings are based strictly on statistical data and is one of several indices that measure programs at colleges and universities, such as those produced by U.S. News World Report .

Also according to the Chronicle article, Academic Analytics offers its services for a fee and subscribers can choose 10 peer institutions with which they would like to be compared.

These are impressive feats, and bragging points for Rex Gandy (Dean, CoST), Bob Lohead (Director, School of Polymers & High Performance Materials) and Sherry Herron (Director, USM Center for Science and Mathematics Education). But, what about USM’s College of Business? After all, USM’s *Interim* Dean, Alvin Williams, earns significantly more money than Gandy, CoST’s permanent Dean. And, like the CoST, the CoB has various Schools and Centers (e.g., Center for Financial Services, SAIS and the Bureau of Business & Economic Research) that are directed by highly paid faculty, such as John Clark (CFS), Steven Jackson (SAIS) and William Gunther (BBER). What are the results of, to use Lohead’s term, the “untiring” efforts of these CoB luminaries?



**Alvin Williams**



**John Clark**



**Steven Jackson**



**William Gunther**

A search of Academic Analytics’ link to “Business” discipline rankings reveals that AA ranks business schools in seven areas: accounting, business administration, business (various), finance, management, management information systems and marketing. Of course, USM’s CoB participates in each of these areas. However, a search of the top 10 schools in each category above revealed that the CoB is nowhere to be found. The same cannot be said by in-state rival, Mississippi State University, which is ranked by AA as having the #4 program in finance and the #10 program in management information systems.



**Sara Freedman**



**Harold Doty**

These findings reveal why rumors circulated throughout the 2003-2004 period that Mississippi's IHL Board was considering allowing MSU to have so-called "ownership" of USM's business programs. They also show (1) just how it was that former MSU business Dean, Sara Freedman (shown above), was able to advance on to the position of Dean of Oklahoma State University's William S. Spears School of Business, and (2) why it has been the case that former CoB Dean, Harold Doty (shown above), has been unable to land another Dean's job at even a Tier IV university.