31st & Pearl

Is the SoA the CoB's Deepwater Horizon?

The recent reports indicating how the CoB's School of Accountancy is spewing *negative* net tuition revenue all over the place serve to really highlight the weaknesses in the University Priorities Committee's response to cutting the institution's overall budget. As we understand it, the UPC is likely to pass over a unit like accounting, arguing that it is central to the mission of the CoB, and thus to USM. Another unit, like fashion merchandising, might not receive the same designation, and thus would be open to scrutiny. After all, not all reputable institutions offer fashion merchandising, and certainly more of them offer accounting than fashion merchandising.

What this approach misses is that the CoB's FM unit will generate about a $60,000 return, under the best case scenario, during fall 2010. Accounting, on the other hand, stands to *lose* at least that much in the same best case situation. Perhaps it's a sense of *in*vulnerability that has led ACC down such a path of *in*efficiency. As it stands, the vulnerable CoB unit (FM) is completely supporting the invulnerable one (ACC). And, if FM is cut, then two relatively young female FM faculty (Erin Drake and Gallayanee Yaoyuneyong) might be sent packing in order to save two more recently-hired older white guys in accounting (Skip Hughes and Michael Dugan). Put differently, two FMers collectively producing about $30,000 in *net tuition revenue* for fall 2010 may have to go to save two ACCers collectively *losing* something well over $100,000.

If accounting is not the CoB's own version of Deepwater Horizon, it's definitely something close. Unfortunately for the CoB's other areas, the UPC will not recognize this situation for what it is. As accounting's shortcomings go unrecognized, others – perhaps those in fashion merchandising – will most likely pay a price.

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