

Fall 2009 Hattiesburg Doctoral Program Cobb County Cohort

Dear Colleagues in Educational Leadership,

I am pleased to be writing this letter of encouragement to you in your quest for the doctorate of philosophy degree. We believe a robust and invigorating plan of study has been developed that will advance your career path in the field of education. Southern Miss has a distinguished history as Mississippi's first normal school and, today, we enthusiastically extend our educational program to you.

Many of you have been energized for months as our ongoing discussions have led to this unique opportunity. Your patience has allowed us to share aspects of our program while receiving input from you. This collaboration is a model of the P-16 partnerships we have been encouraged to create by our IHL Commissioner and provides us with the opportunity to establish a unique learning community consistent with the emerging trends of our discipline.

Some of you have completed the admission process and have already registered for our fall cohort classes. For that I commend you. Others, I understand, are in the process of admission. This letter is meant to be helpful and informative to each of you regardless of where you are in the admissions process.

Since you are at various stages, this instructional letter is divided into several parts. Simply read the portion that is relevant to where you are and proceed accordingly. You will find other links here with informational diagrams to help you access information about the program.

STEP 1 – Admission

The admission process takes time. Our fall academic calendar states classes begin on August 19, 2009. Therefore, if you have not yet been formally admitted you may choose to register as a non-degree seeking student which allows applicants to register for 9 semester hours immediately. **HOWEVER, PLEASE NOTE THESE 9 HOURS WILL COUNT TOWARD THE DEGREE PROGRAM AS LONG AS YOU ARE FULLY ADMITTED TO THE PROGRAM BEFORE THE SEMESTER ENDS.**

You may apply for admission (as a non-degree student) through the Office of Graduate Studies at <http://www.usm.edu/graduateschool>. Students who have been admitted as non-degree will be registered by the Graduate Office for all three courses for the fall semester. (Course information is listed below.) You will receive a letter that includes your ID number and directs you to contact the USM Business Office to pay for the courses. Once this has been completed you will be able to access your courses online.

STEP 2 - Registering for Courses

Access to courses will begin August 24, 2009.

If you have already been admitted, you should register for your courses through the USM website (www.usm.edu). Please contact Ms. Jacque James at 601-266-4580 to be cleared for registration. Use your student ID number to access the SOAR account at USM and then register and pay for the following three courses:

- EDA 700—Public School Finance
 - Instructor – Dr. Ed Leonard
- EDA 720—Advanced Curriculum Development
 - Instructor – Dr. Rose McNeese
- EDA 792—Special Problems in Education Administration
 - Lead Instructor – Dr. Wanda Maulding

You will be able to access your courses through the USM On-line Learning---Blackboard/WebCT site. Simply follow the course directions posted in each course shell to participate in the individual courses. The courses will be available for access on Monday, August 24, 2009.

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Step 3 – Access Your Online Courses

Access to courses will begin August 24, 2009.

To access your on-line classes, follow these directions:

1. Get Password: Call Help Desk (601.266.HELP)
2. Go to the USM website www.usm.edu
 - a. Quick Links Dropdown Menu (top right side)
 - i. SOAR
 1. SOAR Login
 2. CampusID Password Management
 - a. USERNAME (use w + your 6 digit student id)
 - b. PASSWORD
 - c. Login
 - d. Change Password
 - i. OLD – NEW – NEW – CHANGE
 - e. Logout
 - b. Quick Links Dropdown Menu (top right side)
 - i. Southern Miss Online
 1. Course Login (left side icon)
 2. Pop-up Blocker Check – check OK
 - a. Always Allow Pop-ups from this site....(southernmiss.blackboard.com)
 3. Login: SOARID (USM ID#) and Password (NEW Password) – check OK
3. When you have logged in, you will see a listing of the Blackboard courses you are registered to take during fall semester.
4. Click on the name of the class and you will be in the course.

Step 4 — Tutorials

1. Go to: www.usm.edu/lec
 - a. Learning Resources for Online Community
 - i. http://www.usm.edu/lec/resources/learner_resources.php
 - b. Review the Blackboard Student Tutorials before classes begin on August 19
 - i. http://www.usm.edu/lec/des/students/blackboard_student_tutorials.php

You can also contact the USM Learning Enhancement Center (www.usm.edu/lec or 601.266.5158) and get more information and training opportunities for taking on-line classes at USM.

Step 5 – Face-to-Face Meetings (all CENTRAL TIME ZONE)

Dr. Maulding will serve as lead instructor for the cohort and she will communicate via the live Wimba chat feature embedded in the Blackboard courses. We have scheduled an online orientation meeting for 5:30 p.m. (CST) on August 19, 2009, and this same orientation will be repeated again on Thursday, August 20, 2009, at 5:30 p.m. (CST) Among the topics of discussion at these orientations will be the face-to-face scheduled meetings with Dr.

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Maulding that are to take place this semester. The exact date of Dr. Maulding's first face-to-face meeting with you will be determined by Dr. Maulding and the doctoral cohort within their EDA 792 course shell. Please know the EDA 700 School Finance course taught by Dr. Ed Leonard will be an asynchronous offering conducted fully online. The EDA 720 Advanced Curriculum course taught by Dr. Rose McNeese will also be an asynchronous offering taught fully online. However, as stated above, Dr. Maulding's EDA 792 Special Problems course is a hybrid offering which includes asynchronous and face-to-face instruction with the exact dates yet to be determined.

Step 6 – Attend Online Orientation (Central Time)

Once you have been formally admitted OR have completed the non-degree enrollment form (Step 1), and have successfully registered for EDA 792, 720, and 700 (Step 2), you should then plan to attend one of the two online orientations scheduled for your convenience. The first is Wednesday, August 19 at 5:30 p.m. (CST). The second is Thursday, August 20 at 5:30 p.m. (CST). The guest link for attending these online sessions is:
http://usmlive.wimba.com/launcher.cgi?room=_usm_s_138505691031_128720

SUMMARY

At this point in time you should

1. be formally admitted to the program or you must have successfully completed a non-degree enrollment form;
2. have registered for 9 hours of classes using the proper registration codes: EDA 792, EDA 700, EDA 720;
3. have completed the Blackboard Student Tutorials; and
4. attend one of the online orientation sessions scheduled above. The orientation sessions will provide more detailed information.

The actual courses in Blackboard will be available for students to access on Monday, August 24, 2009.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, feel free to direct them to Dr. Maulding (wanda.maulding@usm.edu or 601-266-4579) or myself.

Wishing you a successful start!

Gary Peters

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