

# 31<sup>st</sup> & Pearl

## ‘Hughes-Dugan Bromance’ Still White Hot

The professional “bromance” that has been going on between the CoB’s director of accounting, Kirby “Skip” Hughes, and [the new](#) Horne Professor of Accounting, Michael Dugan, [is as](#) hot as [ever](#). What began with Hughes’ praise of Dugan as one of [the most caring](#) professors in higher education, and then continued with more “Hughes love” over Dugan [being rated](#) as one of the top 500 academic [accountants](#) in the nation, has now boiled over into praise of Dugan from Hughes about Dugan’s extraordinary ability to place USM accounting graduates into prestigious accounting positions nationwide. We are tipped off to this latest chapter in the Hughes-Dugan bromance by Van Arnold’s 2-Sept-2010 [presser](#) entitled “Accounting Students Land Jobs with Prestigious Companies.” In it, Arnold states that Dugan was integral in securing jobs at PricewaterhouseCoopers in New York City for two graduates, while another was placed by Dugan in a New Orleans-based accounting firm. According to Dugan, “[i]n my nearly 30 years as an accounting professor, I have helped hundreds of students find jobs in their fields of study.” Hughes, who came to USM in 2009, adds that assisting students in locating jobs has always been a priority of the CoB’s School of Accountancy.

It is clear to some that Hughes’ unrelenting praise of Dugan – via the USM public relations office and ultimately local and state media – is [an attempt](#) to mitigate some of [the fallout](#) across campus and [beyond](#) that the CoB [is facing](#) by (1) hiring Hughes in 2009 at a salary of \$150,000 or more, and (2) bringing in Dugan in 2010 at what [is believed](#) to be a salary of \$150,000-\$175,000 (if not more). As many reports and editorials at USMNEWS.net point out, these hires came at a time (2009-10) when almost 50 tenured and tenure-track faculty were delivered pink slips by the Martha Saunders administration in response to consecutive budget cuts totaling almost \$25 million.

All of this press must have USMers wondering why Saunders doesn’t have one of the top accountants in the nation working on the budget crisis. Surely Dugan could solve this problem in a weekend, saving a couple dozen USM faculty jobs in the process. If not, it would seem that he could work out of the provost’s office to secure new jobs for the 29 tenured and tenure-track faculty whose contracts were shredded this week by the Saunders administration. Surely they would all have jobs at Tier 1 universities by next year. Failing this, one would think that Dugan could have assisted the administration by delivering the bad news to the terminated 29, and in a much more caring way than likely occurred on 26- and 27-Aug-2010.

Former USM Center for Writers director Frederick Barthelme certainly did as much, [if not more](#), for the careers of his creative writing students than Dugan ever did for the careers of former accounting pupils. Thus, most readers, particularly those in the CoAL, likely see this press barrage for what it is.

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