

USM Suspends Admissions into CoB MIS Program

HATTIESBURG – USM provost Robert Lyman reported to the USM Faculty Senate (on 4-Dec-09) that USM will suspend admissions into the CoB's MIS program beginning in January of 2010. In explaining this decision, Lyman told senators that the MIS program was slated for elimination by the old APG during the 2010 budget cut talks that took place during spring/summer 2009, however the APG ultimately decided to place MIS on the second(ary) cuts list instead. The APG's recommendation to eliminate economics, though, put MIS in continued jeopardy given its departmental affiliation in the CoB with ECO.

Lyman also told gathered senators that there remains some possibility that MIS will again be in jeopardy when the new UPC begins the 2011 budget cuts deliberations. In fact, Lyman described the CoB's MIS program as one with considerable uncertainty. According to Lyman, this uncertainty led him to recommend to USM president Martha Saunders that USM suspend admissions into MIS beginning Jan-2010. Saunders accepted Lyman's recommendation, and decided to suspend MIS admissions (beginning Jan-2010) for at least one year. After one year the situation is slated for re-evaluation.

One claim made by Lyman in response to a faculty senator's question is that MIS enrollment remains above of any sort of IHL guidelines for terminating programs, etc. However, sources tell USMNEWS.net that suspending admissions into MIS for one year will turn above-the-line enrollment numbers into problematic ones, thereby ensuring that MIS be put in future jeopardy, especially if Mississippi's fiscal condition is as bad as described (to USM faculty) by IHL Commissioner Hank Bounds.

Should the CoB's MIS program ever reach the chopping block, which seems probable now, Lyman stated that its faculty will have the same opportunity to appeal their plight as the CoB's nine economists (and other USM faculty) had back in Sept-09. Unfortunately for MIS faculty, however, Donna Davis, one of only two senior faculty in the unit, will be retiring from USM on 30-June-2010. MIS' only other senior professor, Chang-Tseh Hsieh, is not capable, at least according to sources, of articulating the unit's appeal before Saunders' cabinet. As a result, the program would likely be terminated if faced with that situation.

Stay tuned for more on this matter, as 2010-11 is likely to be a turbulent one for MIS.