



Education

Yes, on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

USM Announces Logistics, Trade and Transportation Program

The University of Southern Mississippi (USM) School of Construction and the Department of Economic and Workforce Development have received a \$50,000 grant from the Mississippi Department of Transportation to begin developing a new interdisciplinary graduate program to teach the advanced skills needed to address the challenges and opportunities created by global trade. A letter from Governor Haley Barbour to USM President Martha Saunders stated that a graduate program in logistics, trade and transportation would “be a great fit with the redevelopment of the Port of Gulfport and the opening of the Panama Canal in 2015 or 2016.”

The interdisciplinary program incorporates advanced skills to address opportunities and obstacles affecting global trade operations on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, particularly on north-south multimodal trade throughout the Americas. The program builds on existing resources of USM, including their Logistics Management and Technology emphasis and the Executive Format Masters in Economic Development program. In a direct effort to meet local demand, the Logistics, Trade and Transportation program allows students to supplement their program of work with courses from across university departments; this flexibility allows for a wide range of partnerships and professional qualifications.

Tulio Sulbaran, Ph.D., an associate professor in the School of Construction, explains the impressive nature of the program’s origin, “Local industries requested a program to address logistics, trade and transportation progress on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. The university responded rapidly to the industries’ request, which now allows for vertical integration through applied research and industry needs.”

David A. Marchman, associate director of the School of Construction, adds, “Required classes also represent the horizontal integration of the Trade, Transportation and Logistics program with other departments. This allows the student to receive an inclusive learning experience that translates into practical, real world application.” Desmond Fletcher, director of the School of Construction, reiterates that the Gulf Coast’s “industries and trade sectors are uniquely layered.”

With South Mississippi’s central location on the Gulf of Mexico, the widening of the Panama Canal and the expansion of the Mississippi State Port at Gulfport, the introduction of USM’s program comes at an ideal time to prepare the Gulf Coast for a larger role as a national trade and logistics hub. The program will create professionals for the new global economy and serve a niche largely unaddressed by national logistics and transportation education and research centers. Only 55 peer graduate curriculums exist throughout the United States, making USM’s Logistics, Trade and Transportation program invaluable to the continued growth and innovation of local and regional markets.



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