

Some Say **Klinedinst** Now **Worsening Budget Crisis** for USM Faculty and Staff

Word coming from some who have communicated with USMNEWS.net indicates that economic professor Mark Klinedinst may now be harming the efforts of USM faculty who are attempting to navigate the current USM budget crisis with minimal faculty/staff losses. As reported by numerous media outlets, USM is currently planning for a \$15 million to \$20 million budget cut, so some faculty losses are expected to be announced soon. USM provost Robert Lyman has even pointed out that estimates of 100 faculty losses are not out of the realm of possibility. And, Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour recently suggested that next year's cuts might make this year's seem mild by comparison.



Dr. Mark Klinedinst speaks Friday at the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg during an American Association of University Professors meeting. The AAUP has weighed in with alternative suggestions to cutting faculty and staff. (matt bush | Hattiesburg American)

The highlights above vividly frame the current crisis facing USM at the moment. A number of recent editorials, reports and/or *GH Chatter* posted to USMNEWS.net in the past few days and weeks have pointed out that Klinedinst has been on a crusade of sorts regarding this same budget crisis. In doing so, Klinedinst has been referring to “sacred cows” and other aspects of the budget as areas that USM administration refuses to address. While his earlier efforts *may* have been aiding the cause of USM faculty, some are saying that Klinedinst's latest efforts – through the USM chapter of the AAUP – have likely undone any good he was previously accomplishing, and are now making the situation worse, particularly for faculty and staff. In his [19-April-10 report](#) for *The Hattiesburg American* entitled “USM cuts ‘painful,’” *THA* higher education reporter Ed Kemp covers the 16-April-10 meeting of USM's AAUP, wherein a list of “17 alternative budget cutting solutions” were released by the Klinedinst-led group. As Kemp states, “[t]hey range from capping enrollment to furloughs to dropping a division in athletics,” though a full list is available at www.aaup-usm.org.

Sources tell USMNEWS.net that Lyman stated (in a university-wide town hall meeting) that he is seriously opposed to faculty furloughs, while it would also seem that a cap on enrollment would shrink USM's only source of revenue at this point, making it a move that Lyman and USM president Martha Saunders will dismiss out of hand. It may, however, be that the suggestion to drop a division in athletics – presumably to division two – will doom any further efforts that USM faculty and staff may hope to make that will minimize cuts in human resources. This is so because much of the private support for USM comes from those who would consider themselves staunch supporters of USM sports. A sample of what the community thinks about Klinedinst's/the AAUP's proposals is found below, from comments to *THA*'s website:

baldeagle101 wrote:

In the past if you were a tenured professor at USM you had a cush job, you could do as little as you wanted to and it was ok. Lack of attention to this is one of the reasons we are where we are now.

Drop all sports but football and baseball, go independant, only schedule up to Div I teams! Go back to anyone anywhere anytime!! We would have a 12 game away season but what the heck we cannot fill the Rock anyway!!! Next do away with the Rock and build more parking lots and dorms. Who needs a homecoming game? Make it a Spring event like the 100 year celebration. No need for an Athletic Director or Dept. Let the football and baseball coaches schedule their own games. Go back to the McCain days when if you were a professor you taught classes, lots of classes.....day and night too!
4/19/2010 3:03:36 PM

happysunshyne wrote:

I kind of like the idea of merging universities and canning some professors that are just there because they rubbed elbows to have a cushy position even though they don't need it! If the gov't is going to be merging schools and school districts, the state universities shouldn't be exempt from this either. Make some of the older professors retire. There are a lot of options other than just plan gettting rid of education all together. Or, here is another food for thought, if you didn't charge so dangum much to go to college, maybe that would help. If people could afford it and didn't have to depend on gov't funded programs or scholarships to go to college, that would be a HUGE help.
4/19/2010 10:30:51 AM

GoldDome wrote:

Or better yet why not merge Old Miss with Southern Miss and get rid of a bunch of choir boys at Old Miss. All the Universities are hurting. Education is never a top priority in this state and with the current administration never will be. We rank 50 in a lot of categories for a reason and education is just one of them.
4/19/2010 8:27:13 AM

dorightnell wrote:

NOw isn't that just like a Union?...Give us our jobs and salaries, no matter what. Here's some free advice that I usually charge big bucks for: Get a real job. Try, for instance, a job that has real consequences if you do not do it well. Work on a construction job or an assembly line and screw up and see how long "tenure" lasts.

Now hear this! Professors are not "special". Now, quit your bedwetting and deal with reality.
4/19/2010 7:38:01 AM

TommyTucker wrote:

The efforts of the education system to get us to accept that they are "special" and different from everyone else and thus should be immune to this economic mess that they have greatly contributed to with their liberal ideas is ridiculous. Whatever happened to the idea that we were all in this together and would work it out together?? Selfishness has overtaken our society and it seems that groups in the education system, unions and many other government employees think they should be granted some special immunity and not have to share in the solution to this mess. Rich and not so rich private citizens also need to make sacrifices and quit crying. We used to solve problems together, now we seem to do everything possible to make someone else pay. We can thank many of these liberal professors that at dominating most colleges in America today for much of this mess as they have failed to teach out kids how to and where to find the TRUTH AND REALITY.
4/19/2010 7:36:15 AM

Paluka wrote:

Drop a division in sports? Are these people nuts? Let's drop about 150 of them. There are a lot of useless professors on that campus. Some of the classes they teach are not meaty. Let's can those. We should not have even offered many of these classes. I agree with getting rid of some sports. Women's basketball is a total waste and to boot they don't win! Football is the King of USM. Want to play Delta State? Talk about making USM a Belhaven school. I think we can fire a few coaches if we don't do better next season. That MTSU game should still burn deep. It was like we did not have a full staff anyway. Guys can play just as bad without coaches so there are some savings there. Get rid of some of those dead-head professors and then come back and talk about sports. Why not just merge with Ole Miss?
4/19/2010 7:26:22 AM

Interestingly, Kemp refers to Klinedinst as having last year been on "the . . . chopping block," and this year as "retiring," in reference to the forced retirements of Klinedinst, William Gunther, Trellis Green, Edward Nissan and George Carter, all from economics. These five mostly senior faculty in ECO are retiring so that Sami Dakhliya, Daniel Monchuk, Deniz Gevrek and Akbar Marvasti can continue their USM careers, though only some will do so, in USM's CoAL. Gevrek resigned in Dec09/Jan10 in order to move to Texas A&M University at Corpus Christi, while Dakhliya has resigned and is moving on to a French university for 2010- 11. In his interview with Kemp, Klinedinst stated that "the list's purpose is to show there other options to the last resort

of dumping faculty members” and that “[i]t doesn't make good economic sense to hurt a resource that is both central to the university mission and that generates revenue for the university.”¹

The 17 items specified by the USM AAUP are:

- Eliminate or reduce E&G funded scholarships.
- Reduce the percentage of tuition allocated to athletics.
- Drop down a division in athletics.
- Cut the total budget for the university administration. (e.g. Are four assistant/associate provosts necessary? Does there need to be an associate provost at the coast right now?).
- Reallocate a greater share of F&A and salary recovery to colleges to provide more funding for faculty positions. Right now, 10% of the F&A (indirects) generated by grants goes to the college (dean); 15% goes to the department; 75% goes to the Vice President of Research and to the “general fund.” An alternative might be to give deans 50% of the F&A instead of 10% to put towards support of faculty lines.
- Institute green initiative recommendations to save on utilities (flextime, work-from-home staff arrangements, four day school week? building utility initiatives, etc.).
- Staff reduction strategies such as staff pooling should be considered - e.g. two departments with two staff apiece might instead share three staff altogether (especially if we raised pay a bit and allowed up to 50% of hours to be worked from home, it might be a popular innovation for staff. Pooling might be across campuses).
- Furlough 12 month faculty, staff and administrators.
- Estimate savings from cuts of all faculty/administrators with salaries over \$100,000 (3, 5 or 10% cut).
- Estimate savings from various cuts/loans such as 20% over 200k, 10% 100- 200k, 5% 50- 100k 3% 30- 50k.
- Cap all salaries at USM at 200k.
- Estimate savings from a cut of all salaries by 2%.
- Temporarily suspend MIDAS. Give the 40% of salary recovery, previously sent to MIDAS, to the deans and chairs to decide how best to “incentivize” faculty.
- Offer early retirement incentives (e.g. U. Chicago - no upfront costs if the money is paid out over one semester. The retiree gives up the next year's salary for a 50% pay out. The university saves 50% of the salary in year one and 100% in subsequent years).
- Additional outsourcing should be considered (e.g. marketing/communications; payroll).
- Reorganize Academic Affairs to reduce the number of administrative positions.
- Keep class sizes reasonable. Cap enrollment. Possibly increase academic standards if necessary.

With proposals to allow working from home, capping salaries at \$200,000, reducing administration, capping enrollment, suspending MIDAS, and early retirement – many of which have already been criticized by the Saunders administration – it is possible that this same USM administration will see this list as little more than a passive-aggressive, public handwringing of sorts on the part of Klinedinst and the AAUP. The prospect of cutting head football coach Larry Fedora’s salary to \$200,000, taking away the polymer scientists’ MIDAS funds, and knocking the USM baseball program down to division two will not put “Mark Klinedinst” or “USM AAUP” in a positive light across the local community.

One final element of the Kemp story is in the third photograph from *THA*’s Matt Bush, which is inserted below.



¹ It would seem that the faculty’s ability to “generate revenue” would be hampered by the AAUP’s proposed enrollment cap.

It appears that it is economics professor Akbar Marvasti who is seated at the back of the room, arms folded and wearing a dark shirt.² Marvasti's brief career (thus far) at USM has been marked by controversy, including an unusual fall tenure award from the Mississippi IHL that reports say came only after an internal inquiry at USM. It is faculty like Marvasti who may have the most to lose from a souring of the atmosphere that may be occurring in Hattiesburg (vis-à-vis USM) thanks to Klinedinst and the AAUP.

² The *THA* photos by Matt Bush also show a sparse crowd at the 16-April-10 AAUP meeting, despite the significance of the issues at hand.