

## Fruit from the Grapevine

As talk continues to swirl around the campus at Southern Miss, more and more of the focus is on the more clearly emerging triad of President Martha Saunders, Provost Bob Lyman, and Dean Denise von Herrmann (College of Arts and Letters [CoAL]). This is a liberal arts trinity that appears to be protecting the CoAL from any major budget cuts in the roughly \$8.5 million university academic budget cuts for next fiscal year. The CoAL will come out of this process not just as the largest college budget (the college entered the process with the biggest budget), but it looks to increase its lead over all other college budgets. Since budgetary matters are a zero-sum game (for one to increase, one or more others must decrease), the CoAL gain is mostly coming from the College of Business (CoB) loss. The CoB budget was the smallest college budget at Southern Miss, and now it is even smaller. While the triumvirate crows about “strategic planning and cuts” and not having “across the board cuts”, there is no apparent regard for disproportional cuts. The CoB has always been a revenue generator at Southern Miss; why would you want to harm that stream of income? Is that “strategic”? The answer may be that these maneuvers are strategic for the liberal arts triune – it will strategically place the CoAL further ahead of all other colleges at Southern Miss. Is that positive for Southern Miss? Is that any different from what Shelby Thames did for polymer science? The perception is all that is important is the happiness of the Saunders-Lyman-von Herrmann axis.