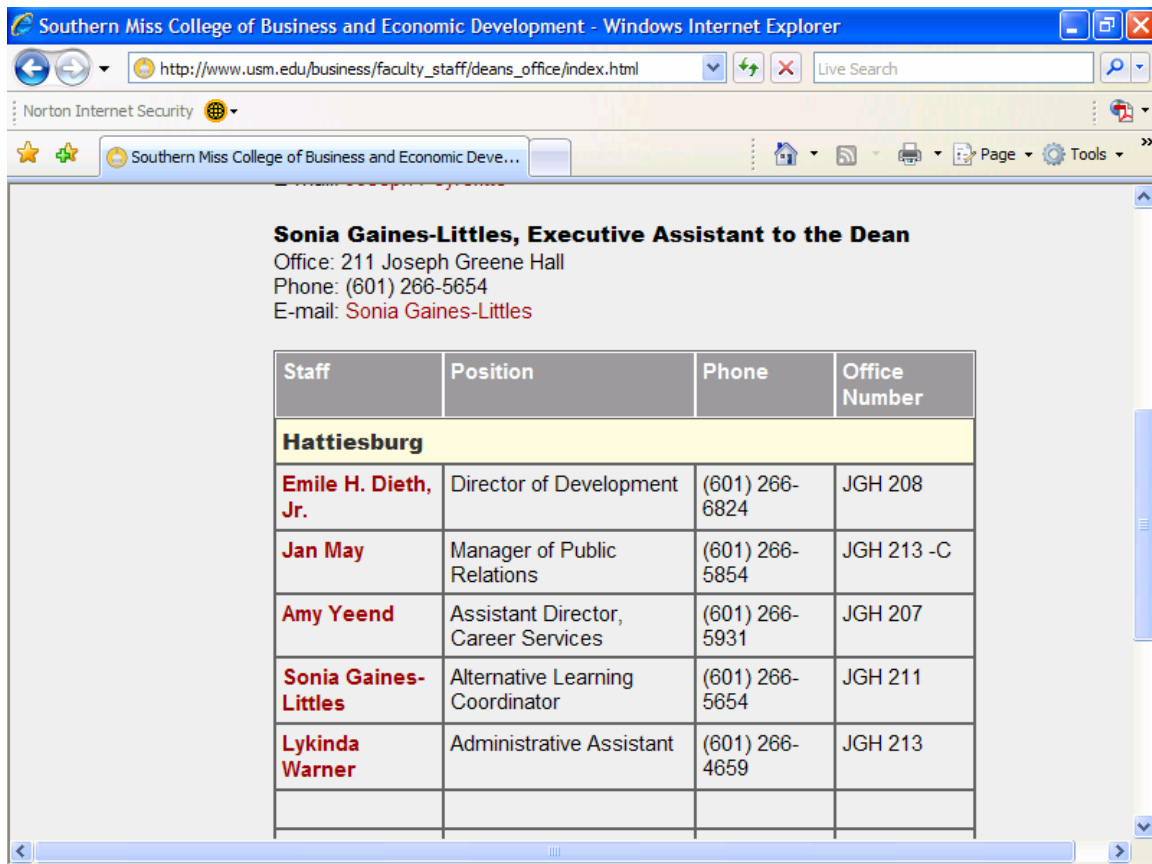


## Two Positions are Better than One

### Is Sonia Gaines-Littles Putting Together a Job Snowball?

The situation regarding the CoB's Alternative Learning Coordinator (ALC), Melia Hartsfield, has remained a mystery since it was reported back in April of 2007 that Hartsfield had taken leave due to what USMNEWS.NET sources indicated was a stressful intra-office situation. Without receiving any official notification from Interim Dean Alvin Williams, it appears that Hartsfield is now out as ALC, and that her replacement is Sonia Gaines-Littles, who is also the Executive Assistant to the Dean. That information comes to USMNEWS.NET through the CoB's own webpages, as the insert below shows:



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying [http://www.usm.edu/business/faculty\\_staff/deans\\_office/index.html](http://www.usm.edu/business/faculty_staff/deans_office/index.html). The page content includes the following text:

**Sonia Gaines-Littles, Executive Assistant to the Dean**  
Office: 211 Joseph Greene Hall  
Phone: (601) 266-5654  
E-mail: [Sonia Gaines-Littles](mailto:Sonia.Gaines-Littles@usm.edu)

Staff	Position	Phone	Office Number
<b>Hattiesburg</b>			
<b>Emile H. Dieth, Jr.</b>	Director of Development	(601) 266-6824	JGH 208
<b>Jan May</b>	Manager of Public Relations	(601) 266-5854	JGH 213 -C
<b>Amy Yeend</b>	Assistant Director, Career Services	(601) 266-5931	JGH 207
<b>Sonia Gaines-Littles</b>	Alternative Learning Coordinator	(601) 266-5654	JGH 211
<b>Lykinda Warner</b>	Administrative Assistant	(601) 266-4659	JGH 213

The revelation above means that Gaines-Littles now holds two (2) positions on the executive staff, a situation truth4usm, a popular poster at *USM Forum*, once referred to as a “job snowball,” given former President Shelby Thames’ propensity to award staffers with multiple positions.

As USMNEWS.NET has reported in the past, Hartsfield took over the ALC position at the beginning of the 2006-07 academic year, when the previous ALC, Katie Pounders,

left USM to pursue a doctorate in business at Louisiana State University. Pounders, also the girlfriend (one source says fiancée) of Management & Marketing Chair (and Tourism Management Chair) Tony Henthorne, earned \$30,000 per year in the ALC position during the 2005-06 academic year. That line was increased by \$900 in the spring 2006 merit raise process.

The elevation of Gaines-Littles to a two-job staffer raises several questions, one of which is about compensation. Is she being paid separately for each job? If so, she could be earning quite a sum of money. The insert below, taken from the 2006-07 USM Budget Book, shows the amount of funding for both the ALC and the Manager of the CoB Dean's Office. The latter position is now referred to as Executive Assistant to the Dean.

00004138	Pounders, Kathryn R	10	1.00				
11	Alternative Learning Coordinator			12	30,000	900	30,900
00002968	Hartsfield, Melia D	09	1.00				
12	Office Manager			12	24,100	1,446	25,546

Again, the question USMNEWS.NET reporters have is: What is Gaines-Littles being paid for doing both jobs? Is it \$56,446, if not more? If so, other CoB staff, such as Janice Prescott, Lola Ingram, etc. will be interested in knowing how they can form a “job snowball” for themselves.

The most likely situation is that Gaines-Littles is earning somewhere between \$30,900 and \$56,446. Let's assume it's \$35,000 - \$40,000. As such, where is the remaining \$16,446 - \$21,446? Sources tell USMNEWS.NET that a number of faculty lines were cannibalized during the 2007 merit raise process in order to provide large raises for CoB sycophants. If so, then Hartsfield's position is a likely candidate for similar treatment. Even the lower end figure, \$16,446, will provide hefty bonuses for more than a handful of the CoB's money grubbers.