

# Blueprint for Bloat

## A Look at How ECO Maintained Itself for Far Too Long

If you've been a regular reader of USMNEWS.net for any length of time, you've seen the phrase "their bloated existence" in reference to the CoB's economics unit, which many believe maintained several faculty lines beyond what was warranted by their population of majors. With the CoB's economics unit exiting the CoB in just a few short months – five retiring in June-2010 and the remaining four heading off to life in the CoAL – it seems fitting to lay out a portion of the blueprint that the ECOers used to build up their bloated existence.

**1. Take Control of Business Stats** – This is something the ECOers did, and they did it well. Not only did they routinely teach stats to sections in the single digits and low teens, as the recent reprinting here at USMNEWS.net showed, they worked to split business statistics into two separate courses – BA 301 and BA 302(3). At most schools business stats is taught as a stand alone course and in jumbo sections (in auditorium settings). Not in the CoB. The best guess that some in the know have provided indicates that the ECOers' "coffee and stats" scheme supported one *extra* economics faculty at a minimum, and as many as three or four in the old days.

**2. Manage the IB Program** – by wedding ECO to the international business (IB) program, the ECOers were able to employ additional economists to fill the IB faculty line(s). They also used IB's dozens of majors to mask the fact that only a handful of USM students were majoring in ECO at any one time. The economists didn't stop there. No, they went on to infuse the IB curriculum with *economics courses* that one wouldn't usually find included in a traditional IB curriculum. These included intermediate macroeconomics, intermediate microeconomics and economic development. This easily supported 1-2 *additional* ECO faculty lines.

**3. Rinse and Repeat the International Econ Course** – The CoB's economists were able to add international economics (ECO 336) to the CoB core curricula. Not only that, they included it and another international economics course (ECO 436) to both the ECO and IB curricula. CoB MBA students also got to take international economics via a 600-level course. The same course over and over – CoB ECO/IB majors got to take the same course twice (ECO 336 and ECO 436). The only difference was the instructor – Charles Sawyer for the first and Farhang Niroomand for the second. Those who stuck around for the MBA took the course again with a 600-level prefix. Imagine how many management professors the CoB would need if it offered

principles of management (MGT 300), principles of management (MGT 400), and principles of management (MGT 500).

It's easy to see how ECO at USM kept so many economists on board at any one time. When JGH suite 312 was full, and it often was, there were nine economists there. Throw in two or three more in JGH 309 and couple of others here and there and we're looking at about 15 in all. That's a nice way towards being able to support a PhD program, yet the CoB never has more than 10 economics majors at any level at any one time. Two-thirds of a major per faculty at the group's height spells "b-l-o-a-t" as well as anything.