

31st & Pearl

The WSJAPP as Told by One Who Was There

I have been visiting this site for quite a while. The op/ed column “31st & Pearl” is a good way for me to tell a story that serves many purposes if told. That story is the story of the Wall Street Journal Academic Partnership Program at the COB.

I was a member of the Undergraduate Programs Committee during the 2002-2003 academic year. At that time we were charged by CBA Dean Gunther to assess the faculty’s level of interest in the WSJAPP. George Carter was the chairman of that committee. Each of us were assigned to discuss the idea of the WSJAPP with our fellow faculty from our home areas. This served as a straw poll before beginning our study of the matter. Representatives from the Wall Street Journal gave at least two presentations to the committee. They outlined three possible avenues for the WSJAPP that gave students various levels of access to the Wall Street Journal at varying costs. The committee met before, after, and in between these presentations to discuss issues.

I remember that we asked a lot of questions about ethical issues. We asked about costs. We asked about kickbacks. We asked about services. We asked about conflicts of interest. I remember all of this clearly because George Carter held all meetings during the 12:15 P.M. to 1:00 P.M. break on Tuesdays or Thursdays so we all had to rearrange schedules or skip lunch on those days which didn’t make me any too happy. After a number of meetings just to discuss the WSJAPP and after we had time to talk with other faculty, the committee scheduled a vote on the issue.

When the time came to hold the vote at the special meeting called just for that vote, Carter balked. Now, most of us were senior faculty members, but there were one or two untenureds on the committee. I distinctly remember that the old guys all understood what Carter was doing, and it was obvious that the young guys (being new to USM) did not. Carter is and always has been a first-class bureaucrat. He was trying to stonewall the process. In my view, Carter was part of a political game against Gunther. The WSJAPP was Gunther’s idea

and Carter was trying to kill it in committee. I clearly remember thinking that Carter's opposition to Gunther's plan seemed more like a personal issue than a professional issue.

The Undergraduate Programs Committee never did vote on the WSJAPP that year and we did not vote on it the following year either. Gunther made the decision to go ahead with the program. I have no idea if he gathered information from any other source including staff or students.

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