

Downward Mobbing Now Part of USM's Fabric

HATTIESBURG - At the end of USM's spring 2011 convocation on 12-April-2011, a Q&A session was held, ostensibly to field questions about Responsibility Centered Management (RCM). To the USM administration's surprise, that session went in an entirely different direction when history professor Doug Chambers questioned the administration about reports that a total of six (6) various USM faculty were currently suspended from teaching for fear of danger. USM provost Robert Lyman responded to Chambers, indicating that *only* three (3) faculty had been suspended during the current academic year in separate situations due to feelings of fear (of them) raised by their supervisors and co-workers. According to Lyman, all three faculty are currently receiving pay, pending the outcome in each case. He added that all three cases remain in the investigation stage, though one of the faculty had since retained legal counsel, placing him/her in a separate category.

Sources tell USMNEWS.net that Lyman's admission of three (3) cases is both astonishing and surprising, and that the possibility that there are actually more, such as the reports stating that there are six (6), cannot now be ruled out. Sources point out that what is going on at USM appears to be a sort of top-down mobbing, wherein outspoken faculty are simply being removed from campus life on the basis of trumped-up feelings of fear by various USM administrators, and, in some cases, other faculty. This same situation arose in USM's business school back in the fall of 2007, bringing the total of faculty in a situation like that described above to at least four (4). If the premise of Chambers' question is indeed more accurate, if not stated, then the total number of USM faculty put in this position since summer of 2007 is approaching 10.

With what appears to be a summer 2007 beginning, long-time readers of USMNEWS.net likely recognize this as a situation that has arisen with the hiring of Martha Saunders back in the spring of 2007. Newer visitors to USMNEWS.net may want to peruse the archives to get a better understanding about how far USM has since moved away from what could be called "the mainstream" in higher education. All readers of USMNEWS.net - old and new - would do well to visit Kenneth Westhues' [website](#) for more on the topic of mobbing in academe. Among the many techniques used by mobbers, Westhues lists "fear of danger" as one of the most egregious tactics employed by some in academia who want to crush those who would question the ethics/integrity of their leaders.