

Dr. Martha Saunders
President
University of Southern Mississippi

Dear Dr. Saunders,

I am writing to convey to you the consensus of the Faculty Senate reached at our retreat on August 13, 2009, regarding the Economics Department. The key point of consensus is that the Faculty Senate believes that Economics is an essential core discipline of our university. Witness to that belief is the inclusion of Economics 101 as a USM General Education Curriculum course. It meets the requirement established by the General Education Committee of Academic Council for a three hour course in Decision Making and Responsibility. In establishing ECO 101 as a GEC course, the Academic Council, in essence, decided that Economics is a core discipline at USM. We concur with that belief. It is a foundational discipline that helps make the university a comprehensive university.

The Senate looked at the potential loss of Economics with great anguish. This is, in part, because of the large role that the discipline has in the education of our students, in part, because of the potential loss of valuable tenured and tenure track faculty who are contributing to the education of students and whose scholarly activities bring acclaim to our university, and, in part, because many felt that the process for reaching the recommendation of elimination of the Economics Programs was flawed.

Going beyond the question of Economics, it is the hope of the Senate that any faculty recommended for elimination will be given every aspect of due process by our university. It is the hope of the Senate that all appeals will be considered fairly and that enough time is allowed to consider all evidence. Furthermore, the decision to eliminate any tenured and tenure track faculty is a gigantic departure from normalcy in the life of a university. It is a step reserved for when only dire circumstances confront universities. We ask that all due diligence be used to reach the right decision for the students, faculty, and USM community potentially affected.

With concern,

Jeffrey Evans
Faculty Senate President

cc. Provost Robert Lyman; Faculty Senate Listserv