

31st & Pearl

Ifs and Buts, Candy and Nuts

Former CBA dean, and current CoB economics professor, William Gunther [told](#) *The Student Printz's* Meryl Dakin that "the economics department [at USM] could only be considered as overstaffed if the number of majors was the only factor considered." Yeah, and if one didn't consider their won-loss record, one could make the case that the NBA's Los Angeles Clippers are an historically successful franchise. With 10 faculty, paid over \$1 million per year in salary and benefits, and only 3 graduates per year, the CoB's economics department *is* overstaffed. That those same overstaffed, and overstaffed, economists are now making the case for other metrics of their worth to the CoB shows just how wacky things are getting in Joseph Greene Hall.

The sad thing about all this is that we haven't seen anything yet. As editorialists and sources have been indicating in recent days, things are spiraling downward at a rapid rate in USM's CoB, and could continue to do so as the economists prepare to appeal the USM administration's recent decision to eliminate the CoB's economics majors and its 9 tenured/tenure-track faculty. In making their student credit hours case, the CoB economists are conveniently forgetting that business statistics is traditionally taught in management departments. As such, that portion of their SCH is, in a sense, trumped up, as is the portion that has *not one but two* international economics courses in the IB curriculum, along with intermediate courses in macro and micro, and a course in development economics. You'll find none of this infused into IB programs at other universities. CoB dean Lance Nail said it well when he pointed out that the CoB's international business program was, in reality, an international *economics* program. And with 3 graduates per year, one can see how popular, or *unpopular*, the CoB's truly "out in the open" ECO programs are.

From referring to the 12 SEC schools as USM's "peers," to saying that using 3 graduates per year to classify a 10-faculty department as overstaffed is unfair, the CoB's economists seem to be throwing every argument they can think of against the wall to see what sticks. The problem with this strategy, however, is that you risk looking foolish, which some have already labeled the group. Whether you consider them foolish or not, the battle goes on.

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