

31st & Pearl

"Are You in Good Hands?"

We are told that after the EFIB passed the three-person committee faculty governance option back in September of 2006, economics professor Charles Sawyer was asked if he would step up and serve on that committee. Sawyer reportedly responded with "No, I can't afford the liability insurance." What Sawyer said is interesting in a number of ways. First, it seems to be an admission of sorts -- and one from a 25 year veteran of the college -- that governance committee membership is a quasi-administrative post, and CoB administrators are always tangled up in problematic deals and schemes that have legal ramifications.

Another thing it reveals, given Sawyer's penchant for serving as a behind-the-scenes quasi-administrator -- a position some have referred to as "associate chair" -- is that some in the CoB believe that avoidance of "official" administrative posts provides them with an immunity of sorts. This point is quite interesting, because the Trellis Green Lawsuit Series has shown just the opposite. In Green's case individuals from all corners of the CBA were "called in" to "participate" in one way or another. This involved, as we have seen, production of documentation and participation in depositions. In other instances, if not in the Green suit, it could also mean affidavits and other forms of participation.

There are a number of emerging "associate chairs" in the college. We have already mentioned Sawyer in economics. Donna Davis seems to be jockeying for a position of importance in the SAIS. Stephen Bushardt from management, and Beth LaFleur from marketing, have shown little trepidation when it comes to getting involved in "administrative affairs" within the CoB. Surely there are others who, though not mentioned here, are contemplating such a move. There may be monetary and non-monetary benefits from doing so, as reports available at usmpride.com have shown. If you are considering such a move, we have one simple question, a question asked by our friends at Allstate: "Are you in good hands?"