

## Special Report

### Is "Connections for Life" Still Alive? An Investigative Series on the use of the CoB's Budget

This Special Report examines recently uncovered forms that indicate that the "Connections for Life" program that was developed by former Director of Graduate Programs and current Professor of Management Stephen Bushardt may still be around, and that Bushardt may still benefit from it. Readers of usmpride.com will recall the details of Bushardt's "Connections for Life" program from earlier reports on this website. The excerpt below, from the Spring 2001 issue of *Joint Venture*, explains a little about the development of "Connections for Life" in the CoB:

**MBA Connections for Life**

When Stephen Bushardt was named director of the MBA program last year, his goal was to turn out students who are not only steeped in business and financial skills, but who are also fully developed as individuals, equipped to conquer the obstacles and meet the challenges to become successful business leaders.


His first step was to have students do a market analysis of what other top business schools were doing and what additional skills leading businesses wanted in employees.

The second step was to implement changes, beginning with the requirement for all MBA students to participate in REACH, an acronym for Realistic Experiences and Challenging Horizons offered by Pine Grove Recovery Center in Hattiesburg. REACH is based on similar programs around the country utilized by Fortune 500 companies for their employees. The program at Pine Groove includes outdoor obstacle courses such as tightrope walking, log walking, climbing brick walls and swinging from a trapeze - all designed to build teamwork, communication skills, and trust.

"We call our expanded CBA program 'Connections for Life' because that's what's happening." Stephen Bushardt, MBA Director



Investigators at usmpride.com discovered additional information about Bushardt's involvement with "Connections for Life," even as late as May of 2006. The exhibit below is the top portion of a "Multiple Trip Mileage Report" filed by Bushardt at the end of Spring semester of 2006:

 <p><b>THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI MULTIPLE TRIP MILEAGE REPORT</b></p>	<b>Traveler's Name</b>	Stephen Bushardt	<b>SS#</b>	[REDACTED]	
	<b>Phone #</b>	266-4677	<b>Dept Box #</b>	5077	
	<b>E-Mail</b>	Stephen.Bushardt			
	<b>Dept Name</b>	Management and Marketing			
	<b>Submitter</b>	Betty Dickerson	266-4673	Betty.Dickerson@usm.edu	
	<b>UNIVERSITY CLASSIFICATION</b>		Faculty		
	<b>ATTACH TO A TRAVEL VOUCHER</b>				

This report contained a number of trips from Hattiesburg to Jackson County and Stennis, presumably to teach a course. The insert below shows the totals in mileage reimbursement that Bushardt filed for in May of 2006:

ATTACH TO A TRAVEL VOUCHER					
TRAVEL BY PERSONAL VEHICLE					
Did you use a University vehicle? Yes (or) No					
Date	From	To	Miles	Rate	TOTAL
19-Jan-06	Hattiesburg	Jackson County	194	0.445	\$ 86.33
26-Jan-06	Hattiesburg	Stennis	166	0.445	\$ 73.87
2-Feb-06	Hattiesburg	Jackson County	194	0.445	\$ 86.33
9-Feb-06	Hattiesburg	Stennis	166	0.445	\$ 73.87
16-Feb-06	Hattiesburg	Stennis	166	0.445	\$ 73.87
23-Feb-06	Hattiesburg	Jackson County	194	0.445	\$ 86.33
2-Mar-06	Hattiesburg	Jackson County	194	0.445	\$ 86.33
9-Mar-06	Hattiesburg	Stennis	166	0.445	\$ 73.87
16-Mar-06	Hattiesburg	Jackson County	194	0.445	\$ 86.33
23-Mar-06	Hattiesburg	Stennis	166	0.445	\$ 73.87
30-Mar-06	Hattiesburg	Jackson County	194	0.445	\$ 86.33
6-Apr-06	Hattiesburg	Stennis	166	0.445	\$ 73.87
20-Apr-06	Hattiesburg	Jackson County	194	0.445	\$ 86.33
27-Apr-06	Hattiesburg	Ettiquette Dinner Biloxi	154	0.445	\$ 68.53
4-May-06	Hattiesburg	Jackson County	194	0.445	\$ 86.33

Near the bottom of the table above, an entry for mileage (154 miles) to Biloxi in order to attend an “Ettiquette Dinner.” That trip (@ \$0.445/mile) cost the CoB almost \$70 (see below).

27-Apr-06	Hattiesburg	Ettiquette Dinner Biloxi	154	0.445	\$ 68.53
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Investigators at usmpride.com are attempting to locate paperwork that indicates whether or not Bushardt was reimbursed for the dinner itself. If so, then the cost to the CoB will be higher, perhaps over \$100. We are also attempting to discover whether or not other CoB faculty, such as Barry Babin (Chair/Professor of Marketing) or George Carter (Chair/Professor of Economics), are filing reimbursement forms for activities associated with Bushardt’s “Connections for Life.” These faculty have been part of the program in the past, serving as “wine aficionados” (see photo below).

