

31st & Pearl

ECO Will be “Rescued”

The oral appeals are over, and now the USM administration has until 1-Sept-09, a handful of days from now, to decide whether to stick with their original decision to cut the CoB's economics majors and its 9 tenured/tenure-track faculty or phone in a pardon. I firmly believe that the Martha Saunders administration will take the latter route in a matter of days, and that the CoB economists and economics programs will be “rescued.” There is no hard evidence at my disposal, just a hunch. That hunch, though, is shaped by years of experience with USM, and the way the institution does things. Just when you think “up” is “up,” you are told “up” is “down.”

Having provided my hunch, let me take a moment to describe what I think will come down from the Lucas Bldg. in place of the original plan. After all, the CoB has to cut \$1 million from its budget, one way or another. First, CoB dean Lance Nail has probably already been told to put together a list of *untenured* faculty to eliminate. That list has probably already been reviewed, and approved, by the dome. Soon, we'll all hear about it. These are the people that I believe will be on it.

We have to start with ECO. While the programs and tenured faculty will be saved, the untenureds (as they say) will be cut. That means Deniz Gevrek, Daniel Monchuk, Sami Dakhliia and Akbar Marvasti. With these four the CoB generates annual salary-plus-benefits savings of about \$393,000. That's good, but it's about \$607,000 short of the \$1 million total that came from cutting all of the ECOers. Next, Nail will go into the MIS group and eliminate Dale Lunsford and Barry Cumbie. That will take the total savings to about \$597,000, or just a bit over the halfway mark. From there we head over to tourism management, where Babu George and David Paster will be asked to pack their bags. With only \$759,000 in the pot, the journey will take us to fashion merchandising, where both Erin Drake and Gallayanee Yaoyuneyong will depart.

The total savings is now up to \$915,000, leaving \$85,000 left to cut. By now, the four “problem child” departments have given up all they can, so Nail must journey out into the greater CoB pond to find one more fish to fry. Will it come from MKT, or MGT, or ACC, or FIN? My guess is that it will be FIN's Matthew Hood, if for no reason other than the fact that too many of the candidates that would come from the other units are females.

So, as described here the CoB is going to experience much more pain than had the economists been carved out cleanly and simply. The agony will stretch from ECO, where it would have been anyway, to TM, and from FIN to FM, with still a little more for MIS. Of course, some of these could be saved if only the CoB's instructor corps were sacrificed. But who among us believes that ACC's Patty Munn or one of the MGT/MKT instructors, or maybe even more remotely, TM's Evelyn Green, would dare face any jeopardy? It will not be, just as it has never been. It will be tenure-track, terminally-degreed faculty, like those listed above, who will go to the alter so that lifetime instructors can remain at the trough.

Finally, there is the issue of ECO, which is where it all began. With my hunch, the only remaining economists will be George Carter, William Gunther, Mark Klinedinst, Edward Nissan and Trellis Green. It is difficult to imagine a group less accomplished, less inspiring, than this one. Yet, with the hunch that I have this is the group that will be left behind to teach USM students all of the lessons laid out by Dakhliya in his letter to *The Student Printz's* editor from just days ago. That said, maybe Dakhliya was right on for once – those USM students who want to study economics, or something at least resembling it, should do so now, and without delay.

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