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PART 2

Tolerant people seek and accept the challenge of alternative views and ideas, that is, diversity of thought, reason, and evidence. A consequence is decisions are better informed than they might otherwise be which, in effect, is an opportunity to enhance knowledge, performance, and results. In contrast, intolerant people may consider diversity as heretical and punish it, as Interim Dean **Alvin Williams** and President **Martha Saunders** at the University of Southern Mississippi did because of this research.¹ Their decisions are based on limited information and are, therefore, less informed than they might otherwise be. (Surowiecki) Intolerance is the suppression of potential knowledge, performance, and results. And, in the case of administrators like **Williams** and **Saunders**, intolerance includes intentional bad faith which will be demonstrated in this research.



AlvinWilliams



Martha Saunders

A Favorable Environment

Where should diversity thrive? Where would thought, reason, and evidence be expected to flourish? Where better to anticipate the opportunity to enhance knowledge, performance, and results?

Universities, of course.

¹ As you review the report, consider whether it may be viewed as a microcosm of the plight of Mississippi.

Although not perfect, universities are the most likely to promote diversity. And, like many colleges and universities, the University of Southern Mississippi promises diversity of thought as well as diversity of race and gender. USM publicizes its belief in diversity for all to see. It says it “cherishes the free exchange of ideas, diversity of thought, joint decision making, and individuals’ assumption of responsibility.” But how does a college or university act? Does USM, for example, measure up to its verbal commitment? Does it promise *and* practice diversity of thought?