

Saunders Sends e-Harbinger to USM Community

HATTIESBURG – On 13-August-2010 USM president Martha Saunders sent an e-mail to USM faculty and staff informing them that recommendations for handling a \$15 million budget cut have been sent from the University Priorities Committee to her cabinet. A copy of that e-mail appears below:

From: all-facstaff-bounces@usm.edu [mailto:all-facstaff-bounces@usm.edu] On Behalf Of USM Mailout
Sent: Friday, August 13, 2010 1:08 PM
To: all-facstaff@usm.edu
Subject: [All-facstaff] Special Message from President Saunders

University Priorities Committee Ready to Deliver Cost-Saving Recommendations

In January of this year, the IHL Board of Trustees asked the state's universities to develop plans to address anticipated budget losses for FY 2012. At Southern Miss, we expect a decrease of approximately \$15 million in the 2011-2012 academic year.

Upon a recommendation from the Faculty Senate, I approved the formation of the University Priorities Committee to assist with determining university priorities and budget reductions. Under the direction of overall chairman, Bill Powell, the UPC began its work in January 2010.

After months of reviewing nearly 500 academic and non-academic programs and units across campus, the committee has submitted a draft of its recommendations to the Provost and me. The Executive Cabinet will review the recommendations and provide feedback so that the UPC can finalize its report.

While we know what our tuition will be in 2011, we do not know what our state appropriation will be and are attempting to plan for worst-case scenarios. The process to achieve these savings is taking place in a fluid environment in which there are many variables including enrollment, retention, tax revenues and increased costs.

Although there is a strong likelihood that programs will be reduced or eliminated, our top priority will be to maintain a quality educational experience for our students. Their success will be our first consideration.

For more information about this process and the work of the UPC, visit <http://www.usm.edu/upc>.

While these are not easy decisions, we are grateful to the campus community for its hard work and patience throughout this process. Take heart. We will persevere, and Southern Miss will emerge stronger than ever when these difficult times have passed.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Martha Saunders
President

Saunders indicates in her e-mail that the UPC examined 500 academic and non-academic programs in its search to cut \$15 million from the operating budget. Once the recommendations are reviewed by the USM cabinet, they will be made public. Sources tell USMNEWS.net that the CoB will not escape the pain coming from the cuts, and that at least a few tenured/tenure-track CoB faculty will receive termination notices in the near future.

Look for future reports from USMNEWS.net as this situation develops further.