

The Morgan Dynasty – *Just Another Piece of The Dirty Southern Miss?*

The recent news (see below) that USM provost Robert Lyman alluded to USM chief financial officer Joe Morgan being relieved of his CFO duties by USM president Martha Saunders, effective 30-Aug-2010, was sweeping across the Hattiesburg campus on 11-May-2010. USM faculty and staff are buzzing with questions about what Morgan did, what his new position and salary will be should he remain on campus in some capacity, and why he will not simply be cut by USM administrators in their effort to trim \$15 million from the institution's 2012 budget.

.. breaking news ... breaking news ... breaking news ... breaking news ..

Provost Lyman Implies CFO Morgan was Relieved of Duty

HATTIESBURG – USM provost Robert Lyman was questioned by the USM faculty senate on 7-May-2010 about the recent “[resignation](#)” of Joe Morgan from the position of USM chief financial officer. Lyman's response implied that Morgan did not resign, but was instead relieved of CFO duties, though Lyman did state that he did not believe that Morgan was involved in the USM Research Foundation/Pinion Properties [scandal](#). According to Lyman:

“I can tell you this, [the ‘resignation’] came as a surprise to me. I can't say I know for a fact, but I am absolutely confident that it has nothing to do with the [USM] Research Foundation [situation]. I think it probably reflects other factors. . . **You know we all serve at the pleasure of the president. I think that's what's involved here.** I think that the unfortunate timing may have suggested a relationship between the Research Foundation. I absolutely don't believe that is true.”

The highlighted portion speaks volumes – Lyman senses that Saunders relieved Morgan of his upper-level duties to the institution. Though the comments about the USMRF may have alleviated some [concerns](#), sources say that the faculty senate must have been shocked to hear Lyman describe the situation as highlighted above.

In other news, the senators' tone made it clear that the atmosphere on campus is deteriorating rapidly. Most senators seemed troubled by (1) the APG-led process of cutting about \$11 million from USM's 2011 budget, and (2) UPC-led process to cut \$15 million or more from USM's 2012 budget. There were numerous questions, many accusatory and suspicious of the motives of those involved. Some senators asked about future lawsuits over the [ongoing](#) efforts to [terminate](#) up to 100 faculty. Senators even expressed concern about the CoB's recent move to hire Michael Dugan, an accountant at the University of Alabama, to direct its MPA program. The CoB's Donna Davis tried to protect the Lance Nail administration of the CoB by offering a response to the Dugan issue, though it did not appear that faculty senators were satisfied by her comments.

With Millsaps president Frances Lucas coming on board soon to manage USM-GC, many in the USM community are wondering whether Saunders is on her way out. Saunders has certainly seen her share of problems since May-2007, when she assumed the reins. Among these are the recent drop to Tier 4 by *U.S. News & World Report*, the USM Research Foundation-Pinion Properties scandal that is now ongoing, and the elimination of the CoB's economics majors, to name a few.

Despite Lyman's protestations, some USMers and others are having a difficult time believing that Morgan had nothing to do with the USMRF scandal. Lyman said it's simply bad timing. Surely Saunders and others in the administration knew the timing was bad. Why, then, did the announcement have to come in May when Morgan would remain until August, and since a national search for his replacement would not commence until 2011-12, if even then? This question puts a bad light on the Morgan “resignation.” It also says something about the Morgan dynasty at USM. Maybe the CoB's Mary Anderson is now dreaming about Ruston, while Saunders is thinking about the top job at West Florida.