

Breaking News

CoB to Nail Down New Dean in Ultra-Secret Process

LONG BEACH – Only 24 hours before the first finalist candidate for the CoB's new Dean position arrives in Mississippi, the current CoB administration announces that the first finalist's visit will begin on 18-March-08 and end on 20-March-08. Details of the hiring process were also just released, as CoB faculty and staff were informed that the interview process will **not** include dissemination of the finalists' vitae. Instead, the finalists' vitae will be marked "**Confidential**," and housed inside departmental offices, where sign-out sheets will be used to track just who is interested in viewing the vitae. Given the current process, the recent search for USM's President – a search that was as secretive as any seen in the State of Mississippi in recent years – looks now like an open book.

The first finalist is Lance Nail, associate professor of finance and Chair at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Nail, a native of Cullman, AL, received a PhD in finance in 1996 from the University of Georgia. Nail joined the faculty at UAB as an assistant professor in 1996, and in 2003 he took on the position of finance chair. Despite being lauded by administrators at UAB for his many accomplishments, Nail currently holds only the rank of associate professor. If hired, Nail will either become the CoB's first associate professor Dean *or* he will be the second consecutive Dean hired by the CoB who was also promoted to professor at the same time. The CoB's previous Dean, Harold Doty, left Syracuse University as an associate professor of management and arrived at USM as a professor of management.

In addition to his current rank (associate) and current position (departmental chair), there are a number of other factors working against the hiring of Nail. For one, Nail's background is in finance. It is not likely that the non-EFIB faculty in the CoB want to see the Dean's chair re-occupied by the EFIB. Additionally, Nail's bachelor's degree in finance from the University of Alabama puts him in one of the least employable categories as far as CoB employment is concerned. In the Doty administration, a moratorium on hires with UofAL backgrounds went into effect, and even though that moratorium has been lifted with regard to regular faculty lines, it is not likely that the pro-Doty faction in the CoB will allow a hire at the top administration level that fits this category. Nail's current affiliation – UAB – only works to reinforce the "AL barrier" that he likely faces due to the source of his undergraduate degree.

This hiring process promises to be the CoB's own version of "March Madness." The search committee chair, CoH Dean Peter Fos, is believed to have quietly accepted a position as Provost at another institution. Another day, another USM secret. Stay tuned for additional reports as things heat up further.