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## Resolution to IHL Board, March 7, 2004

USM Faculty Senate

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## **A RESOLUTION FOR THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF MISSISSIPPI INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION (IHL)**

On Friday, March 5, 2004, the administration of The University of Southern Mississippi (USM) suspended two tenured senior professors, Dr. Francis Glamser and Dr. Gary Stringer. Between them, they have served USM and its students with distinction for 56 years. Both were summoned to President Shelby Thames' office and given letters stating that Dr. Thames was initiating termination proceedings against them. While they were at the President's Office, the locks to their own offices were changed and at least one computer was seized. They were prohibited from collecting their professional research and personal items that day, and they learned their salaries would cease within a month.

March 5 was indeed a dark day for higher education in Mississippi. The action by the USM administration rekindles memories from Mississippi history when freedom of speech and academic freedom in higher education were virtually non-existent. Is this the type of environment this Board of Trustees wants to support in 21st Century Mississippi higher education? *The Faculty Senate of The University of Southern Mississippi hopes not, and in this context,*

*We strongly urge that the Board of Trustees take immediate steps to end the termination proceedings that are scheduled for Dr. Glamser and Dr. Stringer;*

*We strongly urge that the Board of Trustees immediately reinstate Dr. Glamser and Dr. Stringer;*

*We strongly urge that the Board of Trustees work to renew an environment at USM that provides for freedom of speech, academic freedom, and freedom from retaliation;*

*And we strongly urge that the Board of Trustees-- for the good of USM students, faculty, and staff, and for higher education in Mississippi-- direct the Thames administration to refrain from threatening and retaliating against faculty or staff who raise legitimate questions and concerns, and seek clarity on important university issues.*

To not respond affirmatively to the requests of this resolution will mean that the open academic environment so necessary to the intellectual growth of students and informed discourse among faculty, staff and administration will disappear at USM. It will mean Enron, WorldCom, and Tyco scenarios in higher education in Mississippi will be more likely because there will be no need for senior administrators to be accountable to those they serve and lead. And it will mean that real progress at USM will be postponed far into the future.

*We strongly and respectfully urge the Board of Trustees to fully reinstate Dr. Glamser and Dr. Stringer immediately.*