31st & Pearl

Like Butter

Without raising even a bead of sweat, the College of Business at USM just successfully completed its 6th Year AACSB Review. And, the "Year" in "6th Year" was, for the CoB at least, only 10 months. While the CoB's central administration rejoices in the news, as it should, it would probably be a good idea to take stock at what this decision means to the world surrounding USM's b-school.

For one, the CoB's "expedited probation" was clearly a move the AACSB wanted. For those of you who have been keeping up, you know that the accreditation officials didn't even bother visiting Hattiesburg. If they had, they would have found 14 fewer faculty, and 149 fewer journal publications, that were found by the 2007 Peer Review Team that visited the Hub City back in February of 2007. Clearly, the CoB's PRT members have weak stomachs. They wouldn't want to view the train wreck that the CoB's "human resource situation" has become. To do so would have also removed any plausible deniability that a "reaffirmation by e-mail" would provide.

Second, by acquitting the CoB so easily, the AACSB's credibility is no doubt diminished. The Tier IV world was watching the whole episode, and has surely learned the new art of accreditation. If you've been thinking of the AACSB as a "paper tiger," join the chorus. The Central Southeastern State Universities of the world are already singing, and celebrating. Their university administrators now know that AACSB re-accreditation isn't about the resources, it's about the rehearsals. Cash poor b-schools will have USM's CoB to thank for future budget allocation difficulties related to AACSB accreditation.

Of course, one could go on and on about the ramifications of the AACSB's latest decision. Perhaps future reports here will do so. For now, I can't help but wonder just what people at Central Missouri State University are thinking.

31st & Pearl *is a series housed at usmnews.net that features commentary on aspects of life in the CoB from a variety of columnists.*