

# MISSISSIPPI JUNIOR COLLEGES SHOW THE WAY

## *An Approach to Budget Cutting that Senior Institutions can Use*

Higher education reporter Ed Kemp indirectly provided USM's faculty senate with the kinds of information it needs to combat "draconian" approaches to budget cutting chosen by the USM central administration. That information came via Kemp's 23-May-2010 [article](#) for *The Hattiesburg American* entitled "Budget cuts hit PRCC, JCJC," wherein he indicates that Mississippi's junior colleges are looking to cut athletics in an effort to close budget gaps resulting from the lagging economy. Nearby JCs Pearl River Community College and Jones County Junior College are facing budget cuts of \$3 million and \$2.5 million, respectively, for the 2011 fiscal year that begins on 1-July-2010.

Both JCs raised tuition for the coming year to get to the figures (cuts) listed above. Both are also looking at energy saving measures, according to Kemp, to meet some of the needed cuts. This is also an approach that USM will be implementing for FY2011. PRCC is also, however, moving to a four-day work week to economize, an option that USM has heretofore declined to implement. In other novel approaches, both of these JCs will be cutting sports programs in the near future, another option that USM has apparently taken off of the table in its own efforts to cut \$10 million for FY2011 and \$15 million for FY2012. A summary of some of these follows:

- PRCC has eliminated its golf *and* tennis programs
- PRCC plans to seek ways to reduce athletics-related travel expenses
- Both JCJC and PRCC will eliminate all off-season games and scrimmages
- Both JCJC and PRCC will cut all athletics schedules, with the exception of football and soccer, by 10%

It is highly unlikely that USM will consider dropping any of its sports programs. However, the third provision above would eliminate all fall semester golf, tennis and/or softball contests, none of which count towards official records/NCAA participation. This move would save USM a consequential sum. Also, a 10% schedule reduction would cut USM's basketball and volleyball seasons by three contests each, for a total of nine. A 10% reduction in baseball would eliminate five games, while a 10% cut in softball would reduce the schedule by about four games. Tennis would see its schedules fall by about two matches each, for a total of four. In all, about 22 athletics contests would go away as a result of a 10% schedule reduction at USM. Finally, item two above would likely eliminate some air travel, while it would also reduce the quality of some of the bus travel that currently takes place.

Is it likely that USM will follow the lead of the state's junior institutions? Sources say "no," though they do point out that the innovative approaches found by the JCs does give bodies like the USM faculty senate a strong case to make to the central administration. Whether or not the USM faculty senate will do so remains to be seen.