

60 Scary

Alcorn State University just cut 60 personnel positions from its budget, all in response to the dire economic/budgetary situation facing Mississippi's 8 public institutions of higher learning. Some of ASU's cuts were in *faculty* contracts that were not renewed for the 2009-10 academic year, and these cuts occurred at ASU's main campus in Lorman. There is no news yet as to whether or not any of Mississippi's other 7 institutions will be cutting faculty positions, but it is known that they all face similarly bad budgetary situations. USM has not yet cut any occupied faculty lines, though lines for new hires have been frozen. However, USM president Martha Saunders' decision to lease a company airplane put the 99 year old institution in a precarious financial situation. One would have to think that, even if no elimination of occupied lines occurs, the open faculty lines will remain frozen. In bad economic times like these, the security of the faculty is linked to the competence of university leadership. Given the ill-advised decision to lease the airplane, there is no wondering why USM faculty and staff are scared at the moment.