

# *31<sup>st</sup> & Pearl*

“Campus Dialogues”?

Reading the republished editorial [Saunders-Amodeo Relationship Should be Examined](#), called for usmnews.net to revisit that relationship. After all, who had heard about “Campus Dialogues” or “Core Dialogues” since – well since January 2008? By way of reminder, when Dr. Saunders first arrived on campus, she brought Mona Amodeo’s idgroup in from Florida as [“the facilitator for our Campus Dialogues.”](#) In November 2007, Ms. Amodeo presented her findings. At the time, usmnews.net was unable to provide any real information about idgroup. As the earlier editorial observed “no official website, no prospectus, no list of executive officers – nothing to speak of.” However, things have changed. As of 2009, idgroup sports a spiffy new [webpage](#) that highlights The University of Southern Mississippi. According to [idgroup](#)

**“Branding Strategy & Solution:** The findings from the twelve Core Dialogue™ sessions, conducted over six weeks, were analyzed and synthesized into a report that identified the key strengths of Southern Miss, as well as stakeholder perspectives about the desired future. The leadership of Southern Miss is currently using the findings in the next phases of the organizational planning and development process.”

Most people would agree that desired future for students (and their parents) is being able to afford to stay in school – which should translate into careful and thoughtful use of scarce resources.

On idgroup’s webpage as it appeared on [November 26, 2009](#), idgroup added another twist:

“The president has since engaged idgroup in on-going consulting services focusing on both internal processes as well as the University’s communications program. The scope of work of the consulting engagement is aimed at bringing

the core strengths that were identified during the Core Dialogue process to live – internally and externally.

Madame President, in November 2009, were you *really* still paying idgroup with citizens' hard-earned money? In case you have forgotten, in August 2009, some tenured faculty and tenure track faculty were told they would no longer have jobs. Others were told that their future was cloudy.

USM doesn't need to pay a public relations firm to know that the "core strength" of any university is its faculty and students. Students who are facing major increases in tuition, faculty and staff who are wondering if they will still have a job at the end the current economic crisis will tell you, paying idgroup to come up with "classic oxymoronic management speak, such as the oft referenced 'collective individualism'" is not a legitimate use of resources. Of course, given your failure to listen when you repeatedly hear that your plane is an unnecessary luxury in bad times, it may be that you are simply tone deaf to what is really important to USM and its constituents.