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(Pronunciation note to media: Gautier: “Go-SHAY”)

USA PARTNERS WITH MISSISSIPPI ON NEW “USA GAUTIER”

The University of South Alabama has entered into a new partnership with Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College to create a satellite campus in Gautier, a move that both schools say will enable them to more efficiently meet the higher education needs of the Gulf Coast region.

“Economic times like these require that we avoid provincial approaches and work collaboratively to meet the needs of people and their communities, which often do not end at state lines,” said USA President Gordon Moulton.

“Southwest Alabama and Coastal Mississippi are the same community when it comes to industry, commerce, education, health care, and recreation,” Moulton said. “Mobile and Gautier are only 37 miles apart, and people from both areas commute in both directions every day.

“This agreement is a win-win that acknowledges the need for neighboring cities to efficiently pool resources to build on the quality of life for this growing coastal region.

“In considering this new endeavor, USA and MGCCC officials met with representatives from Northrop Grumman, Chevron and Singing River Hospitals – some of the largest employers in our region. We were persuaded that leaders on the Gulf Coast of Mississippi are very interested in strengthening the relationship with USA. Those industries encourage their employees to attend USA and earn degrees – and they often provide financial support for them to do so.

“By establishing the satellite campus in Gautier, we believe we can meet the educational needs of our region, at the same time increasing our enrollment and tuition revenue, which will help to defray the costs of educating Alabama students in these times of declining state funding,” Moulton added.

“Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College is pleased to partner with the University of South Alabama to enhance higher education opportunities on the Gulf Coast,” said Dr. Willis H. Lott, MGCCC President. “The USA-Gautier satellite campus will ensure that many students from the Mississippi and Alabama coastal region will be able to complete their education with a seamless path.”

Under the plan, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College will host offices of USA, which will in turn provide access to four-year academic programs to compliment the community college's two-year programs. The endeavor will be called the USA Gautier Campus, or, in short, "USA Gautier." USA officials say they will offer traditional classes, as well as use on-line and video conferencing for greatest efficiency and program quality.

USA will offer three traditional four-year degree completion programs beginning this fall: General Business, Information Systems (from the School of Computer and Information Sciences), and Interdisciplinary Studies, which can be customized to meet the needs of employers in the area. The Gautier campus will also serve as a platform for USA's on-line degree programs, especially in nursing and education. The campus will also offer coursework to facilitate student transition into the USA College of Engineering. Additional academic programs will be offered as needs are demonstrated.

Students at MGCCC will also be able to transfer to the USA main campus after two years to complete degrees in all subject areas.

USA currently enrolls 14,757 students, with 1,533, or about 10 percent, coming from Mississippi, predominantly from the coastal area.

Gautier is in Jackson County, which borders Mobile County, home of the main campus of USA. USA is the closest four-year public university to Gautier, and MGCCC is the second largest source of transfer students to USA, with 200 students transferring annually. The closest four-year Mississippi public university main campus to Gautier is more than 90 miles north, in Hattiesburg. Alabama law permits Mississippi students within a 50-mile radius of an Alabama university to attend at the resident tuition rate.

Since its founding in 1963, USA has been one of Alabama's fastest growing universities and offers a wide range of undergraduate and graduate academic programs in Allied Health Professions, Arts and Sciences, Mitchell College of Business, Computer and Information Sciences, Continuing Education and Special Programs, Education, Engineering, Medicine, Nursing and Pharmacy with Auburn University. USA has awarded more than 66,000 degrees.

In addition to teaching and research, USA is one of the largest health care providers in the region, providing more than a quarter million patient encounters annually through its faculty physicians, two hospitals -- Children's & Women's and USA Medical Center -- and the Mitchell Cancer Institute.

Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, a public, comprehensive community college serving over 37,000 credit and non-credit students, has been meeting the educational needs of its four-county district for almost 100 years. In 1965, the college opened the Jackson County Campus which has grown to more than 4,000 credit students since its inception. Educational offerings include academic, technical, career, continuing education, and workforce development. The college annually graduates more than 1,500

students who have attended one or more of the college's eight locations. MGCCC is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools-Commission on Colleges (SACS-COC).

The USA Gautier campus will be located on the first floor of the University Building on the MGCC Jackson County campus. For more information or to find out more about academic offerings available through USA Gautier, call (251) 461-1640. Students may apply online at <http://www.southalabama.edu/admissions/index.html>.