

IHL Moves to Eliminate CoB's MIS Program

HATTIESBURG – With what some are characterizing as yet another surprising (and bold) turn, Mississippi's IHL (the governing body of public universities) moved to cancel the CoB's MIS program at its March-2010 board meeting. After what is referred to as a "first reading," the job of cutting the program out of the CoB will be completed by the IHL at its regular April meeting in just a few weeks.

What will become of MIS faculty? Its chair, Donna Davis, is set to retire on 30-June-10. Should that retirement *not* occur, Davis will become part of the School of Accountancy, under the direction of Kirby "Skip" Hughes. Chang-Tseh Hsieh and Kuo Lane Chen, professor and associate professor, respectively, are each tenured MIS faculty members. Long-time readers will likely recall the controversy surrounding USM's recent decision to tenure Chen. More on that story is available in the USMNEWS.net archives. Recent reports at USMNEWS.net revealed that James Magruder, an associate professor of MIS, is being called on by CoB dean Lance Nail to handle the business statistics courses that are being vacated by the ousting of economics faculty. Magruder is teaching a 150-students section of BA 301 in fall 2010. Sources also indicate that he will facilitate the degree completions of the CoB's remaining MIS majors.

That leaves two junior MIS faculty in Barry Cumbie and Dale Lunsford, neither of whom is tenured at this point. Cumbie is one of Nail's few hires (since 2008) to date, and sources tell USMNEWS.net that he will likely be retained to handle the MIS core courses, and to assist Magruder in covering the MIS courses for the straggling majors. Lunsford, on the other hand, may be facing termination after the 2010-11 academic year. Readers of USMNEWS.net may recall that Lunsford is currently serving his second stint in the USM b-school. The first ended badly, when Lunsford resigned amidst reports that his tenure application would be denied. He returned to USM in recent years, reportedly at the behest of Davis, from High Point College in North Carolina. It now looks likely that Lunsford made a bad bet, and reports indicate that his vitae may not be strong enough to land a position elsewhere during the upcoming academic year.

With the elimination of ECO, and now MIS, the CoB's fashion merchandising faculty has to be feeling some heat. Speculation had MIS on the chopping block after ECO, and that will soon come to fruition. After that, many have indicated to USMNEWS.net that FM would be a serious candidate for elimination. One avenue for USM administrators is to retain only Brigitte Burgess, letting the two untenured faculty from that unit go after 2010-11. As this story plays out, USMNEWS.net will be on the scene.