

From the *Tallahassee Democrat*

FSU administrators testify about layoffs

By Doug Blackburn • DEMOCRAT Senior WRITER • Published: July 22, 2010 2:00AM

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Two Florida State University administrators testified about their respective programs Wednesday as an arbitration hearing over layoffs concluded temporarily.

United Faculty of Florida, the union representing FSU faculty, is contesting the layoff of 21 tenured professors.

FSU, forced to cope with almost \$82 million in cuts from the state, contends that it followed the collective bargaining agreement when it eliminated a handful of programs and merged some departments.

The hearing will resume on Aug. 11 when Joe Travis, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, testifies. He is the final witness on FSU's list.

UFF presented testimony from professors over two days in May. Stanley Sergent, the arbiter for the procedure, is expected to issue a ruling in September.

Sherry Southerland, director of FSU Teach in the College of Education, spent most of the morning in the witness chair explaining how FSU Teach came to replace more traditional programs for preparing undergraduates for careers as math and science teachers.

Sally McCrorie, dean of the College of Visual Arts, Theatre and Dance, was told to trim almost \$1.3 million from her budget in February 2009. As a result, she eliminated a graduate program in scenic design.

UFF attorney Thomas Brooks believes the hearings have gone well. "From a legal, contractual interpretation, it's going to turn on a few particular points and facts," he said.

Betty Steffens, FSU's legal counsel, noted that faculty members were actively involved in the 2009 Budget Crisis Committee that recommended the restructuring to the Board of Trustees.