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## **Governor Musgrove: Shelby Thames to Present at NGA Center for Best Practices Conference**

(Jackson, MS) – Governor Ronnie Musgrove, vice chairman of the National Governor’s Association, has announced that Shelby F. Thames, president of The University of Southern Mississippi, has been chosen by the National Governor’s Association Center for Best Practices to be a presenter at the upcoming “Closing the Gaps with Higher Productivity” conference in San Francisco, California.

"Mississippi's leaders in higher education are well-respected by their peers around the country, and as vice chairman of the NGA, I'm pleased Dr. Thames will be sharing his experiences with other leaders at this conference," Musgrove said. "Our commitment to education in Mississippi has never been stronger, and it's important for the rest of the country to hear about what we're doing to move our state ahead."

"Dr. Thames was selected because of his university’s implementation of a more efficient academic structure for The University of Southern Mississippi," said Kristen Conklin, Senior Policy Analyst, with the National Governor’s Association, Education Division. "Our national network brought Southern Miss up on the radar, and as we researched their plans, we thought conference participants would benefit from their experience."

More than 31 states will have participants in the conference, which is designed to assist policymakers in higher education efficiencies. Governors, legislators and education professionals will be in attendance.

The breakout session titled “Greater Efficiencies through Consolidation, Cooperation and Focus” will feature Dr. Thames along with Reverend Dennis Dease, University of St. Thomas and Chair, Associated Colleges of the Twin Cities; Doug Kristensen, University of Nebraska at Kearney; Roger Perry, Champlain College; and Jay Cole, Office of Governor Bob Wise. Tad Perry with the South Dakota Board of Regents will moderate the session.

“I am honored to have this opportunity,” said Thames. “It is fulfilling to get national attention for our efforts to make Southern Miss a more efficient, effective and innovative university. I hope to share our experiences with policymakers from across the nation, and help them understand that our number one motivation for this action was to make the delivery of education better for our students.”

The conference will take place at the Omni Hotel on September 15.

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