

The Farm

News Briefs from Southern Miss

3-Feb-2011

Saunders Accepts Program Appeals Recommendations

On 2-Feb-2011, USM president Martha Saunders responded to the appeals committee's recommendations regarding Saunders' program eliminations. That response came via the e-mail inserted below, which is addressed "Dear Southern Miss Community."

Dear Southern Miss Community:

The Executive Cabinet and I have accepted the recommendations of the Program Elimination Appeals Committee regarding academic programs scheduled for elimination in FY12. Recommendations included the elimination of 11 programs, the retention of 10 programs and the retention of faculty or graduate assistants for two programs. Faculty members whose contracts will not be renewed as a result of program elimination will have an opportunity to appeal that decision. Students enrolled in programs targeted for elimination will be allowed a reasonable time to complete their degree programs.

I will keep you advised as we move forward, continuing to work together toward solutions to anticipated budget losses for FY12.

Southern Miss – To The Top!

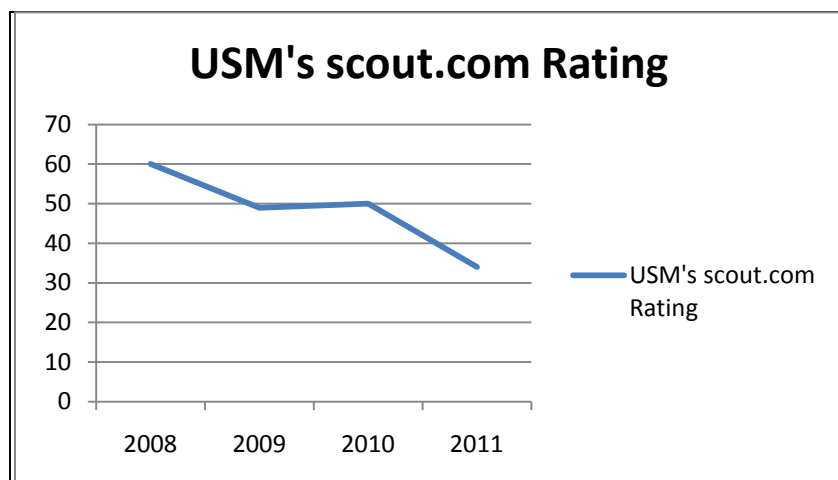
Martha Saunders
President

As the e-mail above indicates, Saunders accepted each one of the appeals committee's recommendations, which included reinstating 10 of the programs that Saunders eliminated back in the fall of 2010. As long-time readers of USMNEWS.net will recall, these eliminations were made in response to the Mississippi IHL's call for USM to designate \$15 million in budget savings for FY2012. With the recent improvement in Mississippi's fiscal situation, a cut as large as \$15 million is no longer expected. Saunders closed her 2-Feb-2011 e-mail by reminding those USM tenured and tenure-track faculty who are being terminated by the fall 2010 budget cuts that appeals of their situations are up next on the docket. Stay tuned to USMNEWS.net for coverage of those proceedings and their aftermath.

Will Athletics Revenue Soon Slip Downward?

USM's football team produced an 8-5 overall record in 2010, its best in quite some time. That was, according to sources, a direct result of having, in 2008, one of the better recruiting classes in several years. Relative to the rest of the country, USM's 2008 recruiting class rates rates a 60 on a scale from 0 to 100, at least according to data compiled by scout.com, one of the high-profile websites specializing in college football recruiting. The next two years (2009 and 2010), however, USM's scout.com rating fell to 49 and 50, respectively. With 2-Feb-2011 being national signing day for this year, that rating was once again retrieved from scout.com. To the surprise of some, it comes in at only 34.

The figure below shows the recruiting trend established by Fedora's USM football program.



The figure above shows that the pinnacle of Fedora's recruiting efforts came in 2008. This year's effort fell to a career low for Fedora, coming in at only the 34th percentile nationally. The downward trend shown in the figure above could very well mean that Fedora's coaching ability will have to increase if 8-5, or even 7-6 records are to be maintained into the future. His best recruiting group will be seniors during the 2011 season, however the clear-cut star of that class, DeAndre Brown, has already declared for the 2011 NFL Draft.

Sources say it is important to contemplate this trend *now* because it could be a harbinger of both fewer wins and less revenue, given that one follows the other. With USM facing budget cuts on the academics side of anywhere from \$10 million to \$25 million over 2010-11 and 2011-12, while the athletics department is planning \$1.5 million golf academy at Hattiesburg Country Club, plus a substantial expansion to Pete Taylor Park, funds will be tight over the next few years. This is particularly true with what many see as a type of athletics department immunity vis-à-vis budget cuts.

Chatting with the Sun – *Editorial Humor by Hal Greene*

If you haven't seen president Martha Saunders' [video blog chat](#) on the subject of service learning with professor Dick Conville, then you must do so now.



Throughout the interview/chat, Conville does his best to *not* look at Saunders. It's as if he would be looking directly at the sun if he were to do so. In that way, it's almost like the interview is being conducted back to back, rather than face to face.

Why would this be? Some would say it's because Conville has become, by way of his position in the USM faculty senate, one of Saunders' more prominent critics. For so many reasons, it's as if she is diminished as far as he is concerned, and as a result, he is looking right over her.



Of course, you are free to judge for yourself. In any event, this chat is a must see for those of you who are interested in the whole "Saunders administration" thing.