

The Student Printz

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Shatterproof holds Addiction as a Disease Panel

By Shannon Barbin
SM2 Content Creator

The Shatterproof Student Association (SSA) recently held an Addiction as a Disease Panel on campus in the Joe Paul Theatre. The panel included addiction psychiatrist, Dr. Charles Richardson, licensed counselor with a specialization in addiction, Jan Moore, peer support specialist, Freddie Humphrey and psychologist and professor Dr. Michael Madson. Prior to the panel, students composed a list of questions to ask the panelists. Madson discussed with the guests why addiction should be viewed as a disease.

Shatterproof aims to defeat the stigma centered around addiction. The panel discussed several ways as to why addiction is classified as a disease rather than just a life choice. The panel focused heavily on addiction being a disease just like any other disease that we see and recognize. Another point that was made was that addiction should not be considered a moral failure but rather a disease that alters the dopamine within the brain.

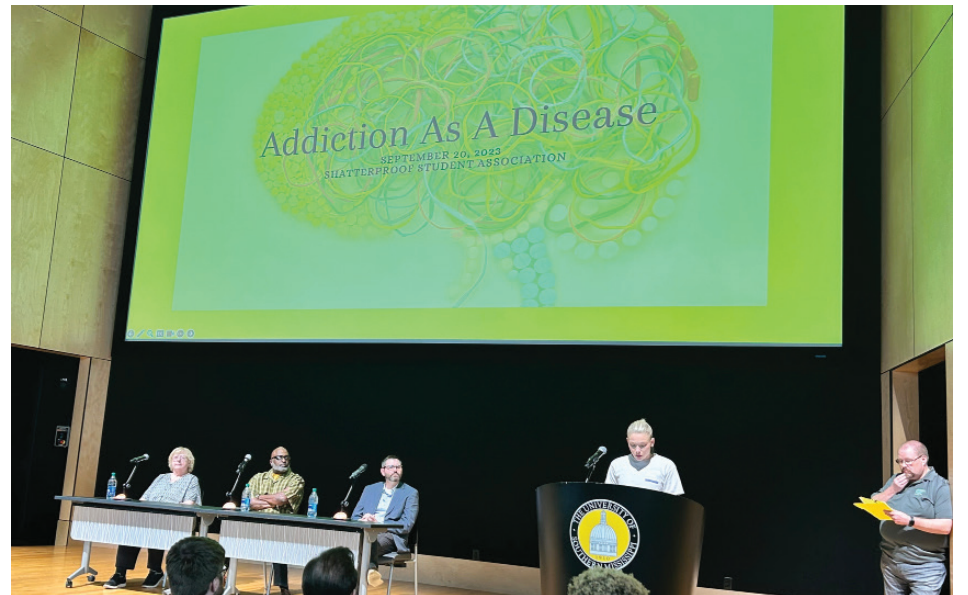
"I'm hoping the students gain a sense of understanding about what

addiction is," said Samuel Lovitt, the vice president of SSA. "Addiction is not a moral failure as we've seen tonight. It's a disease like any other, like we see diabetes or heart failure; things like that. So, it can be treated if it is a disease. That is what I'm hoping that students get from tonight. The alternative to the disease take is moral failure. Think about what that says to the person in addiction."

Moore talked about her experience as a counselor at Clearview Recovery Center and how many of her clients felt an array of guilt and shame. She addressed that often when a client comes to her in her line of work, they are typically in a state of giving out. They are hopeless. She advocates that people with addictions are not their addictions but simply people with a disease.

"Shatterproof's goal is to reduce the stigma around addiction, promote harm reduction and create an affirming, reaffirming environment for those who are struggling or in recovery," said Sophie Denton, the president of SSA.

Humphrey, who also has past experience with addiction, shared a partial of his testimony.



Shatterproof's recent panel on Addiction as a Disease shed light on the issues that come with addiction.
Photo by Shannon Barbin

"They ask what's different this time?" Humphrey said. "This right here, what I am doing now. My drug use, even though it took me down to where I was. It was a small part of which was really going on. 85% is me. Why do I keep coming back to this?"

Why do I keep drinking this poison? I lanced myself and got rid of that crap that was holding me down."

If you are interested in learning more about the Shatterproof Student Organization, email sophie.denton@usm.edu or Samuel.lovitt@usm.edu.

USM Foundation receives record breaking donations

By Huey Turlich
SM2 Content Creator

The University of Southern Mississippi Foundation hit a record high in scholarship donations this year with the bar raised to \$5.5 million in awards.

The USM Foundation is an organization committed to serving the university's community by overseeing fundraising efforts to raise private support for scholarships and other academic needs at Southern Miss.

Their mission is to build relationships with alumni and friends in order to secure private funds and other resources for both graduate and undergraduate students.

This year the foundation funded 2,430 private scholarships to students equaling \$5.5 million. The foundation was able to establish 17 new scholarship endowments this year.

The foundation also provided nearly \$11 million in total support to the university. With \$5.5 million being awarded to students, the other half went to support the academic divisions, operations and maintenance of plants, libraries, faculty and staff support, and many other aspects of the university.

The Chief Communication Offi-

cer for the USM Foundation, Megan Burkes, provided insight on the mission of the organization.

"[The] USM Foundation is the fund-raising arm of the university, but we work with our alumni and friends to build relationships," said Burkes. "We connect donors with the area of the university that means the most to them and where there is need at the university."

The foundation's main goal is to help students and the university stay on the top. Ann Smith, the 2022-2023 recipient of the Ann Parker Blackwell Child and Family Studies Scholarship Endowment, leaves her testimony and how it has encouraged her in her journey.

"Being a scholarship recipient is truly an extraordinary feeling," Smith said. "I am a first-generation student and knowing that someone believes in my success at USM encourages me to continue my education."

The continued efforts and goal driven employees at the USM Foundation are working to keep the scholarship system at its best. Their goal is to continue to keep breaking record heights.

The foundation offers these scholarships to students through the Golden



The USM Foundation serves the community by raising scholarship funds and building relationships between alumni and students. As a result, the USM Foundation has received a hefty amount of donations.
Photo by Huey Turlich

Opportunities (GO) Scholarship and Programs Application System. This process is to be completed each year beginning Oct. 1 and finalized before the Feb. 15 priority deadline. This date is a priority deadline, but students can still update and complete the General Application at any time between the awarding cycle to still

be considered for additional scholarships. Offers can be made at any time during the year, but the majority of offers will be made by July 1.

For more information or to learn more about scholarships and how the foundation can help, visit their website at usmfoundation.com or contact them at 601.266.5210.

The Student Printz

THE STUDENT PRINTZ

The Student Printz is the student newspaper of the University of Southern Mississippi. It is published by the Southern Miss Student Media Center (SM2) in the School of Media and Communication.

It is published every Wednesday morning, and new content is consistently published online at sm2media.com. The newspaper has been printed since 1927 and is proud to serve the Southern Miss campus and community.

SM2 student-journalists and student-producers create and share stories through multiple mediums and across multiple platforms using the most modern technology. SM2 includes Southern Miss Radio, Southern Miss TV, and the Creative and Strategic Communication divisions.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Opinions expressed in The Student Printz are those of the writer and not necessarily those of its student or professional staffs, the university community, the Board of Trustees of the State Institutions of Higher Learning or the USM Board of Student Publications.

To submit an editorial, please do so by email before 5 p.m. on the date of desired publication. Email your letters to printzeditors@gmail.com. We will publish up to 500 words, but we reserve the right to refuse to publish your letter or to edit it for clarity and space reasons.

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Department of Parking and Transit Services FOOTBALL GAME DAY PARKING NOTICE RESERVED AREAS

USM Athletics has reserved parking lots for this event and vehicles must be relocated. The following changes to parking access will take effect in preparation for the Southern Miss vs. Texas State game on Saturday, Sept. 30.

Friday, Sept. 29 — Entrance to the Century Park North and Payne Center lots will close at NOON. Towing will take place in these parking lots beginning at 5:00 p.m. These lots will remain closed until 10 a.m. Sunday morning.

Saturday, Sept. 30 — Towing will take effect in the following parking lots at 8 a.m.: McCarty Hall, Wilbur Hall, Hillcrest and Tower Place Lot, Bolton Hall, Eagle Walk Lot, Ray Guy Way, and Eagle Walk Numbered Spaces.

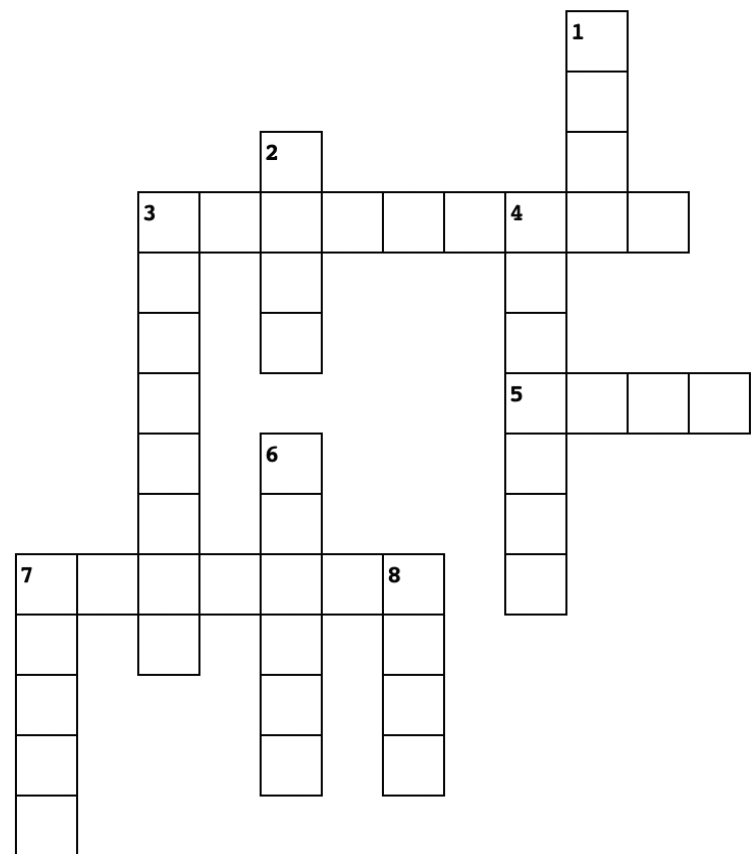
Vehicles parked in ALL other Eagle Club reserved areas must be moved by 8 a.m. on game day Saturday. Student Open Parking is available at the following locations:

- 34th and 35th Avenue Lots
- Scholarship Hall Lot
- Sports Field Lot
- Theatre & Dance Lot – north side close to Asbury Hall with USM ID
- Fraternity Drive
- Ross Boulevard North/South lots
- Pete Taylor Parking lot
- Arthell Kelley Lot
- Montague Blvd Open Zones
- Hillcrest Gravel Lot
- Parking Garage – 2-5 levels with USM ID

If a vehicle is towed, a \$100 towing fee must be paid before the vehicle is released. For more information, please contact Parking and Transit Services at 601.266.4948 or email parking@usm.edu.

Football Game Day Parking Map: tinyurl.com/smgameday

USM Culture Crossword



Down

3. Coffee; always packed when you want it the most
5. _____ Money, the Therapy Dog
7. What USM students can never find

Across

1. The _____ Football Stadium
2. Joe _____; the current president
3. Subway & Chick-fil-a; always packed
4. Fried _____ Wednesday in the Fresh
6. The Student _____; school newspaper
7. The _____ of Mississippi
8. Golden Eagle Welcome Week

AI (Artificial Intelligence), Robots, and Ethics

By Raven Payne
SM2 Content Creator

Keith Abney, a senior lecturer in philosophy at California Polytechnic State University, presented “AI/Robots and Ethics: Surveying the Risk Environment,” which explains the risks, distinct types of risks and workable solutions for AI.

Risk is defined as a possibility that harm may occur. Within risks, there are benefits with regard to risks that are acceptable about AI. But in the words of Abney, “Can we trust AI... that is a complicated question.”

AI leans toward the ethics of risks that surround the community. There are eight known factors of acceptable risk factors that apply to the Ethics of Risk.

The factors are Consent, Informed Consent, Affected Population, Step Risk vs. State Risk, Seriousness and Probability, False Positive and Negative, who decides Acceptable Risk and Existential Risk.

Consent involves involuntariness, non-voluntariness and whether it was proper to use AI without consent of effect. Involuntariness defines the affected party as being aware of the risk and being nonconsenting yet forced. Voluntariness means the affected party is unaware of the risk and

cannot consent.

Informed Consent discusses the knowledge of knowing the risk but giving consent regardless. But it also questions whether the morality of consent should or should not require adequate knowledge of what is being consented to.

Affected Population discusses who is at risk and who understands that their role is risky with AI. Step Risk vs. State Risk involves which one is more important in debates over AI.

State Risk is time-dependent on being in a certain state that is a direct function. Step Risk, which is not time-dependent, is the amount of time spent on the step matters a little or not at all.

Seriousness and Probability are how bad the harm would be and how likely it is to happen using AI. False positive and negative are if AI wrongly finds where a phenomenon occurs or does not occur and if it is present when it is either absent or when it is absent but not present.

Whoever decides Acceptable Risk discusses whether the risks are acceptable or unacceptable.

It applies to three different standards. A good faith subjective standard is up to an individual if the risks are acceptable or unacceptable. A reasonable person standard is what a

fair, informed member of a relevant community believes in. Objective standards require evidence or an expert to explain this unacceptable risk.

The Existential Risk is that it would annihilate Earth's intelligent life or permanently curtail its potential. Catastrophic Risk, which is not an acceptable risk, discusses climate change or something essential to humans.

“All of these can be a result of terrible things if AI is misused, none of them would make humans extinct,” Abney said.

The workable solutions for AI are space backup and responsible AI. Responsible AI requires regulation and auditing to figure out the best AI practices and procedures that will require implementation, exploring and settling in space as a backup plan for our biosphere.

This presentation and work are supported in part by the US National Science Foundation by Cal Poly, College of Liberal Arts and Philosophy Department.

Ethics + Emerging
Sciences Group



AI/Robots and Ethics: Surveying the Risk Environment

U of Southern Mississippi | 20 September 2023

Keith Abney | Cal Poly SLO
Ethics + Emerging Sciences Group

New School of Criminal Justice to be constructed at USM

By Abigail Troth
SM2 Content Creator

The University of Southern Mississippi announced a new building designated for the School of Criminal Justice, Forensic Science, and Security. This new facility will be based on the site of the Human Performance and Recreation building, formerly known as the School of Kinesiology and Nutrition, near the Trent Lott National Center.

Since the mid-1970s, the department has been based out of the aged and undersized Arthell Kelley Hall. Some of the faculty do not even have space for their own offices, and conferences among staff are usually shared in the mock courtroom. Now with the new building, students and faculty will be able to work accordingly in this sizable space.

\$16.6 million will go into the project, with \$570,000 stemming from university funds. With this money, the building will be renovated for the first time since 1988. However, students and faculty are mostly excited about the 5,000-square-foot annex that will be constructed beside the building. This will house a new and updated mock courtroom. The forensic science department will also receive new lab spaces. Outside of the building, a courtyard will be constructed for students to collaborate, relax, and study in.

Despite only being constructed as a designated space for the School of Criminal Justice, Forensic Science, and Security, many officials are excited for the future attention this will bring to USM.

“It’s definitely going to improve the Criminal Justice program here on campus,” said Brian Hauff, the Associate Vice President for Facilities at USM. “The benefits are not just for the



Students and faculty in the School of Criminal Justice, Forensic Science, and Security have been based in the dated Arthell Kelley Hall since the mid-1970s. Now, they will receive a new home in the form of the renovated Human Performance and Recreation building.

Photo by Abigail Troth

criminal justice students right now, but it’s really going to be a great tool for faculty and staff for future prospective students.”

One of the many goals for this new building is to bring attention to the School of Criminal Justice, Forensic Science and Security.

“I think it’s really going to help our enrollment, and that’s something [President Joe Paul] wants to do,” Hauff added.

With enrollment rising, many of those that are involved in the school look forward to the new addition and see it as only a plus for the school.

“It’s been a long time coming,” said Brenda Rowe, Director of the School of Criminal Justice, Forensic Science and Security. “There’s been talk for many years about us having a new

building, and we can’t wait to get into our new home.”

As of 2023, the school houses 500 students, with a rising amount. Due to the tight space, many of these students do not have much room to work or study in the building. And with some professors not even able to have offices in the building, many students must seek help from outside of Arthell Kelley Hall. However, the new plans for the site seek to change that.

“We’re gonna have twice as much square footage as we have in Arthell Kelley Hall currently,” Rowe said.

Not only are faculty and staff excited about this change, but many students within the school have expressed their excitement with the new addition to campus. Having been in such a small and dated space for so

long, many students will be excited to see the school grow and spread the knowledge of their existence on campus.

“I think it’ll actually promote the department and give a bigger image to it, since we’re in such a tiny building over here,” said Hunter Balius, a junior forensic anthropology major from Ocean Springs. “It’s really nice to have that highlighted on the campus, and I’m really excited about it.”

Construction has started on the building and is expected to be completed in June 2025. Plans for what will become of Arthell Kelley Hall will be determined at a later date. Until then, you can visit the building to learn more about what the School of Criminal Justice, Forensic Science and Security has to offer.

IME hosts Hispanic Heritage Month events

By Shannon Barbin
SM2 Content Creator

Recently, the Office of Inclusion and Multicultural Engagement (IME) hosted Hispanic Heritage Month: A 'Bailar, a celebration of dance. The Hispanic cultures have typically in the past been underserved and under-represented, despite their achievements as well as contributions. Hispanic Heritage Month was designed to celebrate and recognize historical traditions within the diverse cultures.

The IME had dance instructor Mariana Canales come to the University and teach students popular Latin dances such as salsa, merengue, and bachata in the Payne Center. Hispanic Heritage Month extends from Sept. 15 through Oct. 15. The IME strives to promote awareness for the community as a whole. They provide a range of events to help students become more culturally aware and to allow them to express their own cultural backgrounds.

"I mean, Hispanic Heritage Month, we don't necessarily celebrate it that much at USM, and I wanted to make sure that our black and brown students got an opportunity to be recog-



Students gathered in the Payne Center to practice cultural dances.

Photo by Shannon Barbin

nized at the university," said Jaborius Ball, the director of the Office of Inclusion and Multicultural Engagement. "I wanted them to make sure they have a space when they come to the university. I wanted them to indulge and engage in this culture, and

I wanted them to have the opportunity to go outside of their normal every day. And I wanted them to have the opportunity to do something they'd never done before."

According to the IME website, their goals include ensuring that all faculty,

staff and students are engaged in equity, diversity and inclusion efforts, as well as educating the campus as a whole with training on equity, inclusivity and diversity. They also focus on collaboration within the campus community and partner to advance diversity. IME states that some of their other goals include supporting underserved students, particularly people of color, low-income and first-generation students as well as cultivating active citizens through learning and community development.

Last Thursday, IME did just that. The students had the chance to receive free dance lessons with cultural dances. IME encouraged students who were hesitant to join in and expressed that everyone was welcome; no experience was needed. Smiles were plastered across the faces of the students as well as the faculty in attendance as they danced the night away.

For more information concerning Hispanic Heritage Month or other programs offered through the Office of Inclusion and Multicultural Engagement, call (601)-266-5724 or email them at ime@usm.edu.

Law School Fair lets students explore options

By Simeon Gates
SM2 Content Creator

The Legal Studies department hosted a Law School Fair in the Cochran center on Wednesday, Sept. 21. Recruiters from various law schools tabled, allowing students to explore their options for law school.

Students like Summer Dillon, a senior, were eager to take advantage of the event.

"Even if you aren't interested in going to law school, seeing it advertised might try and change your path," Dillon said.

Michelle Smith, J.D., director of the Legal Studies program, says that students have much to gain.

"Students often don't know who the contact person is at these different universities, the process that they would go through," said Smith. "And sometimes it's an eye-opener for someone who is, for the first time, considering law school and it gives them the opportunity right here on campus to learn about what these universities have to offer in the future."

This event featured representatives from seven different law schools. Loyola Law School, The Paul M. Hebert Law Center, University of Mississippi Law Center, The University of Memphis Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law, Southern University Law Center, Mississippi College School of Law, and the University of Alabama School of Law were all present at the event.

Marie Vertus is the Recruitment Coordinator for Southern University Law Center. She gave her top two pieces of advice for prospective law school students.

First, studying is essential for success on the Law School Admissions Test, or LSAT.

"When you are going to take the LSAT, definitely do a prep course, study, and prepare for the test," Vertus said.



Schools like LSU and Loyola University New Orleans were featured at the fair, allowing students to peruse and learn their options for their future legal careers. Students were allowed to learn more about the programs, admissions, and even earned t-shirts, pens, and other goodies to encourage them.

Photo by Simeon Gates

Secondly, letters of recommendation should come from a good source.

"When you're asking people for letters of recommendation, make sure you are asking people that are going to tell us about you, your personality, who you are, not someone that's going to write you a one or two-sentence letter of recommendation," Vertus continued.

The event is part of the eighth annual Pre-Law Week. Pre-Law week consists of five days of professional

development workshops, information sessions, and networking opportunities for pre-law students. Events this year were online and in-person. Pre-Law Week 2023 lasted from Monday, Sept. 18 to Friday, Sept. 22.

Pre-law is not a major itself, and no specific major is required for admission into law school. However, it is a concentration that prepares undergraduate students for law school. Students who want to pursue law school must have a bachelor's degree,

letters of recommendation, a personal statement, an application, and have completed the LSAT.

The University of Southern Mississippi offers Legal Studies degrees with concentrations in either Pre-Law or Paralegal Studies. Both are accredited by the American Bar Association. To learn more about pursuing these degree paths, check out the Legal Studies department at www.usm.edu/undergraduate-programs/legal-studies.

USM students tour African American Military History Museum

By Zion Cochran
SM2 Content Creator

On Tuesday, September 19th, USM Professor Dr. John C. Winters' Public History class toured and visited Hattiesburg's African American Military History Museum, in the Sixth Street Museum District.

Winters' class visited the museum to survey the permanent exhibition at the African American Military History Museum and construct a mock exhibition proposal for the forthcoming Moeller Museum, which will be later presented to the Hattiesburg Convention Commission.

Each of Winters' students will write an exhibition review letter in which they will give insight into their own individual museum experience to later present a proposal letter to the new Moeller African American Military History Museum.

"This is part of a much broader effort in the history program to introduce students to the public and apply history, which varies from museums, libraries, national parks, and more," Winters said. "So, students can apply their public research and training to influence and change their communities for the better based on historical research. The University of Southern Mississippi History program provides an opportunity for the Museum

District to engage the next generation and it gives these students the opportunity to unite with the community and gain practical skills and knowledge of the significant role museums play in public history and cultural education."

Winters also took his students to the museum in hopes it would be an educational experience for students of all races and colors.

"I hope students take away the extreme importance of African Americans in military and service history in the United States," Winters said. "Along with what it means to see public history in person and properly interpret it while expansively and critically analyzing why museums and institutions have much importance within the community and connect with the community they serve."

Latoya Norman, the Director of the African American Military History Museum, feels overjoyed to house the Moeller collection.

"The community is honored that Dr. Moeller chose us to accommodate and appropriately display his collection," Norman said.

The Moeller Museum will offer visitors a unique glimpse at the role and expansion of vehicles used to help our service men and women in the heat of battle. The Moeller Museum



The African American Military History is available for the community to tour and research.
Photo by Zion Cochran

is currently in its construction state, with an anticipated opening in 2025. The Moeller Museum will hold eleven military vehicles that were operated during wars and military action from World War II through Desert Storm. Dr. Donald R. Moeller, Lt. Colonel, US Army, Retired, preferred the African American Military History Museum

as the home for his collection display after expansive research.

Moeller was enthused with how the museum recounts the stories of African American service men and women through interactive exhibitions that the museum is deliberate about appealing to the five senses: sight, sound, touch, feel, and smell.

State Auditor's opinion on degrees sparks controversy

By Simeon Gates
SM2 Content Creator

In several posts on X, the platform formerly known as Twitter, State of Mississippi Auditor, Shad White, argued that the state needs to cut spending on "useless" degrees. Instead, that money should go to majors that better fit Mississippi's economic needs and have a better return on investment for students and taxpayers. White specifically singled out liberal arts fields such as women's studies.

"You want to major in women's studies? This is unwise but go knock yourself out. Go get radicalized. Just don't ask me to pay for it. Let taxpayer money go to majors that actually create people with real skills," read one post.

These posts came ahead of a report on the relationship between college majors, brain drain and the state's economy. "Brain Drain" refers to the exodus of educated young people from the state.

The report, "Plugging the Brain Drain: Investing in College Majors That Actually Work," argues that the state should redistribute money from "low-value" degree programs to "high-value" programs. These "high value" programs are more expensive to operate but are relevant to the state's economy and provide high

earnings to graduates. Universities should also encourage students to pursue these degrees. Currently, all programs are funded equally regardless of their field.

"By aligning educational programs with workforce demands and promoting fields with strong employment outcomes in Mississippi, our state can maximize the billions of dollars Mississippi taxpayers spend on higher education," the report reads.

Analysts found that people with degrees in the fields of Healthcare and Education earned well and often remained in Mississippi. Those in Engineering and Business Management made the most and left the most. White cited the latter group as people the state needed to retain.

Graduates from programs like Sociology, Anthropology and Women's Studies did not earn much and did not stay in Mississippi. The office of the state auditor even stated that they "could not calculate a statistically significant median salary for graduates of those programs."

White's conclusions led to a wave of criticism online and from experts.

Several social media users, some of them professors at Mississippi colleges, criticized White's plan and the idea of viewing college solely through an economic lens.

In a thread, Mississippi College

history professor Patrick Connelly asked, "If collecting data to solve the 'Brain Drain,' why not survey students themselves to determine the reasons they are leaving?"

Toren Ballard, director of K-12 Education Policy at Mississippi First, also questioned the report's logic.

He highlighted that taxpayer money only accounts for 21.5% of Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning's budget. Mississippi started decreasing funding for public higher education over the past several years. Market factors like the rising cost of college have already pushed many students into choosing majors in high-value fields.

Ballard further noted on X that the report excludes students who pursue law school, graduate school, medical school or other degree programs after graduation. It also only considers earnings from recent graduates, the 2015 to 2017 cohort, which may not be representative of true earnings.

White defended the report to Mississippi Today. He stated that individuals and market incentives were not enough.

In a response on X, White posted, "When you threaten the funding for the left's favorite college majors... they know you're threatening the very thing that allows them to warp the minds of young people. They

freak out because this is the source of their power in society. A hit dog will holler."

Dr. Matthew Casey, director of USM's history department, spoke on the topic of humanities degrees being "low value."

"...There are going to be many people who tell you that history or English or sociology is somehow a useless major," Dr. Casey said. "But I have found that at the same time people have claimed some majors are useless, they're also very concerned about the nature of textbooks and education. There is something fundamental about what they're teaching and how they're addressing human needs."

Chemistry graduate student Megan Martin also criticized the idea of valuing majors solely on earnings potential. A Mississippi native, Martin plans to stay in the state and become a chemistry professor.

When asked whether students should consider return on investment when choosing a degree, she said, "I think it's naive to just kind of ignore the rest of your life when you're faced with the decision of 'Well I like this, but is it going to help me be successful?' I think you have to find a really good balance between 'how far is it gonna get you in life,' but also doing something you enjoy."

"How do we stop this brain drain? One potential solution is to have the state invest more in college degree programs with graduates who are likely to obtain a high-paying job in Mississippi. The State Auditor's office has now analyzed more data to identify which graduates are likely to obtain a high-paying job in Mississippi's economy and which are not."

- State Auditor Shad White, "Plugging the Brain Drain: Investing in College Majors That Actually Work"

RISE hosts second annual Hot Air Balloon Festival

By Huey Turlich
SM2 Content Creator

RISE, a nonprofit organization from the community, recently held its second annual RISE 2023 Hot Air Balloon Festival. The event was at the Forrest County Multi-Purpose Center off of Highway 49. The community was invited for a weekend full of fun that the whole family could enjoy.

The festival hosted food truck vendors, an art exhibit, live music, and, of course, hot air balloons. With 14 balloons filling the open area, guests got to enjoy tethered rides at \$15 dollars. And the event also had a section for kids, which allowed parents to sit back and relax while their children engaged in fun.

The organization kept the cost of attendance low, with guests being able to donate canned goods to enter or pay \$1 to enjoy all the festivities offered.

The festival kicked off Sept. 22 and lasted through Sept. 24, with each day having a new theme. Patriot's Day was the theme of the opening day. And it was in honor of the military, first responders, and veterans. These

brave men and women came out to enjoy the day and take a couple of pictures in the hot air balloons. Guests enjoyed music as the crews from the hot air balloons set up and started prepping the balloons for flight.

Sept. 23 was Spirit Day. And this was a day for the guests to show some school spirit while also meeting the Universities in the community.

And the event concluded with Faith Day on Sept. 24. This was the day the organization welcomed the churches of the Pine Belt area for worship.

All the funds and donations the organization raised went to helping the students of the non-profit and families in need of support through tough times.

RISE is an organization created to help the community. Their Mission and goal is to

Educate, encourage, empower women and men to RISE to a place of self-sufficiency. The group's Executive Director, Mrs. Linda Donell, shared the goals and mission of the organization.

"RISE is all about helping and offering a hand up for people in need,"



Hundreds gathered at the second annual Hot Air Balloon Festival to watch colorful hot air balloons fill the skies.
Photo by Huey Turlich

Donell said. "We strive to help them rise to self-sufficiency."

The organization was founded in 2001 and was formerly known as the Christian Women Job Corps (CWJC). They work with the community to provide support to those in need and

provide classes for these individuals to be able to become a working member of society.

For more information about RISE, visit their website at www.risenonprofit.org and follow them on their social media platforms at RISE.

Defenders of Democracy bringing the fight to USM

By Huey Turlich
SM2 Content Creator

The Defenders of Democracy made an appearance at the University of Southern Mississippi in hopes to inform, educate and inspire the student body to partake in voting to make a difference.

The campaign held a panel for the students to learn and ask questions regarding voting and how it makes an impact in their community.

The Defenders of Democracy is a campaign from the Southern Poverty Law Center that is a part of the Activate Mississippi initiative. This initiative works to bridge the worlds of arts, activism and voter education. It focuses on a cultural approach to civic engagement.

The Mississippi State Director for the Southern Poverty Law Center, Waikinya Clanton, shared the goals of the campaign. "The Southern Poverty Law Center is a 52-year-old civil rights litigation organization that is committed to being a catalyst for racial justice in the deep South," said Clanton. They focus on educating and informing minorities of their right to vote. She continued to inform the students of the importance of being "all in" to get your voice heard.

With elections coming up Nov. 7, the message being pushed the most was to vote. She believes that it is more than just voting for a representative, but it is the importance of the policies on the ballot.

Starting off the panel with ice breakers, Javorious Williams with NPHC got the students engaged with some karaoke and other fun activities.

The panel was introduced by Victoria Walters, NPHC President. The panel was off to a start with the main goal of the Town Hall panel to push the importance of young voters and their power in the community.

This campaign was a six-week tour that ended here at USM. The five individuals on the esteem panel were



The Defenders of Democracy panel aims to educate the community on the importance of voting. With many prevalent elections coming up, the panelists encouraged those in attendance to register to vote so they could see the impact and strength of democracy.
Photo by Huey Turlich

welcomed in by Laila Peters, a Biological Science Major at USM. These five panelists included Brandon Jones, Courtney Body, Bob Press, Dallas Levy, and Ahmed Souissi.

The moderators focused on asking questions directed toward the importance of voting and what the community needs to know about voting right laws. They wanted to inform the community on the issue of voters' rights and how our democracy is under attack.

The panelist informed the student of current policies that are being attacked and the importance of making a stand for the future. "The world is going to fall on your shoulders to build and rebuild," said Jones. This message resided with the congregation as they listened in.

Volunteerism was another aspect of the discussion that was pushed. The panelists were advocates for getting into the community and getting to know your candidates. The importance of knowing who is running and how you can help them build their platform can cause change and allows for students to make connections and grow.

The floor was open to students to engage with the panelists. They were asked if and why they were going to vote. Their responses were varied with some students unknown about voters' status while others stated they are taking initiative to vote.

For more information on the initiative and the SPLC, visit their website at www.splcenter.org and remember to register to vote in the elections

"The world is going to fall on your shoulders to build and rebuild."

- Panelist Brandon Jones

Southern Miss Baseball's new-look team shines in fall scrimmage

by Jackson Kennedy
SM2 Content Creator

Southern Miss baseball hosted open fall scrimmages this past Saturday, showcasing its new-look team and what fans can look forward to this season. Here are some of the biggest takeaways from the scrimmage and how this team looks heading into the 2024 season. Here are some main takeaways from this weekend:

There are still familiar faces.

Although the Golden Eagle Baseball team lost many familiar faces over the offseason to graduation and the draft, Southern Miss still has some familiar faces. Slade Wilks, Carson Paetow, and Nick Monistere are the only starters from last year who will be in the starting lineup and batting order. Surprisingly, that trio was playing outfield. Monistere moved from second base to center field, where he shined, making a Paetow-esque diving catch where his glove was on the ground when the ball landed in it.

"He's [Monistere] unreal," Paetow said. "He's just... he's unreal. He's gonna be really good. It was big time for him because he's had to make the transition from infield to outfield, so for him to be able to make that athletic play with hardly any practice is just unbelievable."

Wilks was moved from his DH position to left field, and he has an absolute cannon of an arm. Wilks was grateful for his past position but excited to show off his full range of talents to the Golden Eagle faithful when talking about that transition.

"I've really worked hard on especially outfield," Wilks said. "I've DH'd the last two years, and that's been great. We've had good outfielders, but I really wanna play outfield this year, and so obviously keeping things working smooth with my swing, but really trying to get better in the outfield for sure."

Paetow remained at right field, and he batted not only in the leadoff spot but also hit an absolute bomb over the "L" in Pete Taylor Park on the centerfield wall at the first pitch of the bottom of the first. Paetow also caught a flyout near the warning track and threw it so hard and fast to home that the runner who tagged turned around and ran back to third base.

Paetow and Wilks are the only two true veterans in terms of position players, and the leaders of last year are either in the big leagues, graduated, or on the coaching staff, so they have both had to grow into that leadership role.

"Definitely had to mature a little bit, but I kinda learned some stuff from Danny," Paetow said. "There's a lot of leaders on this team, old and young. Just showing the young guys on this team how we do things around here, and hopefully turn them into leaders one day."

Wilks reiterated the same sentiment, wanting to be a leader to show the younger players on the team how to achieve the success they have had over the past two seasons.

"It's definitely a role that me and

him are both ready for," Wilks said. "We've been on some really good teams and have a lot of experience at this point. We have some really good players, and we're just looking forward to helping them get used to that experience as well."

The man behind the plate is ready for it.

Graham Crawford is stepping into not one but two massive pairs of shoes, trying to fill the void left by both Blake Johnson and Rodrigo Montenegro at the catcher position. He was on the team last year but rarely saw action as he had just transferred, and the Golden Eagles already had two phenomenal catchers.

"You know those two are some of the best catchers I've ever been around," Crawford said. "They're both very good at different things, and that's what helped us last year. I mean early in the year, Blake was a stud behind the plate and at the end of the year, Poch hit .400. There's not many guys in college baseball that can do that."

Crawford mentioned a straightforward thing that sets him apart from Johnson and Montenegro.

"Well, I'm from here," Crawford continued. "I've been a Golden Eagle fan. I remember coming to the games when I was ten years old. That, and I have seen it. I've been around baseball for a very long time... College baseball has been around for the last five years, and I've been in it."

Crawford further discussed what it means to be not only playing in The Pete but to play in a position and be "the guy" for that position in front of a crowd he spent the majority of his life part of; he reflected on how thankful he is to be in this position.

"It is an honor," Crawford stated. "I can't put it into words how excited I am for this season. Coming off the last two years, everybody's expecting a lot, and we expect the exact same thing. We don't take breaks here."

Danny Lynch is Still Around

Last year, many fans were upset because, after many years, a Lynch would no longer be in the program. However, near the end of the season, it was announced that Danny Lynch would be taking a Graduate Assistant position on the Southern Miss baseball staff. Lynch umpired at the scrimmage and had a great report with the entire team.

"It's a little weird," Lynch said. "It's definitely a little weird not being able to play in the intersquad, stuff like that, but I'm liking it so far. I mean, I've always had a good relationship with the coaches, so that stuff has come easy, that side of it, but I'm liking it a lot so far."

Lynch talked about his challenge, holding down his constant presence and encouragement on the field that he has always had and letting the leaders on the team have their moment.

"I think the biggest adjustment I have to make is letting the older guys on the team do their thing," Lynch said.

Lynch is handing over the reins, so to speak, regarding who will encourage the players in between pitches. But that's just on the field; expect to hear him from the dugout because he was doing so behind the plate, too.

"I love this program," Lynch continued. "This program did so much for me. I wanna give something back to it; this is a good way to do it."

Lynch laughed, turned on his coach mode, and replied with a simple no when asked about visiting potential property in Louisiana after last season.

"Nope," Lynch added. "Have not, have not."

New Coach, New Players, Same Passion

Head coach Christian Ostrander touched on what impressed him about the scrimmage, who he thought would become fan favorites once the season starts, and finally, how he feels about the roster after losing so many

this offseason.

"We kinda knew it, knew it was coming, through graduation and the draft, and we did our best to prepare for it, and we really like the pieces that we have out here," Ostrander said. "It's been a really fun group to come out here with every day."

A fun group it has been. At Saturday's scrimmage alone, the players encouraged one another, cracking jokes and talking like brothers would, no matter their jersey color.

Wilks hit what would have been a missile of a home run, but it was wide right, and the crowd gasped. Wilks smiled, and the redshirt freshman pitcher, Jake Cook, replied before pitching, "that was still a strike, Slade," which garnered laughter out of the dugouts and stands alike.

Ostrander liked what he saw from his team but took what some would misconstrue as a pragmatic approach. However, he enjoyed the fall camp process, looking forward to seeing who would be the best fit for what position.

"You know these guys are competing hard, and we're just kinda letting them play and watching them and seeing who fits where," Ostrander said. "It's like a puzzle, you just gotta put the pieces together."

Putting together that puzzle is one thing, but making sure it's a pretty enough picture to please the eyes of Southern Miss fans is another challenge in and of itself. In the last two years, Southern Miss has hosted Super Regionals. There were two wins shy of Omaha in 2022 and one win shy this past June. While some fans may see this as a rebuild or that Golden Eagle baseball will take a step back, no one on this team has that attitude.

"These guys are competing hard, and they know what this place means, and they know their responsibility," Ostrander said. "Yeah there's gonna be new faces scattered out there, but we feel like they'll be ready to play when that time comes in February."



Southern Miss suffers 44-37 defeat to Arkansas State in conference opener



by Dima Mixon
Editor

Southern Miss dropped its fourth straight conference opener and third straight under head coach Will Hall after losing to Arkansas State 44-37.

"All in all, they played better than us," Hall said on his postgame radio show.

This was an offensive fire show for two offenses that rank near last place in all of the NCAA in yards per game. Both teams combined for 874 yards of total offense with Southern Miss outgaining Arkansas State 449-425. Southern Miss trailed by as many as 17 points in the third quarter and, despite a late desperate rally, could not hold off Arkansas State's offense.

On USM's first drive, starting quarterback Billy Wiles drove the Golden Eagles 12 plays 87 yards in 5:42 to score the game's opening touchdown.

It was one of the best drives that Southern Miss has had on offense all season, and a two-yard TD rush by Frank Gore Jr. capped it.

A lot of the talk coming into the game was asking who the Arkansas State running back would be, and that was answered when freshman Jaylen Raynor led Arkansas State right down the field to respond to USM's scoring drive with a scoring drive of their own to tie the game at seven a piece.

Southern Miss was set back deep after getting stuffed on the kick return, which felt like it happened a lot through the night, and Wiles got hit and picked off, setting up another Arkansas State touchdown.

They would never look back and never lost the lead after that.

Southern Miss went three and out, and Arkansas State blocked the punt to set up a field goal try, which made the score 17-7 in favor of the Red Wolves.

Hall even mentioned the kickoff returns in his postgame radio show, noting that they were tackled at the 15-yard line a couple of times, giving his offense a real disadvantage.

Wiles would lead Southern Miss back down the field on a desperately needed touchdown drive, and he delivered, finding Latreal Jones for a 28-yard touchdown catch to make the score 17-14 in favor of Arkansas State.

Both teams traded field goals to close the half, with Arkansas State leading 20-17.

Arkansas State got things going in the second half. Raynor scampered up the middle for a 62-yard touchdown to extend Arkansas State's lead 27-17. After a Southern Miss punt, Raynor scrambled into the endzone,

capping off another touchdown drive and blowing open the game by putting Arkansas State up 34-17.

Thankfully, Southern Miss did not give up. Otherwise, it would have been an even grimmer look than it is already.

Rodrigues Clark scored from 59 yards out on the ensuing possession, inching USM closer.

The defense got a three and out, which was one of their only ones of the day, to give USM back the ball.

Wiles led the team down the field to cut into the lead with an Andrew Stein 42-yard field goal, decreasing Arkansas State's lead to 34-27.

The defense came up with another stop, and the rally was in full force. Wiles led Southern Miss down the field and found Jakarius Caston for a 22-yard touchdown to tie the game.

That could have been sooner if a controversial fumble call had gone their way, but who knows if it would have mattered. Hall sure thought it would have mattered a lot.

"The fumble was big where they fumbled," Hall said on his radio show. "They said it wasn't enough information to overturn it. That would have given the ball back in scoring position. That was a big one."

The momentum had utterly switched, and it felt like the Southern Miss defense would impose its will on the freshman quarterback. They did and forced a punt for Arkansas State. USM went three and out in what would be a crucial possession.

Arkansas State added a field goal on their next possession to take back the lead at 37-34. Southern Miss would go three and out on another crucial possession.

And Arkansas State would go to all but ice the game on another Raynor rush, this time for 62 yards. He would finish the day with 97 yards and two touchdowns on 17 attempts.

Southern Miss managed a desperation field goal and doomed inside kick but did not convert.

Wiles finished the day with 20-36 215 yards and two touchdowns with a pair of interceptions. Gore Jr. had a breakout day with 20 carries, 132 yards, and a touchdown to show for it.

It was a disappointing loss for Hall, which jeopardized and set this program back from where they wanted to be this season. They fall to 1-3 on the season and 0-1 in the Sun Belt.

Southern Miss (1-3) will host Texas State (3-1) next week at the Rock at 6 p.m.