

## Where's Skip Hughes Going?

USM has posted a notice:

"The University of Southern Mississippi invites applicants for a full-time, 12-month, tenure-track faculty position as director of the School of Accountancy in the College of Business...Starting date is July 1, 2014..."

Skip Hughes has only been department chairman for less than five years. He came to Southern Miss hailed as someone who was going to turn the accounting program around. Skip was of the opinion the faculty was going to undertake some serious research rather than the low level, vanity publications that were substantially the norm. As we know, [nothing changed](#) and the research continues to be almost exclusively low level research. In fact, Hughes joined in publishing in low level journals .

Where's Skip Hughes going? Actually we don't know. There has been no public announcement of an impending departure. There is a [carefully buried announcement](#) on the Southern Miss web page for a "Director & Associate Professor." Only when you click on "view" do you find the details.

One reader suggested Hughes might have been the subject of a Patty Munn-like coup. Of course, Patty "retired" or was "pushed out" last June 2013 along with Charles Jordan and Roderick Posey. (As sources have told usmnews.net, the lack of fanfare surrounding their exodus smacks of a forced departure.) Anyway, let's get back to Skip. Perhaps we can gain some insight by looking at some earlier reports.

An early report was (Quotes are Skip's words. He insisted on recording our conversations.):

["Things are going to change around here."](#) Dr. K.E. "Skip" Hughes II

Dear Accounting Colleagues,

I met with Director Skip Hughes a few days ago and that's what he said: He "jumped on this train as the train is already moving down the track." But, be clear, now that the economists are gone, "[t]hings are going to change around here."

Declaring "things are going to change around here" is not a new idea for new administrators at CoB/USM, but Director Hughes really means it. Unlike Dean Gunther who "was not an archeologist" (i.e., he didn't care happened before he arrived at USM), Director Hughes is "on the train...moving down the track." Okay, we've got that clear, let's get an idea of what he expects. I'll share with you his "beliefs" and "feelings" in his own words in a series of reports. We'll devote several discussions to research.

This report will provide an overview of Director Hughes' "feelings" about research expectations. Note that his "feelings," as you will observe, have only coincidental, if any, relation to the College of Business' Faculty Handbook, Journal Ranking, or its purpose. According to Director Hughes topics of research should be in line with subjects like "how I love depreciation." And such research should be published in *Accounting Horizons* and *Issues in Accounting Education*. He doesn't expect you to publish in *Journal of Accounting Research*, especially during the current cutback in funding, but *Horizons* and *Issues* are what he expects from you—you can do it! Now, if you go against his "feelings" to do something in practitioner journals like the *Journal of Accountancy*, *CPA Journal*, or *Strategic Finance* ["I (Hughes) rue the day *Management Accounting* changed to *Strategic Finance*—it doesn't have a lot of value for me (Hughes)], you are not going to get credit for it if it doesn't "connect the dots" with his "feelings" about how it compares with the standard, "how I love depreciation." Also, understand that the methodology, if you have one, had better be a methodology Director Hughes can understand, like "matrix algebra, stuff like that"—real accounting topics and methodologies he can read.

To sum up Director Hughes' "feelings", "if you aim as high as you can and accounting is in the title of the journal, I think that you would be safe." If it's a topic other than something like "how I love depreciation", "I [Hughes] couldn't support it."

Stay tuned for more of Director Hughes' research expectations.

Your colleague,

Marc DePree, Editor, usmnews.net

**Only two things are infinite, the universe and human stupidity,  
and I'm not sure about the former. - Albert Einstein**