

## CoB Dean Goes on Record Regarding Budget Cuts

HATTIESBURG – Just recently the CoB cut the better part of \$1.5 million from its operating budget, the result of a process that has been weeks and months in the making, and one in which USM's four other academic deans have been taking part in their respective colleges. Until now, however, it has been the CoAL's Denise von Herrmann who has served as the main spokesperson for the five USM deans. That all changed with *The Hattiesburg American's* Tim Doherty's [13-August-09 news report](#) entitled "USM budget cuts: All 5 colleges may be hit," wherein CoB dean Lance Nail speaks out in some detail about the CoB's elimination of three economics programs and 9 tenured/tenure-track ECO faculty.

As Nail explained to Doherty, "[t]he total number of economics majors in the college represents less than 1 percent of the students enrolled in the College of Business. So, the supply of faculty and demand of students is most out of line in Economics, and it is our smallest degree program by far. Between all three degree programs there have been only 10 graduates over the past three years compared to over 1,500 (College of Business) graduates overall, so, the core mission of the College will not be substantially impacted by the elimination of the Economics program if that recommendation is adopted." Sources tell USMNEWS.net that Nail's analysis and decision to support the elimination of the ECO majors makes sense. The public had been previously told that there are only 21 current majors across all three programs, and that they graduate a combined 5 students each year. As if these numbers weren't compelling, now Nail tells us that there have been only 10 graduates across these programs over the past three years. That is an average of about 3 graduates per year, and the total of 10 represents less than 1 percent of all CoB grads over three years.

Nail didn't stop with the lengthy quote above. He went on to tell Doherty that cutting the three economics majors would not affect the CoB's standing with AACSB. According to Nail, in his interview with Doherty, "[o]ther degree programs in the college and university will be only marginally impacted. According to our accrediting body, the AACSB, less than half of our member schools of business offer economics degrees." This explanation squashes [recent speculation](#) (on the *USM Forum – Message Board*) by "LVN" – who is thought to be former CoB staffer Linda Vance, whose job was eliminated on 30-June-09 – that Nail may not have pre-certified his move to cut economics with his accrediting body, the AACSB. LVN's speculation, and comments like those of "Anguslordie" on *The Hattiesburg American's* website (see below), seem to reflect either misinformation or inadequate information.

[Anguslordie](#) wrote:

Mr. Nail is being disingenuous at best. Hundreds of students take economics classes every year. I would like to know who will teach econ--which is, as far as I know, the basis of business and finance--once all the professors are gone.

As Nail explained to Doherty, an economics *major* is not central to a business school, as less than half of all AACSB-accredited b-schools have one in place currently. And while

Anguslordie's concern seems legitimate at first glance, it fails to recognize the fact that the CoB's economics requirements (ECO 101, 201 and 202) can be covered with as few as two faculty lines. In current CoB finance and decision sciences instructors Farooq Malik and James Magruder, respectively, the CoB has two individuals with PhDs in *economics*. Malik's came from Texas Tech University, while Magruder's came from Southern Illinois University. Additionally, CoB finance professor James Lindley holds an economics PhD from the University of Georgia, while Chang-Tseh Hsieh, the *McCarty Distinguished Professor of DS*, holds a PhD in finance from Purdue University. Sources tell USMNEWS.net that this cadre of CoB professionals is easily capable of chipping in to handle the CoB's ECO course offerings in the interim, even if on an overload basis. Not only that, sources tell USMNEWS.net that even when ECO courses were managed by *the ECO people themselves*, decisions like placing Susan Doty, John Lambert and other *unqualified* individuals in front of large sections of ECO commonly occurred. Doty holds only a 27 year-old *MBA*, while Lambert has *online* master's and PhD degrees in *management*. Thus, according to sources, the *ECO people themselves* have been some of the worst stewards of the ECO courses the CoB has ever known.

Sources tell USMNEWS.net that the debates over the decision to cut the economics majors is going to be highly emotional and often erratic, as indicated by the recent *USM Forum --- Message Board* post by "Art Vandelay," which hints at some sort of diabolical plot behind the elimination of the economics programs and faculty.

<p><b>Art Vandelay</b> Posts: 5 Date: 13h, 45m ago</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Reply Quote</p> <p>Dear Baldwin:</p> <p>Your little diatribe suggests that your issues with economics go beyond the curricular content of the College of Business. In particular, you claim that "economics has long been a political problem within the COB" and you threw in some denigrating comments and lies for good measure. Well, it takes at least two parties for there to be a "political problem."</p> <p>Your bias reveals that something other than a fair evaluation of the facts is driving the decision to collectively eliminate economics faculty.</p> <p>Art</p>
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Vandelay's debate with another poster, "Baldwin," can be followed via the first link in this report above. Sources tell USMNEWS.net that the Vandelay-Baldwin debate is a good place for gathering some background information on ECO's place in USM's CoB. They also point out that now that Nail has gone on the record, the decision to eliminate ECO can be seen in a different light.

Stay tuned for more coverage on this story as new details emerge.