

## USM Financial Situation Dire and Getting Worse

With Ed Kemp's [23-July-09 article](#) for *The Hattiesburg American* entitled "USM prepares for budget cuts," you have to wonder just what now-former CoB associate professor of finance John Clark knows about USM's dire budgetary situation and why he is leaving for the University of Missouri – Kansas City. According to information obtained by Kemp, each USM dean is drafting a plan to cut \$2 million from each of the college budgets, a figure that will likely mean termination of not only staff and adjunct faculty, but also tenured professors. Each cut, as explained by Kemp, is part of an effort to cut \$10-\$12 million from USM's overall budget. (As reported earlier, only \$100,000 of these cuts will be coming from athletics.) Clark's affiliations with the USM Foundation may have put him on the "need to know earlier, rather than later" list vis-à-vis the USM financial crisis reported by Kemp.

In response to what they feel is a non-transparent atmosphere being fostered by the Martha Saunders administration of USM, the USM Faculty Senate held an emergency meeting on 22-July-09. About 50 USM faculty members attended that meeting, and afterwards philosophy professor Andrew Haley told Kemp that the USM administration "has been absent in explaining this crisis . . ." Judging by the online responses to Kemp's article, *THA* readers generally agree, also citing bad timing with regard to the proposed parking garage and the \$2 million lease for Saunders' twin-turbo aircraft (see USM Archives for more on these items). Over at the [USM Forum -- to build trust, a team and a campus -- Message Board](#) things are in full meltdown mode, with anonymous faculty posters comparing the Saunders and Thames administrations. One respected poster, Curmudgeon, points out (in the "Budget for 2010-2011" thread) that "[t]hrowing people overboard and reorganizing the university without input from the affected parties is a leadership style survivors of the Thames administration would recognize. Suddenly discovering that your unit is on the chopping block as a *fait accompli* via some list is hardly the product of enlightened leadership. Temporary emergency measures to balance the budget are not the same thing as a university reorganization. Using the former to achieve the latter and to avoid legitimate input is dishonest."

As with the other colleges, a \$2 million cut in the CoB will be deeply felt. According to sources a number of instructors (e.g., Wanda Fennell [MGT], Amy Sevier [MGT]) and adjuncts/visitors (e.g., Arthur Sorochinsky) are now in jeopardy. Also in jeopardy are a few under-producing CoB academic programs. One of these, according to sources, is tourism management, which could be reduced and consolidated at CoB-GC, as intended by the Thames administration. As it stands, a large portion of TM activity remains in CoB-H. Also in jeopardy is fashion merchandising, currently staffed (67% at least) with untenured faculty.

Since 2007, the USM central administration has been tracking FM's struggles, and the long-standing position there of Cynthia Easterling Moore, an opponent of the CoB's handling of FM, will not prove helpful should Nail consider opposing any effort to reduce FM. The most susceptible CoB program, however, is economics, which is notorious for its low number of majors. That unit has been propped up through the years by, what many feel, was the presence of economists-deans of the b-school (e.g., Tyrone Black, William Gunther). There are a number of untenured faculty in that corner of the CoB, including Yosef Bonaparte, Sami Dakhliya, Deniz Gevrik, Akbar Marvasti, and Daniel Monchuk. Elimination of these lines would save the CoB about \$400,000 in salaries alone, and closer to \$500,000 including fringes. The impending retirements of the remaining faculty (George Carter, Trellis Green, William Gunther, Mark Klinedinst and Edward Nissan), all in the "retirement window," would save the CoB about another \$525,000 in salaries, and closer to another \$600,000 including benefits. To put it differently, elimination of the economics major would generate about half (1-2 economics instructors would still be needed to staff principles courses) of what the CoB is being asked to provide in terms of a \$2 million cut.

Clearly, the coming weeks and months are going to be rocky for all USM constituents. Reporters at USMNEWS.net will be there to cover events as they unfold.