

Special Report

More “Fun Money” Found?

An Investigative Report on the Growing Fall '08 Book/Online Fees Controversy

Recent reports and editorials here at USMNEWS.net (see [1](#), [2](#), [3](#)) have expanded upon *The Hattiesburg American's* coverage of various textbook pricing/online fees scandals that have been plaguing USM's campus in recent weeks. These issues have not only been hot topics at both *The Hattiesburg American* and USMNEWS.net, they have also been the subject of discussion on the *USM Forum -To build trust, a team and a campus - Message Board*. Since these issues have arisen, reporters here at USMNEWS.net have uncovered other tentacles of the story, reaching to other fees associated with various CoB courses. Of course, included in this new finding are the fees associated with the CoB's participation in the *Wall Street Journal's* Academic Partnership Program (WSJAPP).

As reported in the *USM Bulletin 2008-09*, CoB students each pay a \$19/semester fee to support the WSJAPP. According to usm.edu, the CoB services 2,400 majors. At \$19/student, and applying this figure to half of them (i.e., to juniors, seniors, grad students), the CoB is generating more than \$22,000 this semester from the WSJAPP fee assessment. Additionally, two other fees are applied to CoB students. The first is a \$10 surcharge on students who enroll in a section of MIS 320 (E-Bus App Strateg). The second is a \$30 surcharge on students who enroll in a section of MGT 400 (Glob Mgr Pol & Stra). Potential revenues from these fees are provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1
Potential Revenue from CoB Course Fees and the WSJAPP

Course Fee/Program	CoB-H Students	CoB-GC Students	Total CoB Students	Potential Revenue
MIS 320 Fee	148	72	220	\$ 2,200
MGT 400 Fee	298	110	408	\$12,240
WSJAPP			2,400	<u>\$45,600</u>
				\$60,040

Before addressing the specifics of Table 1 above, an explanation of how the numbers were calculated is appropriate. The figure for the WSJAPP was found by doubling the total for fall semester 2008 that is mentioned above the table. That figure came from applying the \$19/semester charge to each of the 1,200 business majors (juniors, seniors, grad students) at USM. Next, enrollment totals in MIS 320 and MGT 400 were found for both CoB-H and CoB-GC at usm.edu. For CoB-H, the figures come from the 27-Aug-08 update to the fall 2008 USM schedule guide. For CoB-GC, the figures come from the 20-Aug-08 fall 2008

USM schedule guide update. These totals were doubled in each case in order to estimate an annual enrollment in these courses. Lastly, the total enrollments were multiplied by \$10 and \$30, respectively, to arrive at potential revenue totals for each of these sources. As Table 1 indicates, the WSJAPP, MIS 320 and MGT 400 generate \$45,600, \$2,200 and \$12,240, respectively, each year. As a result, the CoB's budget is *more than \$60,000 larger* than it would be in the absence of these fees/programs. This amount of money is essentially sufficient to cover the travel allotments for all research-active CoB faculty.

If one assumes that the CoB's administration can "do pretty much anything it wants" with even half of the money noted above, the CoB's administration has *more than \$30,000* to "play with" each year. Meanwhile, sources tell USMNEWS.net that the proceeds from the CoB's *Parham Bridges Real Estate Endowment*, which is significantly more than the totals covered above in this report, have neither been seen nor heard from in years. Things have become so convoluted that getting to the bottom of the financials of the CoB (or of USM) might never occur. To Mississippi taxpayers and USM students and their parents, that is a real shame.