

USM Enrollment Up, But Not By As Much As Claimed

Comparing USM and IHL Totals

To hear the Martha Saunders administration tell it, USM's total enrollment has risen from 16,008 students (Fall 2008) to 16,668 students (Fall 2009). Of course, as explained in Jana Bryant's [11-Sept-09 presser](#) entitled "Southern Miss Announces Largest Enrollment in University History," the numbers used to come up with the 4.1% increase in enrollment are the dreaded "duplicated enrollment" or "duplicated headcount" that USM officials are so fond of, and that counts enrollees at USM-H and USM-GC as separate students, without regard to whether or not that is the actual case. According to sources, however, these figures are used to inflate what is actually going on at USM vis-à-vis enrollment and retention. Evidence in support of USMNEWS.net sources came on the same day as Bryant's presser, and via an 11-Sept-09 presser from Mississippi's IHL entitled "Preliminary Fall Enrollment Figures Show Increase." Unlike USM officials, IHL Board officials rely on the more informative "unduplicated headcount," as from the IHL's actual presser (see insert at end of this report).

According to the IHL, USM's "unduplicated headcount" rose from 14,793 students (Fall 2008) to 15,301 students (Fall 2009). Not only does this change represent a more modest 3.4% growth rate, it also avoids overestimating the size of the USM student body by some 1,350 students, a pitfall the Saunders administration's "duplicated headcount" statistic does not avoid (USM's *overestimate* is more than 50% of the size of the Mississippi University for Women's student body). Additionally, the IHL numbers show that USM's growth is lagging behind the system-wide's 3.5% growth, and it is individually below growth rates at Jackson State, Mississippi State, MUW and Ole Miss.

IHL Press Release

PRELIMINARY FALL ENROLLMENT FIGURES SHOW INCREASE

9/11/2009 - Jackson, Miss.

Unduplicated Headcount	Fall 2008	Fall 2009 *Preliminary figures	Percent Change
Alcorn State University	3,252	3,339	2.7%
Delta State University	4,064	4,031	-0.8%
Jackson State University	8,374	8,785	4.9%
Mississippi State University	17,824	18,601	4.4%
Mississippi University for Women	2,365	2,478	4.8%
Mississippi Valley State University	2,929	2,819	-3.8%

<u>University of Mississippi</u>	17,601	18,345	4.2%
University of Mississippi	15,289	15,933	4.2%
Medical Center	2,312	2,412	4.3%
University of Southern Mississippi	14,793	15,301	3.4%
System Total	71,202	73,699	3.5%