

31st & Pearl

Dear Denise

I don't mean to shove my way into the territory blazed by the creator of USMNEWS.net's "Dear Skip" series, but it seems important to get out at least one warning message to CoAL dean Denise von Herrmann, who is now preparing to "welcome home" four of the CoB's nine tenured/tenure-track economists. In case you haven't heard, which isn't likely, these are assistant professors Daniel Monchuk and Deniz Gevrek, associate professor Sami Dakhliya and full professor Akbar Marvasti, and they are coming to CoAL as part of a plan to save the unit from the \$12 million in budget cuts that are being contemplated by the Martha Saunders administration. Why does von Herrmann need this warning? Because the CoB's 9 economists have been creating trouble for their current dean, Lance Nail, since Nail's arrival back in July of 2008. And the four economists who are coming over to CoAL from the CoB have been just as much a part of the trouble as any among the five who are supposedly retiring after the end of the 2009-10 academic year.

To be honest, the ECO trouble dates back more years than one. USMNEWS.net reported long ago about how Marvasti [was hiding behind](#) research work he had done *years* before coming to USM in 2006, only to pawn it off as new work in Dakhliya's so-called "EFIB Fridays" seminar series. The USMNEWS.net report "Hook 'Em Home" showed that Gevrek [maintains permanent residence](#) in Austin, TX, a choice that will not be conducive to von Herrmann's efforts to raise the national research profile of USM's CoAL. Speaking of bad residency decisions, Monchuk first topped Gevrek by [making his home](#) in Washington, D.C., instead of Hattiesburg. He later [made the switch](#) to China just to keep his distance record safe. For a bit more on Monchuk, he once got former EFIB chair George Carter to [reimburse](#) a \$2,185 publication fee at a C-level economics journal! Not wanting to be left behind at the gravy train station, Marvasti [quickly jumped](#) on board.

When this group of four unpacks over in the LAB, dean von Herrmann will likely have her hands full. Whether or not she is equipped to handle their antics, or their budget demands, remains to be seen. Many are speculating that whatever department houses the economists – assuming they don't govern themselves – will soon face a shortage of E&G funds and a reduction in reputation.

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