



The University of Southern Mississippi: One Year post-Hurricane Katrina

*A Report on the University's
Response and Recovery*

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Preface

On August 29, 2005, the University of Southern Mississippi's Gulf Coast facilities were devastated by Hurricane Katrina. The category 3 storm, which had winds of more than 100 miles per hour when it struck Mississippi, caused a tidal surge as high as 30 feet-plus in areas of the coastline.

Katrina also caused damage at the university's Hattiesburg campus, located about 75 miles north of the Gulf, where winds also reached in excess of 100 miles per hour.

This report outlines the impact of the storm on Southern Miss, as well as the university's efforts toward recovery from what has been called the worst natural disaster in modern U.S. history.

About Hurricane Katrina

Hurricane Katrina is considered the costliest and one of the deadliest hurricanes in modern U.S. history, with damage costs exceeding \$50 billion, and fatalities, directly and indirectly, topping 1,300.

Katrina came ashore at Buras, La., as a Category 3 hurricane on Aug. 29, 2005, with top winds estimated at 135 mph.

Katrina first struck the U.S. as a category 1 hurricane near the Broward/Miami-Dade County line in Florida on Aug. 24, 2005, after bringing tropical storm conditions to the northern Bahamas (**Source: Weather.com**).

Hurricane Katrina's impact on the University of Southern Mississippi

Southern Miss suffered more than \$200 million in damages to physical structures and in losses in equipment, intellectual property, security and revenue at both its Hattiesburg and Long Beach campuses, and at its teaching and research sites along the Mississippi Gulf Coast, due to Hurricane Katrina. One hundred and twenty-eight faculty and staff lost their homes. There were no fatalities among university employees or students.

Approximately 1,000 students had to withdraw from the university because of Katrina's impact on them and their families, resulting in a \$7.1 million tuition shortfall at the university for the 2005-2006 academic year.

The Hattiesburg campus reopened for the fall 2005 semester on Sept. 12. After moving its campus in Long Beach to a temporary location in Gulfport, Southern Miss Gulf Coast resumed the fall semester Oct. 10. The Gulf Coast Research Laboratory reopened for classes Sept. 19.

Southern Miss also delivers educational services in Jackson County, which resumed the semester Oct. 10; at Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, where Southern Miss resumed operations in spring 2006; and at Stennis Space Center, where Southern Miss resumed operations Oct. 10.

Gulf Park campus in Long Beach

Southern Miss' Gulf Coast operations headquarters is at the Gulf Park campus in Long Beach. The cost of damages at Gulf Park is estimated at \$23.9 million (not including research and intellectual property).

The Gulf Park campus sustained damage to every building. The Southern Breeze Internet Coffee Shop, formerly the provost's home, was completely destroyed. The buildings on the south part of the campus were washed through, leaving the first floors heavily damaged and the buildings unusable.

To date, the Business Complex, Holloway Complex, Physical Plant Building, and the Shipping and Receiving building have been repaired. The AEC and library have been gutted and are ready to be restored. Electrical service has been restored to the north end of campus including the AEC and library. Temporary water and sewerage services are available for the library; AEC; Business Complex; Holloway Complex; and the Physical Plant.

Approximately 7,000 cubic yards of debris have been removed from Gulf Park at a cost of \$160,000.

Southern Miss re-starts fall 2005 semester at Gulf Coast Student Services Center

With the assistance of faculty, staff, students and university administrators, the university moved from approximately 300,000 square feet at its damaged Gulf Park campus operations to 50,000 square feet at the Healthmark Center in Gulfport, located inside the former Garden Park hospital, across the street from Gulfport Memorial Hospital on 45th Ave. Portable buildings have been added at the site for additional classroom and office accommodations for students, faculty and staff.

After moving into the facility, Southern Miss began offering classes Oct. 10 to restart the fall 2005 semester after instituting an abbreviated, flexible schedule similar to that offered in the summer.

The Healthmark Building is owned by the Pinion Group, led by Dr. Richard Hadden, M.D. The Pinion Group is a Southern Miss research foundation company that supports the university's mission.

In June, the Mississippi Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning committed to Southern Miss having a presence on the Long Beach campus, following the completion of repairs to two damaged buildings. IHL and university officials expect that return to be complete in fall 2007.

The board will acquire an additional 125-150 acres to build a Southern Miss campus for the Gulf Coast.

Gulf Coast Research Laboratory (GCRL) in Ocean Springs

About the GCRL

The GCRL is a renowned marine research institute and where much of the marine biological research of the northern Gulf of Mexico has been pioneered. As the state's marine laboratory, GCRL provides scientific data and analysis for use by state and federal marine resource and environmental agencies. Approximately 200 faculty, scientists, graduate students and staff contribute to the GCRL's mission of working toward a future of sustainable marine and coastal resources through scientific discovery, development of new technology and education of future scientists and citizens.

Hurricane Katrina's impact on the GCRL

The GCRL sustained approximately \$13 million in damages to buildings, contents, collections (not including research and intellectual property) as a result of tidal surge and winds from Hurricane Katrina. The GCRL resumed classes Sept. 19.

Destroyed on the campus were buildings housing three teaching laboratories, the shop and physical plant, the striped bass research and stocking program. Restoration of the Fisheries, Research and Caylor buildings, all flooded by the 20-plus-foot storm surge, is in the final stages. Faculty, researchers and staff at GCRL are in the process of setting up the offices and laboratories that are housed in those buildings. To date, all remaining buildings except the Toxicology Building, Parasitology Wet Lab, and Maturation Building have been restored. Utilities are available to all buildings. Temporary modular units have replaced lost classrooms and teaching labs of the Hopkins Building, and served undergraduate students from throughout the United States who attended the 59th consecutive session of the GCRL Summer Field Program for academic credit in June and

July of 2006. The GCRL Physical Plant has re-established its shop in a storage building with offices in the dormitory. Projects are underway to replace destroyed greenhouse buildings that were used for marine aquaculture and marine botany research.

GCRL at Cedar Point

Cedar Point is a 224-acre site five buildings where focus of research is on shrimp farming research and development. Cedar Point facilities sustained some damage, including destruction of greenhouse cover and roof damage, estimated at \$98,000. Marine finfish aquaculture projects wiped out at the main GCRL campus have restarted in buildings at Cedar Point with additional facilities under construction.

Recovering GCRL Programs

GCRL fisheries personnel made it back on the water to take monthly samples in September 2005 and operated in outdoor and makeshift laboratories to process samples. Their efforts to collect samples on time and at all stations insured that the continuity of more than 30 years of data remained unbroken.

Six months after Katrina, scientists with Mississippi's first spotted seatrout stock enhancement program celebrated a milestone rebuilding the native Mississippi broodstock lost to Hurricane Katrina, a major step in the program's comeback.

In spite of losing half its wet lab space, the aquatic toxicology program is now back to almost 95 percent capacity, conducting funded programs such as the Consortium for Estuarine Ecoinicator Research for the Gulf of Mexico and Aquatic Research Consortium (ARC).

GCRL's Marine Education Center

The J.L. Scott Marine Education Center and Aquarium at Point Cadet was destroyed and has been demolished. The estimated cost of damage at Point Cadet is \$20 million. The MEC has relocated to the GCRL grounds, and modular units house four classrooms that allowed the popular Project Marine Discovery Sea Camp to continue as scheduled with 727 children ages 5-14 participating during June and July 2006. The marine education center has also successfully restarted visits to schools with live animals and learning activities, field-trip mini-camps of one to

five days for school groups, and teacher workshops. School groups participating in overnight mini-camps have come from Alabama, Louisiana, Arkansas and Oklahoma. An estimated 12,000 cubic yards of debris have been removed from GCRL at a cost of \$260,000.

Southern Miss at Stennis Space Center

The Center of Higher Learning at Stennis Space Center, which is administered by Southern Miss, had minimal damage at its facilities. The Southern Miss Department of Marine Science, also housed at Stennis Space Center, received minimal roof and interior damage to its facilities and its offices reopened Sept. 12.

Southern Miss at Jackson County

The University of Southern Mississippi operates a teaching site at the Gulf Coast Community College campus in Gautier. The Southern Miss facilities there, which the university leases, received minimal damage and the fall 2005 semester at Jackson County resumed Oct. 10.

Southern Miss at Keesler Air Force Base

According to American Forces Press Service, Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, where Southern Miss provides educational services, sustained heavy damage from Hurricane Katrina. Keesler officials cited severe damage to the base's industrial and housing areas. About 50 percent of the base was under water.

Southern Miss administrative offices at the base were heavily damaged, and buildings where the university held classes were converted to shelters following the storm. Southern Miss resumed delivery of educational services at Keesler in the spring 2006 semester.

The mission of the University of Southern Mississippi at Keesler Air Force Base is to provide courses, programs and services designed to meet the unique needs of the Keesler community. Southern Miss at Keesler is centrally located and offers on-base bachelor's degrees in American Studies and Psychology and a master's and bachelor's degree in Technical Occupational Education. Southern Miss works closely with Keesler's Education Services Flight to provide excellent customer service in the areas of registration, advisement and tuition assistance for on-base degree programs and most off-base degree programs.

Hattiesburg campus damage, debris estimates; update on repairs

Facility damage on the Hattiesburg campus primarily involved roof and fencing. Power and water service was out for three days after the storm. Since then, 40 buildings (large and small) have had their roofs either repaired or completely replaced. Fencing has been repaired or replaced.

The roofs of six landmark structures are to be replaced, along with other repairs, including the Aubrey K. Lucas Administration Building; the Powell Ogletree Alumni House; the Peck House, Hattiesburg Hall, the Fritzche-Gibbs Building; and the Human Performance and Recreation Building.

The total cost of repairs to the Hattiesburg campus is estimated to be \$20,000,000. Approximately 27,000 cubic yards of debris has been removed at a cost of about \$500,000.

Support of faculty, staff and students

Southern Miss' initial response following Hurricane Katrina included securing its facility sites, surveying damage, assuring employment of current faculty and staff, helping university employees with housing assistance and clothing, and making arrangements to resume the fall 2005 semester.

The Office of Student Affairs responded immediately by meeting with more than 450 students who had needs due to the impact of the storm, and conducting an intake of information from these students to determine the appropriate assistance to provide. The office served as a one-stop clearing house for students seeking assistance, including making requests for changes to financial aid requests to accommodate needs arising due to the impact of the storm.

The university has received donations of money and material from supporters worldwide. The following information gives details of this support.

Financial assistance to students

The Katrina/Rita Relief Act was spearheaded by the Mississippi Congressional delegation, led by U.S. Sen. Thad Cochran, which included approximately \$90 million in assistance for higher education in Mississippi. Southern Miss received \$27.5 million of this funding to assist its students who were impacted by Katrina.

In March, the State Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) hosted a rally at Southern Miss to thank members of the Mississippi congressional delegation for their efforts to secure this assistance.

Student eligibility for these funds was based on information from the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Students had to be residents of the state of Mississippi, enrolled in a school here, or living here as of the date of the storm and had to show need as determined by the FAFSA.

- 912 students received Katrina funds for the fall 2005 semester to pay off prior term balances following the storm.
- 3,967 students received Katrina funds for the spring 2006 semester to help cover the cost of tuition.
- 2,820 students were awarded Katrina funds for the summer 2006 semester to help cover the cost of tuition.
- For the fall 2006 semester, the university has already awarded Katrina assistance funding to 2,324 students. Thus far, through the Katrina/Rita Relief Act, we have made a total of 10,023 financial aid awards to students at Southern Miss.
- Collegiate Funding Services and SunTech, Inc. donated \$10,000 to the Foundation's Katrina fund, to be awarded to students enrolled on a full-time basis showing need and who were impacted by Katrina.
- Scholarship America donated \$35,000 to the Foundation's Katrina Relief Fund to be awarded to part-time and full-time students impacted by Katrina and who showed need based on the FAFSA. The award from Scholarship America was funded by a consortium of lenders, guarantee agencies, and third party service entities.

Southern Miss Foundation's Hurricane Katrina Relief fund

Total contributions to the Southern Miss Foundation's Hurricane Katrina Relief Fund to date is \$230,940.04. Donations to the fund have come from individuals as well as corporate contributors.

More than 150 faculty, staff and students qualified for relief through the Hurricane Katrina Relief Fund, after a committee composed of Southern Miss faculty, staff and students assigned to review applications for assistance completed its work. The committee also reviewed overall family income of applicants in determining financial need. Financial assistance awards were given from the fund in March, including to 74 individuals who received a contribution of \$600, 54 who received \$300, and 29 who received \$50.

Southern Miss Athletic Department's Hurricane Katrina Relief Fund

Southern Miss student-athletes affected by Hurricane Katrina benefited from a relief fund set up by the Southern Miss Athletic Department, which to date totals \$117,000 in donations.

Bush-Clinton Hurricane Katrina Fund

On Dec. 8, 2005, University of Southern Mississippi President Dr. Shelby Thames accepted a **\$1.5 million contribution** to the university from former U.S. presidents George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton, through the Bush-Clinton Hurricane Katrina Fund, during a ceremony at the University of New Orleans.

The contribution was part of a \$30 million allotment in grants through the fund to higher education institutions in the Gulf South affected by Katrina.

President George W. Bush asked the former presidents to co-chair the Katrina Relief fund in September, after the two former presidential rivals had also worked together to raise funds for the South Asia Tsunami relief effort. At the time of the presentation of funds at UNO, the Bush-Clinton Katrina Fund had taken in more than \$100 million in contributions.

Southern Miss has applied for an additional \$500,000 from the fund for the purchase of technology equipment.

According to a news release from the Bush-Clinton Katrina Fund headquarters, more than 30 public and private institutions in Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama received a contribution through the fund, designated to be used for repairs and reconstruction and replacement of equipment due to physical damage caused by the storm; assisting students who left school due to its closure and/or their relocation after the hurricane; and for salaries and benefits paid to retain and support faculty and staff who were/are not working because of the school closures.

Southern Miss used the initial gift from the fund to cover the costs of employee salaries during the period of time the university was closed.

State of Mississippi approves borrowing power for Southern Miss toward recovery efforts

The Mississippi Legislature, in its spring 2006 session, approved a \$150 million line of credit to Southern Miss to assist in recovery efforts in lieu of FEMA and insurance payments to the university. As of the date of this publication, the university has not used the credit. Southern Miss decided more than a year ago to purchase insurance because of its proximity to the coast. The university's insurance premium is \$1.2 million annually.

Volunteer efforts

- During the spring 2006 semester, the Office of Community Service Learning at Southern Miss hosted student groups from three North American universities. In January, a group of 43 students arrived in Mississippi from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. These students spent a week volunteering in Gulfport alongside Southern Miss students, faculty and staff. The group was involved in a variety of tasks including tree removal, house refurbishing and debris removal.
- In February a group of 41 students and 2 staff came to Mississippi from the University of Guelph (Ontario, Canada) for a week of service in Hattiesburg and on the Gulf Coast. The students participated in service projects at a Habitat for Humanity site, at local schools and with hurricane recovery efforts in Pass Christian. The students also learned about the Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi during their visit.
- In March a group of 10 students and one staff member from California State University-Chico volunteered for a week in Hattiesburg. The students from CSU-Chico worked on hurricane-related projects at the Long Leaf Trace and the Hattiesburg Zoo. They also spent time working with children at the Family Network Partnership, an outreach of the Southern Miss School of Social Work that provides educational, recreational and vocational programming for at-risk Hattiesburg youth. Overall, the students from these three universities logged more than 3,400 volunteer hours in Hattiesburg and on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.
- Also in March, a group of Southern Miss international exchange students joined other students from across the country in New Orleans as they assisted a grassroots organization there known as the “Katrina Krewe,” which was founded to help clean up trash and debris left from Hurricane Katrina in the city’s neighborhoods. The group from Southern Miss collected and bagged trash and debris in the city’s Gentilly neighborhood.
- Southern Miss student Emily Lambuth of Summit, assisted in the collection of prom dresses for various Mississippi Gulf Coast schools. A junior majoring in medical technology at Southern Miss, and a member of the Children of the American Revolution (CAR), Lambuth worked with the Illinois chapter of CAR to make the effort a success. The Illinois CAR chapter collected dresses and worked with Lambuth, who serves as president of the Mississippi chapter of CAR, to distribute them as well as other supplies for schools on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Lambuth traveled to the coast to distribute 250 of the dresses.

- Five thousand gallons of American Pride, an environmentally friendly paint developed by researchers at the University of Southern Mississippi, was donated by Southern Diversified Products (SDP) to home owners on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Created by the School of Polymers and High Performance Materials at Southern Miss, American Pride paint contains no hazardous organic compounds and emits almost no odor, making it highly suited for occupied areas. Southern Diversified Paints was founded under the Mississippi University Research Authority by Dr. Shelby Thames before he became president of Southern Miss.
- Southern Miss faculty and staff in Hattiesburg collected clothes and other items during September to provide immediate assistance to colleagues on the coast.
- University Libraries conducted a successful book drive to assist coast libraries that netted donations of more than 4,500 books.
- The Southern Miss Staff Council sold fleece jackets, with profits going to aid Southern Miss Gulf Coast colleagues.
- The Southern Miss Alumni Association partnered with the University Registrar's office to replace any diploma of Association members lost or damaged due to Hurricane Katrina free of charge. The deadline for the program, originally set for Dec. 15, 2005, was extended to March 31. Prior to the original deadline, about 400 applications were received for new diplomas.
- Representatives of the Southern Miss Department of Community Health Sciences volunteered for a beautification project assisting the playground at Waveland Elementary School in Hancock County, which was devastated by Hurricane Katrina.
- The Southern Miss Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage held a blanket drive for coast residents in need last fall.
- The Southern Miss faculty senate organized weekend trips to the coast to help Southern Miss Gulf Coast faculty and staff clean debris out of their yards and make repairs to their homes.
- The Southern Miss College of Business offered free consulting services to help businesses affected by Katrina resume operations or expand, using the Internet as a resource.

- The Southern Miss Gulf Coast nursing class was able to hold its annual quilt fundraiser, even though the original was lost during Hurricane Katrina, after a group of Illinois teachers donated a new one.
- Building on his long association as a volunteer with Habitat for Humanity, University of Southern Mississippi professor Hugo Ley, who serves as director of the Southern Miss Architectural Engineering Program, is using his expertise as an architect to help the charity design and develop not just housing, but also a community in Hattiesburg for people displaced by Hurricane Katrina. Habitat for Humanity International is helping fund the project, which will include a variety of home designs ranging from three-bedrooms to larger four-bedroom homes on five acres of land in south Hattiesburg off of Edwards Street. Ley said the plan is to complete the project in three years, with construction set to begin later this year.

Southern Miss hosted displaced students

Southern Miss Hattiesburg hosted approximately 100 college and university students for the fall 2005 semester who were displaced or who could not attend their school because of the impact of Hurricane Katrina. These students were offered a waiver of out of state tuition fees, depending on eligibility.

The number of students Southern Miss hosted, and the universities and colleges where they were originally enrolled, included:

- Berkeley College (New York City) - 1
- Delgado Community College (New Orleans) -12
- Dillard University (New Orleans) – 5
- Hinds Community College (Raymond, Miss.) -1
- Jones County Junior College (Ellisville, Miss.) 3
- Louisiana State University (Baton Rouge, La.) - 2
- Loyola University New Orleans - 4
- Mississippi College (Clinton, Miss.) 1
- Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College (Jeff Davis campus, Biloxi, Miss.) - 18
- Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College (Jackson County campus, Gautier Miss.) – 3
- Ohio University (Athens, Ohio) – 1
- Pearl River Community College (Poplarville, Miss.) – 10
- Southeastern Louisiana University (Hammond, La.) – 3
- Southern University at New Orleans – 6
- Spring Hill College (Mobile, Ala.) – 1
- Tulane University (New Orleans) 7
- University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee – 1

- University of Louisiana at Lafayette -1
- University of Mississippi – 1
- University of New Orleans -19
- William Carey College - 3
- Xavier University (New Orleans) – 7

Tulane University plans to honor the approximately 500 colleges and universities, including Southern Miss, that hosted Tulane students while the school was closed during the fall 2005 semester, with a tapestry that will include the logos of those schools. The tapestry will be placed in the university's Student Life Center this fall.

Donations from national, international supporters

- Japan's Kaetsu University, an international exchange partner with Southern Miss, donated \$5,000 to the university. Kaetsu University and Southern Miss have been international academic partners since the early 1990s, exchanging students and faculty. Through the university, Japanese business leaders have had the opportunity to visit Southern Miss and Hattiesburg to learn about American culture and business practices.
- The University of Bonn donated \$9,500 for the purchase of laptops for the Gulf Coast Teacher's Initiative, as well as a study-abroad scholarship worth \$1,050; Frank McKenna, Canadian ambassador to the U.S., donated 30 slightly used computers, two of which were designated for the GCTI and the rest to public schools hardest hit by the storm.
- The University of Illinois delivered band instruments to Southern Miss for distribution to coast schools affected by Hurricane Katrina.
- The American Society of Clinical Laboratory Science of Mississippi assisted seven medical technology students at Southern Miss who were severely impacted by the storm with a donation of \$200 each.
- Florida Atlantic University, Lynn University and four middle schools and elementary schools in south Florida donated 5,000 books to the Southern Miss Gulf Coast library and to area public libraries, as well as a donation of 300 book bags with school supplies, which was given to the Forrest Heights Boys and Girls Club of Gulfport.
- A former Southern Miss Gulf Coast employee, Carla Sondermeyer Ross, who now serves as faculty development director at Meredith College in Raleigh, N.C., returned to the Gulf Coast bringing donations from the school in the form of gift cards, dolls, stuffed animals, blankets, Christmas ornaments, toys and school supplies in time for Christmas. Ross sewed the scarves and blankets.

- The Southern Miss University Libraries book drive was supported by the University of South Dakota, which donated more than 4,000 pounds of books.
- The University of North Dakota's staff senate donated phone cards to Southern Miss Gulf Coast faculty and staff.
- The marine library at the Southern Miss Gulf Coast Research Laboratory received a grant of \$35,000 from Rotary International. The grant to Gunter Library came from Rotary's Hurricane Katrina Relief Fund.
- Faculty, staff, administrators and students at Kansas' Emporia State University raised approximately \$15,000 to assist students at Southern Miss affected by Hurricane Katrina.
- The North Carolina State University Student-Athlete Advisory Committee voted unanimously to donate \$15,000 from their Student-Athlete Opportunity Fund to assist Southern Miss student-athletes impacted by Hurricane Katrina.
- The University of Memphis Athletic Department provided housing and use of facilities to the Southern Miss football team for their game preparations for the University of Alabama. The game with Alabama became the season opener after the Golden Eagles' opener with Tulane was postponed because of Hurricane Katrina.

Southern Miss names its "Heroes of Katrina"

In May, Southern Miss recognized faculty, staff and administrators through a nomination process for performance above and beyond their regular duties to help the university recover from Hurricane Katrina, by recognizing them as the university's "Heroes of Katrina." The honorees included: Mary Ann Adams, Mary Beth Applin, Cynthia Chatham, Vicki Copeland, Pat Foley, Michael Funk, Beth Giroir, Richard Hadden, Dawne Hard, Robert Hopkins, Paula Kopp, Bob Lowe, Ernie Olivares, Joe Olmi, William Powell, Donald Roman, Stephanie Roy, Raymond Scurfield, Joyce Shaw, David Simmons, Linda Skupien, David Sliman, James Patterson Smith, David Taylor, Sharon Walker, Michael Ward and Lisa Williams.

Southern Miss establishes Hurricane Katrina Research Center

Through its University Libraries, Southern Miss has established the Hurricane Katrina Research Center which will serve as an important national resource for researchers, historians and others who want to learn about the impact of the storm on the Gulf South.

Southern Miss Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage initiates Katrina Project

Integral to the Hurricane Katrina Research Center's collections will be the work of the Southern Miss Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage's Katrina Project, an effort to collect the stories of those who survived the storm, as well as those who were part of

the recovery effort, including volunteers, relief workers, public officials and first responders, among others, through audio interviews.

Southern Miss School of Mass Communication and Journalism initiates After Katrina Newswire

The *After Katrina Newswire* (www.usm.edu/afterkatrina) is a journalism project of the School of Mass Communication and Journalism at the University of Southern Mississippi. It is designed to provide student journalists with an opportunity to contribute important stories to the collective coverage of the region's recovery from the ravages of Katrina.

Plans for Southern Miss on the Gulf Coast

The University of Southern Mississippi and the State Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) are committed to the university continuing as the primary agent for higher education on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Two buildings on the Gulf Park campus at Long Beach should reopen for classes after they are refurbished -- the Advanced Education Center (AEC) and the library. The university will continue to offer classes at the Gulf Coast Student Service Center in the Healthmark Building, located inside the former Garden Park Hospital building just north of Memorial Hospital in Gulfport. Southern Miss renovated and occupied the space shortly after Hurricane Katrina.

Other buildings on the Gulf Park campus that received extensive flood and wind damage and may be declared historic structures could take more time for renovation. The university and the IHL are seeking funding resources for these renovations.

The IHL and the university are seeking 125-150 acres of property in Harrison County to locate another Southern Miss campus in anticipation of expansion of services to the Coast. This will be an additional Southern Miss site and not a replacement of an existing campus or teaching site.