

Babin's Revenge

It started last summer. It carried through the last school year. It culminated with the 2006 annual evaluations. What is it? It's Barry Babin's Revenge.

Babin, the marketing professor who arrived at USM in 1990, spent quite a bit of his time publishing academic research in mostly quality journals, though he never generated massive numbers or consistent dominance of top-tier journals. How was he able to do so? Well, his ties to Joseph Hair and other marketing academics didn't hurt his chances at advancement. It shouldn't be insinuated that Babin didn't work hard, just that he has had the wheels greased more than the average person. After working his academic connections to his advantage, Babin was still a fairly well-known academic at a Tier III school in USM.

How frustrating it must have been to watch others in his department get rewarded for their seniority and service to administrators while Babin toiled in local obscurity. Reviewing CoB pay raises from 1992 to the present indicates that Babin crept up the pay scale until he got the big \$25,000 raise to become chair of management and marketing last year. It had to be maddening to see the likes of Guy Posey, Jim Crockett, Marvin Albin, and Farhang Niroomand routinely receive larger raises for less output.

But then again, you can't really feel sorry for Babin. With his wife Laurie pulling in over \$90,000 a year, the couple currently rakes in about \$217,500 annually from USM. That doesn't count the money the Babins receive indirectly from their association with USM – royalties on Babin-friendly textbooks whose use Babin as marketing chair can mandate and supplementary materials written by Laurie for around \$5,000 a pop. Nice work if you can get it. Don't forget about the Babins' primo teaching schedules. By nabbing the bulk of the marketing courses in the MBA program, Barry and Laurie have assured themselves of two-course teaching schedules with minimal preparations. Add in Laurie's minimal research output over the past decade, and you'd be hard pressed to argue that the family isn't overpaid.

When Harold Doty arrived on the scene in 2003, the Babins were among the first to sell out to him. Barry ran roughshod over graduate programs, and Laurie was front-and-center with the now-infamous [plagiarized] Academic Integrity Policy. When Alvin Williams retired as chair in 2006, Doty chose Barry Babin to head the department. That's when the fun began.

First, there are the closed doors to the departmental suites. Williams, who had long been a proponent of customer service, had had the suite doors open and Janice Prescott stationed at a public desk to facilitate assisting students. Under Babin, the doors were closed and Prescott was moved to a small office down the hall. Babin also reportedly made comments about the routine gatherings in the marketing anteroom at which faculty and staff would drink coffee twice daily. Babin discouraged those meetings because they hurt research productivity. Babin wasted no time in going head-to-head with other department chairmen at the April 2006 evaluation meetings – it was those very meetings

that helped prompt the Stephen Bushardt “decentralized evaluation” maneuver in November 2006 – and Babin used those meetings to endear himself to Doty and create division within Doty’s executive team. Babin handed out unpopular teaching schedules for summer 2006, fall 2006, and spring 2007, giving poor schedules to those he felt were not worthy of common decency.

Now, on his way out the door of USM and on his way to Louisiana Tech, Babin has delivered a number of annual evaluation gut shots to long-time faculty in his department. That’s the Barry Babin we’ve come to know and loathe; dishing out punishment as he runs for cover.

Babin used to be known in the CoB as a scholar. Now he’s known for what he really is: a sellout and, to quote a diverse group of faculty in the CoB, an “arrogant a*****e”. Happy trails, Barry. I wish I could say that “it’s been fun”, but all I can say is “good riddance”.