

One if by E-Mail, Two if by Blog

HATTIESBURG – With a \$15 million budget cut looming that could cost the jobs of 100 USM faculty, USM president Martha Saunders and USM provost Robert Lyman recently met with the five USM deans and the co-chairs of the University Priorities Committee to discuss “how to ‘best communicate’ proposed cuts to employees” and others concerned. The conclusion of these discussions: USM brass should, following the age-old administration practice, release the budget cut details this *Friday*. All we are left to ponder, say sources, is whether the bad news will come via presidential e-mail or presidential blog.

We know the latest about the looming \$15 million budget cut [thanks to](#) *The Hattiesburg American's* Ed Kemp, who penned the 25-Aug-2010 *THA* news report entitled “USM to announce budget cuts soon.” In it, Kemp informs the Hattiesburg and USM communities that USM will possibly inform faculty facing termination about their predicament on Thursday, 26-Aug-2010. Doing so will allow the USM administration to inform the broader communities of the budget cut details the following day, 27-Aug-2010. These dates still allow for little time before the 1-Sept-2010 deadline set by the IHL for issuing terminal contracts to tenured/tenure-track faculty. Still, Saunders cautions that a Friday announcement is a goal, not a commitment.

New faculty senate president Anita Davis told Kemp that the mood around campus has swung between fearful and uneasy over the past few months. Reports coming into USMNEWS.net offices on 25-Aug-2010 described a “gallows mentality” among faculty and staff on the Hattiesburg-based campus. As Davis stated to Kemp, “[w]e’re losing our colleagues, and it’s not easy.” The loss of colleagues continues from last year, when five members of USM’s economics department (William Gunther, Trellis Green, George Carter, Mark Klinedinst, and Edward Nissan) were forced into retirement. The remaining four economists were moved from the CoB to the CoAL, though three of them – Sami Dakhliya, Akbar Marvasti, and Deniz Gevrek – quickly acted to secure employment elsewhere for 2010. Last year’s cuts also caused faculty losses in education technology, though those were appealed and a compromise was reached that saved at least a portion of them.

It’s almost anyone’s guess as to where this situation is headed. USMNEWS.net will be on the scene as further developments arise.