

From the *Tallahassee Democrat*

## **Florida State University administrators defend layoffs at arbitration hearing**

By Doug Blackburn • DEMOCRAT Senior WRITER • Published: July 21, 2010 2:00AM

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Bob Bradley, Florida State University's vice president for planning and programs, testified Tuesday during an arbitration hearing that FSU tried "desperately not to have layoffs."

United Faculty of Florida, the union representing FSU faculty, claims the university violated its collective bargaining agreement in June 2009 when it approved a budget that included letting go of 21 tenured professors.

Tenure is generally regarded as job security for faculty, but FSU — facing almost \$82 million in cuts from the state — opted to eliminate some programs, suspend others and merge several departments, which resulted in the layoffs.

Arbiter Stanley Sergent heard two days of testimony in mid-May from some of the professors who have received layoff notices. FSU, led by associate general counsel Carol Egan, is presenting five witnesses on behalf of the administration as testimony continues today.

A fifth administrator, Joe Travis, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, is scheduled to testify on Aug. 11. Sergent's ruling isn't expected until sometime in September.

Bradley spent more than two hours answering questions about FSU's organizational structure. He was asked repeatedly by Tom Brooks, an attorney for UFF, to explain the difference between a department and a program.

Bradley also reviewed the timeline of events in 2009 as FSU's Budget Crisis Committee, which Bradley was a member of, tried to determine how the university would cope with massive reductions in state support.

Eric Walker, the Faculty Senate president, and Jayne Standley, a distinguished music professor and vice president of the Faculty Senate, were members of the committee. Bradley said both faculty members were aware of the proposed layoffs, which were approved by the Board of Trustees on June 17, 2009.

Marcy Driscoll, dean of the College of Education, defended the decision to lay off tenured faculty members while retaining non-tenured professors. Educators affiliated with FSU Teach were retained, she said, while other programs were suspended.

"FSU Teach will replace the undergraduate traditional program in math and science education," Driscoll said. "I was investing in FSU Teach as the program of the future."