

## ECO Strikes Deal with USM

HATTIESBURG – The topsy-turvy world that is USM these days just got a little weirder. According to Meryl Dakin's [2-Sept-09 report](#) for *The Student Printz*, USM has accepted the CoB economists' proposal, wherein the 5 mostly senior professors – George Carter, Trellis Green, William Gunther, Mark Klinedinst, and Edward Nissan – will retire at the end of this year (2009-10) so that the economics department at USM will survive. This proposal came from the economists in response to USM's Aug-09 decision to eliminate all of the CoB's economics programs and its 9 tenured/tenure-track faculty. As reported earlier by USMNEWS.net, the five retirements will save the institution about \$650,000 per year in salaries/fringes. The remaining 4 members of the USM economics department – Sami Dakhliya, Denis Gevrek, Akbar Marvasti and Daniel Monchuk – will, according to the plan, be moved over into the College of Arts & Letters. Reports here at USMNEWS.net indicate that this move will cost CoAL dean Denise von Herrmann about \$300,000 per year in salaries/fringes.

This price tag doesn't appear to bother von Herrmann, who surprisingly told Dakin that she was never in favor of terminating the economists, despite having said as much to the media on other occasions in recent days. The apparent double-talk from von Herrmann is, according to sources, just one element of this whole wacky situation that now has the CoB's departing economists saying that they are retiring so that the institution can avoid national embarrassment. Some readers have suggested that the deal between the 5 senior economists and the institution, which the economists say will allow the institution to live on, should be made a major part of USM's centennial celebration, which is set to begin on 1-Jan-10.

Associate professor Sami Dakhliya told Dakin that he was looking forward to working with von Herrmann in an effort to strengthen the economics major, making it an asset to the CoAL. He also pointed out that he was "touched" by the petitions and protests in favor of ECO over the past two weeks. According to Dakhliya, students and faculty ". . . chose to become vocal and made their opinions and voices be heard . . . they made all the difference." A number of readers have commented that Klinedinst, who seemed to be the leader of ECO's effort, hasn't been as active over the whole course of his 1985 through July-09 career at USM as he has been since Aug-09. Some have even commented that perhaps this is a fitting way for him to end his 25 years at USM, having brokered a union-style employment concession at a *non*-union shop. The only irony might be that the reward for the 4 remaining ECOers is affiliation with CoAL, which sources say was Klinedinst's dream all along.