

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

## The Egocentric Dean

Judging by multiple accounts of the 18-Sept-09 "State of the CoB" address, the CoB's current dean, Lance Nail, is from the same "all about ME" generation as past dean Harold Doty. That genesis took the former CoB leader all the way *down* to the University of Texas – Tyler, where he now resides. Where will it take Nail? No one knows for sure, but a consensus is building that it will be out of the CoB within two years from now.

Will Nail fly off in two years? Facing 10% budget cuts in 2011 and 2012, there's certainly no reason to stick around USM if one doesn't have to. Who else would *want* to continue to govern a budget that has declined by 25% to 30% during one's tenure as dean? Hiring freezes, suspended travel budgets, "underwater" endowments, faculty flight, and tenure and legal issues abound. Not many could be found to sit atop such a mess.

Let's assume, for the moment, that Nail exits in two years. Who will step in? It's likely that the next dean will come from within. USM president Martha Saunders is having some serious difficulties these days. With problems over a racial discrimination suit gone bad (*for Saunders*) back in Whitewater to all the problems associated with a multi-million dollar airplane lease in the midst of 25% to 30% budget cuts, Saunders is no public relations wonder woman. Quite the opposite, indeed. That means she may wish to promote from within. Could that mean dean David Duhon?

With another "Dean ME" lurking around in Nail, CoBers have to be singing "what's old is new again." Unlike last time, you can bet that there'll be more CoBers working this time around to assist in the CoB dean's departure. With ECO departing for the CoAL in just seven months, the turf wars that Doty proved so useful in stirring have all now been won, thanks in large part to Nail's first year at the helm. It's likely that the CoB is now simply looking to move on.

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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.*