

Terminal Confusion

A [24-July-09 news story](#) by *The Hattiesburg American's* higher education reporter Ed Kemp has resulted in some misinformation/confusion among the USM community concerning the ongoing budget crisis. According to Kemp (in "USM prepares for budget cuts"), ". . . state College Board rules [stipulate that] tenured faculty . . . must be notified a year in advance that they will be released. That means the university is facing a Sept. 1 deadline in placing them on terminal contracts for 2010-11 and then releasing them for 2011-12." Unfortunately, Kemp's statement was used in USMNEWS.net's own [Shaking the Trees on USM's Budget Crisis](#), which ran four days later, on 28-July-09.

After checking into the situation, USMNEWS.net reporters have learned that if the 1-Sept-09 deadline for terminating tenured faculty is met, then the 2009-10 contract of any faculty in question represents the terminal contract. As such, any terminated faculty would be released for the 2010-11 academic year. This interpretation of IHL Board rules is also [consistent](#) with USM president Martha Saunders' [answer](#) to "Question #23" and "Question #28" [from](#) the Faculty Senate.

28. How come the academic side of cuts has to be put out there a year in advance when non-academic cuts are not being put out there?

USM and IHL guidelines require that most tenured and tenure track faculty be notified by September 1 if their current contract is going to a terminal one. Therefore, if we are to consider eliminating any academic programs and their personnel, that recommendation has to be made by September 1. It's impossible to consider such cuts in isolation from other possible cuts in Academic Affairs, so the entire list of recommended cuts from Academic Affairs has to be generated this early. The other divisions are not under such a deadline.

Question #28, along with Saunders' response, is inserted above. There Saunders states that "USM and IHL guidelines require that most tenured and tenure track faculty be notified by September 1 if their current contract is going to be a terminal one." With 2009-10 contracts due in the president's office in Aug-09, a notification by 1-Sept-09 of termination means that the 2009-10 academic year is the terminal year, given that one's *current contract* would be the 2009-10 contract.

Saunders' response to Question #23 makes it even clearer. There she points out that ". . . the University is facing a deadline of September 1, 2009 in terms of notifying tenure-track faculty that their contracts might not be renewed after this coming year." This question, and Saunders' response, are inserted in the space below.

23. Is the APG willing to slow down the process a little or do they just want to move forward at the current fast pace?

Unfortunately, the University is facing a deadline of September 1, 2009 in terms of notifying tenure-track faculty that their contracts might not be renewed after this coming year. This means that the APG needs to get its recommendation in front of the Executive Cabinet in time for them to consider them before September 1, 2009. Once such faculty have been notified, there is still time to discuss alternatives to such faculty terminations, as well as the other programmatic reductions that might be recommended. Even after the budget reduction list is approved by the President and Executive Cabinet, circumstances might change that would relieve us of the necessity of making the recommended cuts. Such circumstances could include quicker than predicted recovery of the economy, an adequate tuition increase approved by IHL, an increase in state appropriations, a significant increase in enrollment, a significant increase in private giving, etc.

By not getting a contract renewal "after this coming year," any terminated faculty would be released before the 2010-11 academic year. Of course, Saunders uses the term "might" to indicate that the termination decision is revocable through 30-June-2010. If revoked, any terminated faculty choosing to remain with USM would be reinstated for the 2010-11 year.

Those seven CoAL faculty who are going to be released on 1-Sept-09 by CoAL dean Denise von Herrmann need to know that 2009-10 is their terminal year, and that they should be making plans to have other employment for 2010-11. The same should be said for those CoB faculty who are thought to be "on the block," which at this point appears to be faculty in ECO, FM and TM. Of course, if any news arises regarding the speculated list of CoB targets then USMNEWS.net will bring that news to readers as soon as possible.