

The Farm

News Briefs from Southern Miss

25-Jan-2011

Thomas Defeats Hudson, Others for Top WIU Post

Western Illinois University provost, Jack Thomas, [has become](#) that institution's 11th president, beating out former USM provost Tim Hudson, who is currently employed in the University of Houston System's main office. Thomas will now be earning \$275,000 per year in salary plus retirement benefits. News of Hudson's [resignation as president](#) of the University of Houston at Victoria, and his application for the top job at WIU, hit *The USM Forum* and USMNEWS.net back in Nov-2010.

Who Appealed the Elimination of MIS?

As the USM program elimination appeals committee's 13-Jan-2011 [report](#) makes clear, there was an official appeal of the decision by the Martha Saunders administration to eliminate the CoB's BSBA in management information systems. The insert below shows that the nine-member appeals group not only heard such an appeal, they dispensed with it on a 9-0 vote to "deny," ending any hope that this CoB unit has of existing after 2010-11.

<p>Program: Management Information Systems, BSBA Recommendation: Eliminate Program Votes: 0 Support Appeal; 9 Deny Appeal</p>

The committee also provided a brief, written rationale for its decision, which is also contained in the report, and inserted below.

<p>Enrollment in the program has declined precipitously over the last decade. This appears to be a nationwide problem as many universities have already eliminated similar programs. Efforts to recruit more majors and to modernize the curriculum were apparently not successful.</p>

As the insert above points out, in cutting the program the committee cites a precipitous decline in enrollment since 2001, and it notes that such enrollment problems are being seen nationwide for MIS. The last supporting comment cites failed efforts to recruit majors and modernize the curriculum.

Long-time readers of USMNEWS.net [will recall](#) that USM has been working to eliminate the CoB's MIS program since before Mar-2010, when the IHL board went through a first reading of the action. USM actually [moved to suspend](#) admission's into the CoB's MIS program in the fall of 2009 – a decision that went into effect in Jan-2010. Given this history, any appeal of the fall 2010 decision to [cut MIS](#) and terminate faculty was

destined to fail. Still, the USM community is left wondering exactly *who* appealed the cut. Sources tell USMNEWS.net that the likely appellant was Chang-Tseh Hsieh, professor of MIS, and [University Distinguished Professor](#). Hsieh [was](#), according to sources, [likely acting](#) on behalf of associate professor of Kuo Lane Chen, [who](#) was terminated as a result of the elimination of MIS.

Does Anyone have \$16.8 Million they can Spare?

With a new, Republican Congress taking hold in Jan-2011, state and local reliance on so-called “earmarks” may be nearing an end. Ed Kemp’s 23-Jan-2011 report for *The Hattiesburg American* [indicates that](#) USM received \$16.8 million in federal earmarks last year, an amount it stands to lose now that some in Congress are vowing to end the budget practice. Both USM vice president for research Denis Wiesenburg, and USM president Martha Saunders, seem concerned about what Wiesenburg calls a “new world order” with regard to federal support of universities. According to Saunders, “[f]rom what we're hearing, it's clear that it's going to become more challenging [to get federal money] than ever before.” Given this, sources warn USMNEWS.net readers that more programs, and perhaps additional USM faculty, will have to be let go in order to deal with this new order.