

31st & Pearl

Permission Slip(-Up)

USM President Martha Saunders often boasts about how USM became a national research university without asking for anyone's permission to do so. Saunders' brag is typical of the heads of many states' second tier institutions, proudly embracing the "underdog" tag that is usually placed upon these same institutions by political and business leaders who generally support a state's so-called flagship institutions. What's interesting about Saunders' statement is that it can easily be turned on its head. Doing so is particularly relevant to USM's College of Business, which, in 2007, came within a hair of losing its AACSB accreditation.

Just who gave USM's b-school permission to be so bad? Who gave interim SAIS director Steven Jackson, and his predecessor Stanley Lewis, permission to allow the SAIS' faculty to take a pass on doing *quality* academic research? The sort of "me first" mentality that pervades much of the CoB's accounting faculty almost cost accounting its separate accreditation from AACSB. Heck, the research in accounting sunk so low that the accountants almost cost *the CoB* its general accreditation.

Who gave EFIB chairman George Carter permission to run the EFIB department like a plantation? That's what Carter has been doing since 2005, and in the process the CoB has lost a number of quality economics, finance, international business and real estate faculty. Replacing these losses with 1970s- and 1980s-style EFIB faculty was also part of Carter's grand scheme, and with the assistance of former CoB economist Charles Sawyer that scheme has been brought to fruition. Of course, this occurred to the detriment of the CoB.

Finally, when and where did former CoB dean Harold Doty get permission to make such monumentally disastrous decisions over the four-year stretch (2003-07) that he sat atop USM's b-school? USMNEWS.net can't seem to locate the memo authorizing the CoB's fall from grace under Doty's leadership. Thanks mainly to AACSB sympathy, and AACSB politics, the fall didn't include a loss of accreditation. Things in the CoB, however, remain bad. Who knows, there's still 2012. Does the CoB's permission slip (to be bad) have an expiration date?

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