

## CoB News, 1 February 2008

### Is Williams Reacting to USMNEWS.NET?

With every report by USMNEWS.NET describing just how *little* work the CoB's Bureau of Business and Economic Research Director, William Gunther, is able to get away with doing for so *much* compensation (\$125,000/9-mos), it seems that the CoB's answer, if not Gunther's, is to engage in a public relations campaign that attempts to tell the opposite story. The latest example of that comes from Interim CoB Dean, Alvin Williams, via an e-mail message to CoB faculty and staff that lauds the work that Gunther's BBER is doing for the CoB and Mississippi.



Alvin Williams

Williams' e-mail, dated 31-Jan-08, is inserted below:

**From:** cob-facstaff-bounces@listserv.usm.edu [mailto:[cob-facstaff-bounces@listserv.usm.edu](mailto:cob-facstaff-bounces@listserv.usm.edu)] On Behalf Of Alvin Williams  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 31, 2008  
**To:** [cob-facstaff@usm.edu](mailto:cob-facstaff@usm.edu)  
**Subject:** [Cob-facstaff] Today's online MBJ - Bureau of Business And Economic Research

Please read the article below from the Mississippi Business Journal on our Bureau of Business and Economic Research (BBER). BBER is working to serve a major outreach function for the College of Business. Thanks to Bill Gunther and Ed Ranck for spearheading this effort.

Alvin J. Williams, Interim Dean  
College of Business  
University of Southern Mississippi

The *Mississippi Business Journal* article that Williams references indicates only what has been reported by USMNEWS.NET – that Gunther's BBER is financing the maintenance of some economics data for Mississippi on a website. None of the actual work is being done by Gunther, Ranck or others in the BBER. The only sound that the BBER will be producing from this effort is the sound that a check makes as it is being torn from a checkbook.

Williams' message appears to be a return volley aimed at reports from USMNEWS.NET, a publication Williams claims not to have known existed until August of 2007. And, even

then, Williams admits to only a cursory knowledge of the existence of the periodical.<sup>1</sup> According to sources, Williams more closely resembles an avid reader of USMNEWS.NET than he does someone with just a cursory knowledge of the existence of the online source for news about the CoB.

## Whose Line is it, Anyway?

For attendees of USM Provost candidate Gary Olson's "open session" with CoB faculty and staff on 30-Jan-08, it must have been like "Doty déjà vu" all over again. Olsen, the Dean of Arts and Sciences at Illinois State University, invoked several lines used by former CoB Dean, Harold Doty, now professor of management at USM. Olsen used the tired joke about "state universities . . . state supported universities . . . and state located universities" that Doty is fond of using on the interview circuit. Olsen also dredged up the Doty line about "friend raising" as a precursor to fundraising. Those intimately familiar with Doty's interview at the University of South Florida, as are regular readers of USMNEWS.NET, will recall Doty's PowerPoint presentation including the term, as did his speech.



Harold Doty

Interestingly, Olson was an Interim VP at USF into 2004, one year before Doty's Sept-05 interview trip there. Thus, he (Olson) was likely alerted to Doty's gaffe-filled speech to the South Floridians, and was able to catch a viewing of it on the Internet in the fall of 2005. Olson's "non-committal" responses to some of the questions, particularly USM historian Bill Scarborough's question about teaching loads at USM, also appeared Doty-esque to some who heard them. Sources indicate that Olson's visit suggests that little has changed, or is changing, at USM under Saunders.

## A Saunders Segue

For more on how much Saunders' administration resembles that of former USM President Shelby Thames, see Saunders' 31-Jan-08 [blog](#) about employing *Noel-Levitz*, a consulting firm, based in Colorado, Iowa and Massachusetts, that specializes in assisting colleges and universities with "enrollment management" issues. Whether it's the mega-consulting Noel-Levitz or the small consulting shop, idgroup – run by Mona Amodeo out of Pensacola,

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<sup>1</sup> Williams' tentative admission comes through comments Williams made in an Aug-07 letter to USM President Martha D. Saunders. That letter requested that Saunders block USMNEWS.NET's editor from accessing the Greene Hall facilities for an indefinite period of time.

Saunders appears to be as adept as Thames at creating consulting boondoggles.<sup>2</sup> However, some would say that at least Thames' consulting connections were largely Mississippi-based enterprises.

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<sup>2</sup> For a look at how Saunders and Amodeo may be connected, see [this installment](#) in our *31<sup>st</sup> & Pearl* opinion series.