

CoB News, 4 December 2008

Sequeira Now Handling Carr's Contest

According to Jan May's [3-Dec-08 USM press release](#) entitled "Graduate Students Pitch Ideas in Annual Business Plan Competition," untenured *assistant* professor of management Jennifer Sequeira has now taken over the annual Golden Eagle Challenge Business Plan Competition that was developed years ago by associate professor of management Jon Carr. As previously reported by USMNEWS.net, Carr is leaving the CoB at the end of this month to take a similar post at Texas Christian University, a Tier II national university.



Jennifer Sequeira

According to May, the teams of graduate business students "develop product and service ideas, company branding and business plans" for a competition that is judged by several business executives, some of whom are USM alumni. The competition is sponsored by **Noetic Technologies Inc. of Hattiesburg**, and it will be held in the Thad Cochran Center on USM's campus throughout the day on 5-Dec-08.

Textbook Scandal Still Pounding USM

The textbook scandal at USM, which involves professors' selection of various "customized textbooks" that differ little from standard versions, yet cost students more (ultimately) and kick back proceeds to USM's various academic units, continues to pound away at USM's reputation. An [editorial](#) in the 3-Dec-08 edition of *The Hattiesburg American* entitled "College textbook racket unnecessary expense" states that "[t]extbook publishers have figured out a racket that enriches them, and university academic departments have become complicit. USM is no different." *THA's* editor also does as good a job as any in laying out the details of the racket, as the insert below indicates:

It works like this:

The department decides on a customized textbook. It might be customized with the name of the professor and the university on the cover. Or it might include supplemental material. It might include the syllabus.

Why, you might ask, would a department decide on such a textbook instead of a plain jane approach? Because it gets a kickback, in effect, from the publishing company for each textbook bought by a student taking that class.

The textbook publisher makes out like a bandit as students are forced to order the new textbook. The academic department gets sometimes tens of thousands of dollars in royalties or other perks. And the student? Well, the student is out of luck - \$80 or \$90 or \$150 in the hole, and unable to sell the book back.

The editor goes on to show just how much money various academic units at USM earned last year by making use of the racket. These are summarized in Table 1 below:

Table 1
Customized Textbook Royalties at USM, Various Units (2007-08)

<u>Academic Unit</u>	<u>Custom Text Royalties</u>
History	\$46,000
English	\$ 2,810
Math	<u>\$90,000</u>
	\$138,810

Just three units at USM (History, English and Math) cleared almost \$140,000 last year alone from the customized textbook plan – a plan USM provost Robert Lyman seemed to approve of by saying that it “exists without a villain.” Of course, *THA*’s editor mocked that response. The editor also noted that USM faculty seem oblivious to “the problem,” a situation that makes sense given that the editorial shows just how faculty benefit from such a scheme. Of course, to faculty this practice is not “a problem,” it is a boondoggle. Judging by the online responses from readers, some of which are inserted below, many in the local community side with *THA*’s editor on this issue.

ogal19 wrote:

The comments that were made by the folks associated with USM are absurd! There is a villain and it is a MAJOR issue even though Oshrin says it is not. I have two sons in school at USM so we spend an average of \$1600 a semester on textbooks alone yet because my husband and I both work as professionals we qualify for ZILCH in financial aid. IT SUCKS! Then you have to deal with folks on campus that don't know their right hand from their left when it comes to advising. I am an alumni of USM and it is really sad that no more is done to help students find their way through this experience.

12/3/2008 7:19:33 AM

MrsSnow wrote:

As a student and employee of Southern Miss, I agree that there is a problem. Yes, I am allowed to enroll in up to six (6) credit hours of classes per semester, but must purchase the textbooks like every other student. On average my textbooks cost me \$300 to \$400 per semester for two classes. A student attending JCJC, purchases the same textbooks at half of the cost! The costs should be the same for textbooks in the same area. So why do textbooks purchased for Southern Miss classes cost so much more. I have had to purchase two of the "customized" textbooks and was not able to sell any of them back at the end of the semester. Any when the textbooks could be sold back to the bookstore, a student only gets "pennies on the dollar". Students can save a little money by purchasing their textbooks across Hardy Street at Campus Book Mart. Hint: purchase at Campus Book Mart and sell the textbooks back at Barnes & Nobles. :-)

12/3/2008 8:49:21 AM

stephendietz wrote:

-"Professors seem oblivious to the problem. "

MOST PROFESSORS ARE OBLIVIOUS TO EVERYTHING! Most of them could not hack it in the real world so they sit behind their wall of academia (a safe zone) where their ideas become stagnated and they become pompous, smug, and just downright snobby pricks. When they reach tenure their motivation dries up almost completely because let's face it, they no longer have to do anything nor do they have to answer to anyone. That's why they are professors, because they couldn't make it on the outside. I'm a Southern Miss alumnus and believe me when I say that I had two of my professors who were devout believers in the Communist Manifesto. I dared them to tell me one time when communism worked. You should have been there to see how I was immediately shouted down. How dare anyone question them! They are all better than us, right? You would have thought I was an accused witch in Salem, Massachusetts from the 1600's.

Now I did have some fine professors at USM. However, most were not. With that being said, nearly 100% of my best professors were retired from the private sector and then went into teaching.

12/3/2008 7:52:24 AM

ladeebugg wrote:

And, if professors are on this thread and get upset about some posted comments, you all need to be upset. That is a fraction of how students feel when they have to purchase books they don't use. And when I say don't use, I literally mean don't use!

12/3/2008 10:21:56 AM

ladeebugg wrote:

Fact of the matter is- some professors have you order books that they don't use! I am an alumnus of USM and I can go get books out of storage that I still have that I couldn't sell back. If I could sell them back, why would I accept \$10 for a book that cost me \$180? That is ridiculous. I always bought books because I was afraid that if I didn't then I would fall behind. It was my experience that I could have saved a couple of thousand of dollars over the few years I was there. It is crazy how much students pay for books. I worked full time and was a full time student. I was difficult for me, thank God for financial aid. I feel sorry for those students who didn't qualify and had to work extra jobs and extra hard to get money to pay for books and classes! The point is, if a professor is not going to use a book, do not try to save face by making the students buy it!!

12/3/2008 10:18:26 AM

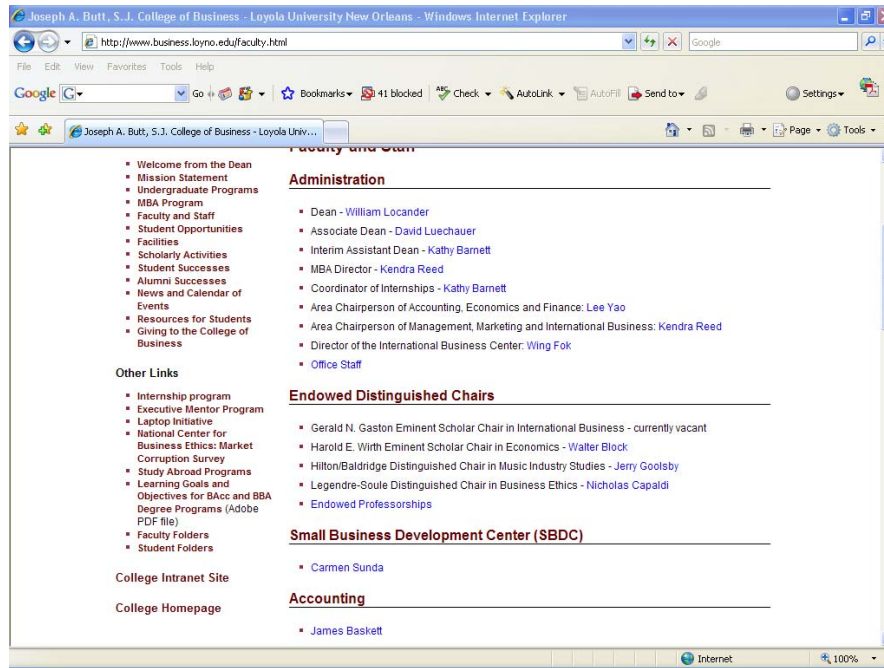
As [reported](#) here [back in the summer](#), USM's business school was at the heart of this scandal when it first arose. Our reports, two of which are linked above, also provided links to other textbook scandals that have plagued USM's business school in the past, some of which may even be worse than the current customized texts scandal that is currently raging at USM.

Former CoBer Trevino “Goes Yard”

Word from CoB insiders indicates that former CoB associate professor of IB, Len Trevino, currently an associate professor of IB at Washington State University, has landed an endowed professorship in IB at Loyola University in New Orleans (shown below).



A recent search of LU's website revealed a current opening (among its “Endowed Distinguished Chairs”) for the *Gerald N. Gaston Eminent Scholar Chair in International Business* position at the private institution. A screen produced by that search is inserted below, and it shows that the *Gaston Chair* is “currently vacant.” This position is believed to be the one that Trevino, who came to the CoB during the William Gunther administration (1998-2003) and departed the CoB during the Harold Doty administration (2003-07), was recently awarded.



Sources tell USMNEWS.net that Trevino has published in each of the four premier journals in the field of IB. These are the *Journal of International Business Studies*, *International Business Review*, *Management International Review* and the *Journal of World Business*. Each of these is shown below.



Trevino is one of [many former CoB faculty](#) who have departed USM since 2003, when former CoB dean Harold Doty was hired by the Shelby Thames administration of the institution.



Harold Doty

Like that of so many of these faculty, Trevino's work since leaving the CoB is scattered throughout the [CoB Brain Drain](#) series. Finally, a quick search reveals that Trevino currently has **269 Google Scholar citations**, which is a figure that would easily put him near the top of today's CoB.

“The Saunders Way” by Duane Cobb

Yesterday's [investigative news story](#) about the arrival of USM's new Beechcraft King Air 200 one month before USM supposedly finalized a lease agreement for the plane is yet another example of why so many are fond of USMNEWS.net. That story also highlights what appears now to be a trend of the Saunders administration – making administrative use of the old saying about it being better to ask for forgiveness than for permission. The airplane story comes on the heels of the decision of three public universities in Mississippi, USM being one of them, to hire a legislative lobbyist before the State of Mississippi decided whether or not such a practice by its higher learning institutions was allowable. In both cases, asking for forgiveness seems to have served USM well. Who knows how things would have gone had permission been sought first?

It also appears that the only difference between these two episodes is the Saunders administration's handling of the news media. In the airplane case, the media were told that no deal had been made. In actuality, the plane was on already on the tarmac (and cold) at the time the statement was made. It is unfortunate that former CoBer Jana Bryant had to be the mouthpiece for the slippery statement. Yesterday's [editorial about the plane deal](#) emphasized that the major justification for USM's leasing of the twin-engine aircraft is that it will allow Golden Eagles sports teams to maintain their competitive edge. It was editorialized, however, that the victims of USM's athletics prowess this year more closely resemble the Ethel Kennedys of the NCAA world than anything else. That point was made again just last night when Larry Eustachy's men's basketball team was defeated *at home in Green Coliseum* by **South Alabama**. One would think that, five years into the program, Eustachy's cagers would be beyond this. Instead, it is routine, as Eustachy continues to struggle to get as many wins at USM (64) as he has losses (65). In losing to the Jaguars last night, USM's fourth and fifth leading scorers came all the way to Hattiesburg from Brooklyn, NY, and Dallas, TX, respectively. See why we need the BKA 200? If not, maybe forgiveness *is* that much better than permission.

While Eustachy has been languishing in mediocrity at USM his predecessor, James Green, took Mississippi Valley State to an NIT and an NCAA tournament. Now Green is at tiny Jacksonville State University (AL), where last night his team downed Norfolk State in Virginia to improve to 5-1. Two of the five wins came against Georgia State in Atlanta and Massachusetts in Amherst, and Green's lone loss came in a hard-fought 78-89 battle with South Carolina in Columbia. It's easy to forget sometimes that Green took the Golden Eagles to a couple of NITs, and produced a Conference USA regular season championship and two 22-win seasons in his first five years. Eustachy has yet to exceed 20 wins in any of his first 4+ seasons.

Luckily for USM the next two home dates are with William Carey and McNeese State (talk about some Ethel Kennedys). Are we sure that a BKA 200 is big/powerful enough to take these two down? If not, Eustachy better ask for forgiveness.