

## **4<sup>th</sup> Tier (Unranked) School Joins Forces With Another 4<sup>th</sup> Tier (Unranked) School Which Equals 4<sup>th</sup> Tier Thinking**

### **Southern Miss and Mississippi College School of Law Recruit “High-Caliber Students” for a Joint Program**

The [Hattiesburg American](#) reported, “A unique partnership between the University of Southern Mississippi and Mississippi College School of Law will enable undergraduates to obtain their Bachelor of Arts degree from Southern Miss after one year of study in the MC Law program.”

“The College of Arts and Letters is pleased to partner with Mississippi College’s School of Law in this endeavor,” said Dr. J. Mark Wrighton, associate dean, Undergraduate Programs and Assessment. “We anticipate that it will further the university’s efforts to recruit and to retain high-caliber students and build even more interest in the college’s programs.”

Let’s be quite frank. “High-caliber students” interested in law school will have the option and the intelligence to attend a nationally ranked law school, which MC School of Law is not. MC School of Law’s tuition (approx. \$28,070) is better than twice the tuition of in-state [law school at Ol’ Miss](#) (approx. \$10,275.), which is ranked #107 in the nation. MC School of Law should have a warning label focused on its danger to students’ financial well-being: high cost, low employment prospects for its graduates. MC students might expect school loans to top \$100,000 for the joint USM/MC School of Law education. Let’s next view the prospect for employment from an unranked law school.

“August 11, 2011: [T]he question of [whether higher education can be held responsible for failing to warn would-be students](#) about the poor job prospects of graduates may really be taking off with regard to law schools.

On Wednesday, a New York City law firm [filed class actions](#) against two law schools -- New York Law School and Thomas M. Cooley Law School -- charging that the job placement information they released to potential students was sufficiently inaccurate as to constitute fraud. Those suits follow a similar [one filed in May against Thomas Jefferson School of Law](#). Each suit argues that students were essentially robbed of the ability to make good decisions about whether to pay tuition (and to take out student loans) by being forced to rely on incomplete and inaccurate job placement information. Specifically, the suits charge that the law schools in question (and many of their peers) mix together different kinds of employment (including jobs for which a J.D. is not needed) to inflate employment rates.”

Will USM and MC School of Law apply the full force of President Saunders' expertise in public relations and advertising? Will USM and MC School of Law mislead students about job prospects upon completion of USM/MC School of Law program? Or will they provide complete information to students with regard to their job prospects? Since USM is acting as a feeder for MC School of Law, the prospects of honesty from President Saunders are slim and none. (See recent review of President Saunders "Strategic Plan." Or her misrepresentations with regard to the costs of the airplane she purchased/leased with state taxpayer and student money during a recession.)

### **A More Fundamental Problem for USM as an Education Institution**

The elephant in the room is the quality, or rather lack of quality of the education at USM and MC School of Law. USM and MC School of Law should be working substantively, applying their full efforts and resources, to improve the academic quality of their schools, not simply combining their fourth tier institutions to produce a fourth rate joint project.