

Top Stories of 2008

by Duane Cobb

10. New Center for Healthcare Marketing -- During the fall of 2008, the Mississippi IHL [approved](#) the establishment of the Center for Healthcare Marketing and Sales in USM's College of Business. Reports here at USMNEWS.net immediately showed just how such a "limited scope center" would benefit CoB favorite Michael Wittmann, the CoB's *Draughn Distinguished Associate Professor of Healthcare Marketing*, by providing him with 2/2 teaching loads well into the future should he become the Center's first director, as sources believed. As other reports at USMNEWS.net have pointed out, Wittmann was a close confidant of former CoB interim dean Alvin Williams. This relationship may have played a significant role in the CoB's support of the CHMS.

9. Saunders Gives CoB \$1 Million for Research -- Hoping to increase research output in the CoB, USM president Martha Saunders announced to the CoB that she will soon be providing new CoB dean Lance Nail with \$1 million in new funds. Editorials here at USMNEWS.net, however, pointed out the inherent [flaw](#) in the idea. That is that Saunders will be providing thousands of dollars tempting CoBers to do the work that their 9-month base salaries are paid to them for doing.

8. Faculty Losses -- 2008 marked a continuation of the mass human resources exodus that began when former CoB dean Harold Doty was hired back in 2003. This year marked the departures of [Francis Daniel](#), [Tony Henthorne](#), [Stephen Bushardt](#), [Talai Osmonbekov](#), [David Glascoff](#), [Alvin Williams](#) and [Jon Carr](#), among others. Like prior years, the CoB lost significant research portfolios in 2008, this time with the losses of Osmonbekov and Carr.

7. Customized Textbook Scandal -- The summer of 2008 saw a major scandal hit USM, and one that was covered extensively by *The Hattiesburg American*. This scandal involved the adoption by some USM faculty of various "customized textbooks" that differ little from standard editions, but that cannot be resold by USM students. Reports here at USMNEWS.net showed that the CoB was at [the center of this scandal](#), given that former interim CoB dean Alvin Williams chaired a committee of marketing faculty that adopted such a text. As Valerie Wells of *THA* pointed out, these adoptions provide kickbacks to USM professors and their departments, which is believed now to be the primary motivation for their selection. This scandal [continues to plague](#) the Saunders administration.

6. CoB Faculty/Administrators Deposed -- A number of CoB faculty and administrators were deposed during the spring/summer of 2008 as part of a federal court case concerning a personnel issue in the CoB. Through the publication by USMNEWS.net of parts of these depositions, the USM community was provided new information about the way CoB faculty and administrators behave. For example, through accounting professor [Roderick Posey's deposition](#), our readers learned that former dean and CoB icon Joseph Greene used the assignment of teaching schedules as a punishment tool. Knowledge of the malicious actions taken by Greene forever changed the way many now view the former USM b-school leader. The deposition series also taught us a bunch about the [research practices](#) of various CoB faculty, particularly some of the accountants. The series also provided information about [some unwritten AACSB rules](#) that the CoB used in its recent attempts to garner re-accreditation.