

## This is *Leading*?

### Budget Rumors

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The rumor mill is working overtime as we plan for anticipated budget reductions. While I agree that this is a good time for dialogue, I ask that you keep the following realities in mind:

- We are working on the FY10 budget now. It is due in the IHL Board office the first week in August. Many of the positions frozen mid-year '09 will be used to balance the '10 budget.
- We have begun discussions for the FY11 budget. We are looking for reductions of approximately \$11 million. Please note that \$7 million of this year's budget includes one-time stimulus money. It is unclear how much, if any, of this amount we will receive in FY 11. The additional areas reflect built-in cost increases such as utility costs and minimum wage increases that must be addressed.
- There is no tuition increase to offset these increased expenses.
- Please note that this is not an exact science. We do not know what our state appropriations or tuition will be in '11 and are attempting to plan for worst case scenarios.
- There is a strong likelihood that programs will be cut. Any academic programs slated for deletion must be decided on first in order to provide proper notification to faculty and students. Non-academic program will be cut as well but are not subject to the same timelines.
- As I told you in the town meeting in January, we will not engage in across-the-board cuts. Instead, we are taking a more surgical approach.
- We are not helpless in this matter. Increased enrollment, increased external research funding and increased philanthropic donations will help to bolster our finances.
- I have advised the Provost and CFO to include me in all future meetings.

We are going to get through this - together.

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Where have you been, Martha? You sound like a bit part extra rather than the star of the show. You get the big (uncut) bucks, get in the game.

You are supposed to be the whiz of public relations; what happened? Is your summer reading list just too darn good to put down for a crisis? Even faculty and staff who are frequently sheep, including a large number of them who are rarely around in the summer, are upset and asking questions that only you can answer. Care for a hint? This is not a good time to mention how "vital" your precious airplane is. You may want to have an explanation ready for your Athletic Director's announcement that his "*cut*" for this year is a \$400,000 *increase*. Spin that.

When there is a “strong likelihood that programs will be cut”, why is athletics immune from consideration? Southern Miss loves its sports, but there is a new reality in town: money is in short supply and some things covered and excused cannot now be so. Being president is not just wearing a tiara; do something. How about asking those donors who gave money to get rid of Coach Bower?

“We are not helpless in this matter. Increased enrollment, increased external research funding and increased philanthropic donations will help to bolster our finances.” Of course it would help, but you say nothing about it. Ever. Families are searching for funding to send their children to Southern Miss and to find loans to get for their children, but the economy is not doing well in case it escaped your notice. Speaking of which, is this a realistic time to expect donations? On the research front, Southern Miss has always been, thanks mostly to the hard science side of the house, an amazing grant production machine. All this disruption and lack of leadership from you is distracting to them, and makes them wonder if their teaching loads are going up and resources are going down. Are you trying to drive them to another university?

Saving the best for last: “I have advised the Provost and CFO to include me in all future meetings.” Are you in charge or not? Do you think anyone will believe you have had *no* participation in anything until now? If that is the case, i.e. you really do not do anything but play the role of a smiling show dog, then your tenure as president is rapidly concluding. Your mindset that Southern Miss constituents will buy this “break glass and get Martha to save us” scenario is absurd. Because of your typical inactivity, you are way behind on this, and everyone will be watching and listening to everything you do and say with a sharp, critical set of eyes and ears. You are not used to that.

It really is simple: leaders lead. Leaders can certainly be wrong and unpopular. What they cannot be is a non-leader; that is career suicide. On the bright side, you may not have to worry about working so hard on the centennial plans.