

CoB News, 30 September 2009

Klinedinst's Fading 15 Minutes

CoB economics professor Mark Klinedinst has been on what USMNEWS.net sources have referred to as the ride of his life since early August of 2009. It was at that time that the Martha Saunders administration of USM warned the USM family that serious budget cuts were in the institution's near future. As a part of those cuts the Academic Planning Group (APG) that was advising Saunders recommended the elimination of the CoB's economics majors and its 9 tenured/tenure-track faculty. It was then that Klinedinst sprung into action, leading the ECOers and doing interviews with media outlets such as *Inside Higher Ed*, telling the world that USM officials were not following various stated processes in working to eliminate the 9 economics faculty. (Klinedinst's colleague, George Carter, took things further by telling news outlets that the economists were the target of subterfuge, and that a tenth economist – Yosef Bonaparte – had already fallen prey to a conspiracy hatched by USM administrators.)



Lee Celano for *The Chronicle*

Mark Klinedinst, an economics professor at the U. of Southern Mississippi, appealed the decision to cut the major by citing the numbers of nonmajors in the program.

Now, two months later, the saga has apparently come to an end. Klinedinst, Carter and three other mostly senior economists (William Gunther, Edward Nissan, and Trellis Green) struck a deal with USM wherein they have agreed to retire after 2009-10 so that the four mostly junior economists (Akbar Marvasti, Daniel Monchuk, Deniz Gevrek and Sami Dakhli) can continue their USM careers in the College of Arts & Letters. Yet even though the saga is apparently over now, Klinedinst was still able to leverage a bit of extra attention from the episode – attention that came via David Glenn's 28-Sept-09

article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* entitled "When Tenured Professors are Laid Off, What Recourse?"

In describing the recent situation at USM, Klinedinst told Glenn, "We realize that the university has been trying to be proactive in these difficult times. The problem we have is that these decisions are going forward without formal hearings before an impartial body." Sources tell USMNEWS.net, however, that Klinedinst's comments are off point – the APG, which made the recommendation to eliminate ECO, was exactly the kind of impartial body that Klinedinst stated was lacking in the recent process. Sources say instead that Klinedinst's upset comes as a result of not having the kinds of "good ol' boy" control over the administrative/political machinery at USM that served faculty like Klinedinst, Carter, Farhang Niroomand (now the b-school dean at the University of Houston – Victoria) and others so well over the past two decades.

Klinedinst stated in the interview that he would like the University to follow national guidelines set by the AAUP, in which a faculty committee would hear appeals from departments slated for elimination. "There are basic questions of shared governance here," Klinedinst told Glenn. USM provost Robert Lyman didn't completely disagree, yet he added that administrators would still need to be able to take care of budget matters for the university. As sources put it, though he would like it to have ultimate authority in matters of program/faculty termination, Klinedinst's faculty body could not be anything more than advisory.

It seems, particularly with the tone of this *TCHE* piece, that the ECO saga is coming to a close. Of course, if there are any new developments USMNEWS.net will be on the scene to provide breaking news reports.

Can Saunders be Sued?

Once again a member of the coterie of lawyers surrounding USM president Martha Saunders is making the argument that she has "qualified immunity" against lawsuits. The latest claim comes via Herman Hollensed's [response](#) to the latest lawsuit filed against Saunders by former USM assistant athletics director Greg Herring. Herring claims that he was forced by Saunders to resign (or face being fired) after he commenced a fall 2008 "Eagle Walk" prior to Saunders having arrived at the M.M. Roberts Stadium location where USM's traditional EW occurs. The Saunders legal team's response is being heard so often these days that one has to wonder whether

Saunders believes she is above the United States legal/judicial system. Whether or not Saunders holds such a belief is irrelevant, sources say, to the fact that having to maintain a coterie of lawyers is itself a concern Mississippi taxpayers should have vis-à-vis Saunders' employment by the state.