

Dear usmnews.net

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I don't know what you are hearing from campus, but the situation is bad and expected to get worse. Southern Miss has lost almost 10% of its student body. Some of us think the number is even higher and total [enrollment is even lower](#), but is hidden behind the way the IHL and the school [counts the number](#) of students. A lot of people don't realize it, but most of our money comes from tuition; state appropriations continue to drop. President Bennett suggested in his [budget update](#), that enrollment isn't likely to improve given the competition for students and the reduction in state funding based on loss of credit hours taught. You roughed out the numbers in one of your reports, and here's what we're looking at:

$\$3,490/\text{semester} \times 2 \text{ semester} \times 1623 \text{ students lost} = \$11,238,540$

BTW, I haven't adjusted for the income lost last year because of the drop in enrollment. I'm just talking about this year.

We have a lot of fixed costs, like paying back the loans the university took out to go on its building spree. Those have to be paid back. I don't see Bennett and his overpaid administrators taking pay cuts, so most of us think we are going to see another round of layoffs and department closings.

Name withheld by request

Dear Name withheld,

usmnews.net continues to receive comments similar to the ones above. Except for a [letter to the University](#) community, many comment that no one seems to have heard much from President Bennett. Surrogates include the Provost and Vice President for Finance who have publicly struggled to explain the situation without unduly distressing anyone. According to them, the University can reduce costs by cutting travel expenses, freezing hiring, increasing class sizes. No one really believes that. As noted above, far too many of the Universities' costs are fixed. They cannot be eliminated. The costs that are not fixed are personnel. Many remember the \$1 million or so saved by eliminating the economics and MIS departments in the College of Business.