

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

## Academic Fraud Abounds in the CoB

Recent articles regarding the Accounting faculty at USM have highlighted a decades-old issue: Academic Fraud. In fact, issues related to Academic Fraud have been one of the key points in usmnews.net's (and, previously, usmpride.com's) investigative reports over the past year. Sami Dakhli, Harold Doty, and others may claim that usmnews.net's reports are "lies," "mischaracterizations," or "misinformation," but such claims only underscore the lack of honesty with which these individuals operate.

As an aside – and for the edification of the uninitiated – usmnews.net presents two main types of written articles: reports and opinions. Reports are based on factual evidence gleaned from FOIA/MORA requests, written communication that has been disseminated publicly, and other sources that can stand up to public scrutiny. Opinions – whether based on a writer's impressions regarding reports or not – are clearly labeled as "commentary" or "opinion." While one may easily disagree with an opinion piece, facts are required to effectively rebut a report, and the CoB administrators and their supporters have provided precious little in the way of information, even when compelled by law. Rebuttal with facts is apparently not to their liking.

Now, as we consider recent reports about Academic Fraud – especially recent reports regarding Marvin Albin's double-/triple-/or possibly quadruple-counting of an article – we should consider what Academic Fraud really is. Let's define Academic Fraud as purposeful and/or continual "accidental" abuses of well-known and well-accepted ethical academic principles and practices. For example, in the recent Albin case, which, by the way, does mirror the Albin double-counting scandal from the mid- to late-1990's, Albin has apparently presented his research in a deceptive manner. If Albin has indeed published this article in the 1990's and in the 2000's, then he has published the article in two outlets. The real question in this instance is whether or not Albin *actually* published the article twice (commonly known as Recycling Fraud), or whether he simply *claimed* to have published the article twice (in which case he falsified his SEDONA records). In either event, Albin's actions violate commonly-held academic principles and constitute Academic Fraud.

Academic Fraud may take many forms; Plagiarism, Falsification of Records, Deceitful Publishing Practices (including Recycling Fraud), Selling Grades, Shirking Teaching Responsibilities, and Abuse of Outside Employment Privileges are simply a few. There are others. Think back to past reports (again, those backed by documentation and

evidence) at usmnews.net. A significant portion of the USM AACSB report was plagiarized from Central Missouri State University, and the CoB Integrity Policy was plagiarized from Syracuse University. Now, it appears that Albin has either falsified his SEDONA records in an effort to mislead AACSB or he has engaged in Recycling Fraud, which damages the reputation of USM. Also recall George Carter's use of University services and facilities for outside consulting work – a policy clearly regulated by USM Policy yet ignored by USM administrators.

Just who is harmed in under Academic Fraud? By perpetrating Academic Fraud, individuals degrade the Academy and the professionals who participate in it. Accreditation is undermined, since most accrediting bodies assume that institutions are operating with some modicum of honesty. The University is harmed by these types of actions, since their inevitable discovery has a negative effect on the University's image and reputation. Academic Fraud affects students adversely as well, given that unethical faculty are rewarded and may be given the protection of tenure based on deceit. Taxpayers are harmed in another, worldlier manner, since their tax dollars are allocated to deceitful individuals based on things unrelated to job performance.

Where will this Academic Fraud end? One cannot know. However, it is this writer's opinion that (1) Academic Fraud pervades the CoB, (2) many more instances of Academic Fraud will be uncovered by usmnews.net reporters, (3) CoB administrators know and have known about these unethical, illegal, and unscrupulous practices, and (4) CoB administrators will continue to attempt to cover up for those who have violated the public and professional trust. One reporter points out that there are several problems with the recently-released SEDONA records, and that reporters haven't even made it out of the "A's in Accounting." Keep a watchful eye, dear reader. Something tells me that the Usual Suspects are up to their same old tricks, and they may have added some new recruits to their devious ways.

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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.*