

Bad News Continues

Everyone Seems to be Ranking Southern Miss Near the Bottom

HATTIESBURG – Here’s something you won’t see in *The Hattiesburg American* or on Southern Miss’ website -- three national organizations have placed the university near the bottom of the nationwide rankings.

First, the [2015 Forbes Best Colleges and Universities](#) ranked Southern Miss as 553 out of 650 schools. Let’s compare Southern Miss to other Mississippi colleges and universities included in the Forbes rankings. Millsaps College is #333, Ole Miss is #359, Mississippi State is #365, Jackson State is #462, Mississippi College is #522 and USM is #553. That puts **USM at the 15th percentile—bottom of the barrel**, JSU at the 29th percentile and Millsaps at the 49th percentile.

Forbes

A few days later, the 2015 edition of Best Colleges from *U.S. News & World Report*, announced that USM remains in the bottom tier of national colleges and universities with a ranking of “RNP” or rank not published. According to [U.S. News & World Report](#), “Rank Not Published means that U.S. News did calculate a numerical rank and score for that school, but decided for editorial reasons that since the school ranked below the U.S. News cutoff – the top three-fourths of each ranking category are numerically ranked – that U.S. News would not publish the rank and score for that school on usnews.com.” Stated in the simplest terms, **USM fell some place in the bottom quarter of schools.** usmnews.net does not know where in the bottom quarter the school fell because “[s]chools marked as Rank Not Published are listed alphabetically.”



Now, [College Factual](#) has ranked Southern Miss as #1027 out of 1394 colleges and universities. To make the picture even worse of fifteen public and private colleges and universities in Mississippi College Factual ranks Southern Miss as #9. Eight colleges and universities are ranked ahead of Southern Miss:

Millsaps College (#308)
University of Mississippi Main Campus (#489)
Mississippi State University (#563)
Mississippi College (#647)
Tougaloo College (#763)
William Carey University (#806)
Blue Mountain College (#830)
Belhaven University (#966)
University of Southern Mississippi (#1027)

Underscoring the woeful position in which Southern Miss finds itself is the fact that it falls 197 places after Blue Mountain College. As one source commented, "I didn't even know Blue Mountain College existed."

Sadly, Southern Miss' position in the bottom tier has become commonplace, even expected. Southern Miss first fell to the bottom tier in 2006 under former president Shelby Thames, but that was temporarily rectified in the first year under current president Martha Saunders. However, just after Southern Miss rose above the bottom tier under Saunders, it returned there and has remained throughout the subsequent portion of Saunders' 2007-12 tenure as USM's ninth president. The bottom tier was next held under the watch of interim president Aubrey Lucas. Now, as tenth president Rodney Bennett holds the dubious distinction of presiding over a bottom tier university.