

## **CoB at a Crossroads**

### **PART 4**

Many followers of the trials and troubles of USM's College of Business believe that the institution has been forever relegated to bottom of the academic food chain. Others recognize the many problems, yet they still have hope that the organization can be turned around. However, even those in this group understand that if a turnaround is to succeed, it must begin with the hiring of the CoB's next Dean. This new series, "CoB at a Crossroads," takes a multi-part look at the many problems that the new Dean of the CoB will face as the 2008-09 academic year begins.

#### **"I Don't Have a Dog in this Fight"**

The CoB's new Dean will have many obstacles to face on Day 1. One of them will be dealing with the fact that any oversight over the CoB's faculty evaluation process was killed in December of 2006, when CoB management professors, Stephen Bushardt and David Duhon, put a motion on the floor at the CoB's Fall 2006 faculty meeting that eliminated the traditional executive team conference that established each faculty's rating in teaching, research and service. Under the Bushardt-Duhon plan, individual faculty ratings are decided by department heads, without consultation with the other department heads or the Associate Dean.

As one would expect, the Bushardt-Duhon proposal was met with lively criticism, particular among members of the EFIB. The two authors of the proposal were at a loss to explain why they hadn't vetted the proposal in the CoB's Handbook Committee, though they were bailed out of this potential quandary by none other than former CoB Dean Harold Doty, who pointed out that the CoB's faculty handbook, *Enhancing Faculty Productivity*, did not include the requirement that handbook changes go before the CoB's Handbook Committee before consideration by the CoB faculty as a whole. When queried why he appeared to champion a proposal that obviously seemed to so many CoB faculty to be another swipe at productive faculty, Doty responded: "I don't have a dog in this fight."

Doty's response begs the question: How could something like the Bushardt-Duhon proposal, which clearly has the potential to stifle faculty productivity like few other proposals could, be seen by a Dean as so quality-neutral as to provoke the response, "I don't have a dog in this fight"? An old CoB sage once wrote that when a CoB administrator, or an administrator's lackey, says "I don't have a dog in this fight," you can be sure that quite the opposite is the case. To that one might ask: Just how much research has Doty done since resigning his Dean post in April 2007? Now you're starting to get the picture, and the CoB's next Dean will have to be a fast learner as well if things are to get turned around in USM's College of Business. By the way, the Bushardt-Duhon proposal passed by a 2-to-1 margin. Just another day in the life of the CoB.

#### **Black Tuesday in the EFIB**

At the beginning of Fall semester 2006, the EFIB voted to have a 3-person committee govern the department for the 2006-07 academic year. About three weeks later, EFIB Chairman George Carter called a surprise meeting of the department. Carter's announcement did not offer any indication as to what would be discussed at the meeting.

It simply stated that Carter wanted to read a statement to EFIB faculty and then get the EFIB faculty's reaction to it. It was at that point that the drama was to play out.

Carter came to the meeting and read a prepared statement. The statement indicated that he, Carter, was not comfortable being part of the EFIB's 3-person governance committee to which he was elected three weeks prior. He then announced his resignation from that committee. Next he stated that he relayed his intention to USM's legal counsel, and was advised by counsel that his (Carter's) resignation nullified the EFIB's elected governance committee, and that as a result Carter was to inform the EFIB that it was instructed by legal counsel hold a new election and choose among two remaining faculty governance options (i.e., chair only, and 3-person committee not to include the chair).

Associate Dean Farhang Niroomand, who had skipped the original vote three weeks prior, apparently knew beforehand about the details of Carter's conversation with USM legal counsel because he (Niroomand) attended the second meeting with two voting proxies in hand. Those proxies belonged to EFIB Coast faculty, Farooq Malik (assistant professor of economics) and Weihua Shi (visiting assistant professor of finance). After heated debate, Carter's proposed re-vote proceeded, and won by a margin of three votes, one of which was Shi's (cast by Niroomand). Another vote in Carter's favor came from visiting assistant professor (in IB), John Lambert.

Carter's move was controversial, to say the least. And, the sinister aspects of the move have been the subject of numerous reports here at USMNEWS.NET. Part 4 of "CoB at a Crossroads" closes with two aspects of it that have received a bit less attention. First, the EFIB's re-vote was based on a USM Handbook that had been replaced months earlier by a newer version. That newer version allowed for two simple faculty governance options, not the three Carter and the USM counsel relied upon on Black Tuesday. It's more difficult to imagine that USM's counsel did not know about the newer handbook than it is to assume that Carter acted alone, only using an alleged conversation with USM's counsel as a smokescreen. Second, two improper votes were cast on Black Tuesday -- one each by John Lambert and Weihua Shi. As visiting faculty at the time, neither was entitled to express a formal opinion on faculty governance in the EFIB. As Carter indicated by his long-winded reading of the USM Handbook at the beginning of Fall semester 2007, he (Carter) knows that visiting faculty are not allowed to participate in faculty governance votes. As such, Carter's fingerprints are, at every turn, all over the troubling events described in the CoB as Black Tuesday.