

The ECO Terminal

A Newsletter Relating to the Elimination of Economics Programs

Gunther Joins Klinedinst's Army

Former USM CBA dean and current CoB economics professor William Gunther (pictured below) has become the third full professor in ECO to speak publicly about the USM administration's decision to eliminate the CoB's economics majors and its 9 tenured/tenure-track faculty. Gunther did so via an interview with Meryl Dakin of *The Student Printz*, for Dakin's [19-Aug-09 article](#) "Department of Economics in crosshairs of planned cut." Dakin's article also marks the entry into the debate by *The Student Printz*.



The elimination of the 9 CoB economists was, according to sources, especially hard for [Gunther](#), who also served as the [director](#) of the CoB's [Bureau](#) of Business and Economic Research (BBER), which was [suspended](#) along with the economists. Sources tell USMNEWS.net that the [BBER](#) afforded Gunther a [permanent 2/2 teaching load](#), which was very [valuable to him](#) given that he [maintains](#) a permanent [residence](#) in Josephine, AL. Gunther's residence there was [valued at over \\$562,000](#) several years ago by property tax officials.

In their interview, Gunther told Dakin that the department of economics could only be perceived as overstaffed if the number of economics majors were the only factor considered. He stipulated that there were few majors, but noted that economics classes were an integral part of every business degree program. Sources tell USMNEWS.net, however, that the economics classes Gunther refers to are ECO 201 and ECO 202, or the two economics principles courses. They also indicate that it is difficult to imagine a scenario wherein the CoB (or any USM college) needs 9 tenured/tenure-track faculty, costing the university \$1 million per year, to staff these two classes.

Gunther went on to discuss tenure with Dakin, telling her that tenure is sacred at a university, and it should protect one from the whims of administrators. He added that when universities throw tenure out of the window, it sends a signal to prospective faculty that tenure doesn't mean anything. CoB dean Lance Nail conceded that tenure is important, but he noted that USM is not alone in facing what some are calling the worst economic time in decades. Finally, Gunther took a swipe at USM's Academic Planning Group (APG), saying that it did not operate in the open and that it did not allow full participation of faculty. USM provost Robert Lyman reminded Dakin that APG meeting summaries were posted to the Internet and that each academic college had representatives on the group. Sources say that Gunther's arguments did little to combat the explanations provided by Nail and Lyman.

Where is Marvasti?

Some readers of USMNEWS.net have asked when another CoB economics professor, Akbar Marvasti, will join George Carter, Mark Klinedinst and William Gunther in the *public debate* against various USM administrators about the decision to slash the economics majors and 9 tenure/tenure-track economics faculty. Marvasti (pictured below) remains the only [full professor](#) of economics – not counting Edward Nissan, who sources say will remain silent – to avoid the public fray vis-à-vis the budget cut decisions.



[Marvasti](#) was promoted to full professor after coming to USM, and thus, according to sources, should have joined Carter et al. by now in combating the USM administrators. Sources tell USMNEWS.net that when former CoB economics professor Charles Sawyer was interviewing Marvasti during 2005-06, he (Sawyer) informed a [number](#) of CoB faculty that Marvasti was a veteran of faculty vs. administration political battles from his (Marvasti's) [days](#) at the University of Houston – Downtown.

Though there have been a number of debates on various Internet sites, and Marvasti may have been part of those, sources say that Marvasti will not likely join the *public* fray.