

June 30th

Looking ahead to June 30th, what is going to happen if the 5 Economics “retirees” do not retire? As has been reported here previously, no one on either side was willing to commit to this “agreement” in writing: the “retirees” would not submit letters of retirement without assurances that the University would not renege on their part and fire the remaining economics faculty members and the University would not commit to that in writing without the letters of retirement. This is a classic stand-off. Supposedly at this point, both sides want the same thing, but neither trusts the other side. This could still work out and fade away. It could also blow-up and force Southern Miss into a public slap-down position. While everyone who knows the people involved understands the lack of faith in their individual and collective words and commitment, it is also widely understood that if this falls apart the University may have to allow the faux retirees another year of employment at USM, but that would be the last year for *all* of the economists. Every economist would receive the termination letter they did not receive this year. Both sides would again argue they own the moral high ground; by that point that fictional real estate would be valueless.

If this situation does detonate, it will actually be a positive overall opportunity for the dome: they terminate all of the economists rather than half or so of them, and they let Denise von Herrmann, Dean of the College of Arts and Letters, count all the “savings” as an Arts and Letters budget cut for FY 2012. That – again – artificially pads and saves the Arts and Letters budget and – again – sticks it to Lance Nail, Dean of the College of Business. That simply has to be viewed as a “win-win-win” by and for the dome.