

BHAG?

A Guest Editorial by **Victoria Tyler**

USM faculty senate president Anita Davis opened the 3-Dec-2010 faculty senate meeting by stating, and I paraphrase throughout, that there are *disparities with values* that are commonly held by USM faculty. Davis reported that she has studied the organization behavior literature, finding much about *common values* and *core ideology*. Separating *core values* (what USM stands for) and *core purpose* (why USM exists), Davis told the faculty senators gathered on 3-Dec-2010 that they need to begin thinking about the *shared values* that *define* USM and USM faculty. As Davis noted, one's *purpose* is one's *soul*.

Davis urged senators to be *idealistic* in thinking about their goals for USM, noting that such goals are *not ever reached*. She urged senators to ask questions of themselves, such as (1) what are your core values?, (2) would you still be working at USM if you were independently wealthy?, and (3) would you continue to hold your core values if doing so put you at a disadvantage? Davis said that *she* believes that working in a community is more fun than working alone, that knowledge production is a satisfying endeavor, seeing different ways of doing things makes her happy, and watching students doing better makes her feel good about herself and encourages her. Davis added, then, that the *envisioned future* faculty senators were to build should be (1) visible, (2) vivid, (3) real, *but not realized*, (4) audacious, and that whatever goals are listed individually and as a group, they should *not* represent reality. This was all put together in the acronym BHAG, which stands for Big Hairy Audacious Goal.

Is your head spinning? If so, you're not the only one in such a situation. All of the philosophical discussion that Davis would like to have cuts squarely against the grain [framed at an earlier meeting](#) by another faculty senator. Now, at a time when one couldn't really overstate the need for the USM faculty senate to be relevant, it is arguably less relevant than in any other time in memory. That is just the way that USM president Martha Saunders wants it (the faculty senate) to be at this point in USM's history. When you're weakening tenure and carving up the USM faculty, as Saunders is and has been doing for some time now, having the faculty senate off on some sort of idealism scavenger hunt is just what you need.