

Reading a “Dean’s Message”

A recent visit to the Frostburg State University College of Business website led us to the “Dean’s Message.” The banner below immediately caught our eye:

FROSTBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

College of Business (FSUBusiness)

Forget about Florida State University, the institution that 99% of America immediately associated with the acronym “FSU”! Way to go, Danny! As a marketing expert, you’re blazing a trail in coattail riding. If Arnold is hired at USM, look for a sign to be tacked to the side of Greene Hall: “‘COB: Mississippi’s Business School.’ ‘Over 1 Billion Served.’ ‘Don’t leave home without it.’ ‘It keeps going...and going...and going....’ ‘Let your fingers do the walking.’ ‘The choice of a new generation.’” Of course, if Charles Jordan is involved, the quotation marks will be removed, based on Jordan’s talent for obtaining permission to cite without attribution.

We get to the actual Dean’s Message:

Dean's Message

Dear Students, Alumni, and Friends of the College,

What a great time to be associated with FSUBusiness! Having arrived here three years ago, after 24 years at much larger institutions, I really did not know what to expect. My optimism, however, has been completely justified!

FSUBusiness has just received the highest external validation of excellence that a business school can achieve-- AACSB accreditation. AACSB is an organization that focuses only on accrediting excellence in business schools. Of approximately 1,600 business programs in the U.S., only about one-third are accredited. The process of obtaining accreditation involved a five-year candidacy process. FSUBusiness faculty, staff, students, our Advisory Boards and the FSU Administration all played important roles in the arduous, but rewarding, process of achieving this accreditation.



Dr. Danny Arnold
Dean
FSUBusiness

“What a great time to be associated with FSUBusiness! ...[A]fter 24 years at much larger institutions....” Wow, Danny! Why don’t you just come out and say it: Frostburg is a Podunk

town and is MUCH worse than *cringe* Las Cruces or even, gulp, Stark-vegas! What a glowing start to a welcome message! Is Arnold “Big Timing” Frostburg? We think so.

“My optimism, however, has been completely justified!” Optimism about what, Danny? Optimism that the central administration wouldn’t ask too much of you? Optimism that the faculty would roll over and let you have your way? Optimism that you’d get to sit in your office all day and watch YouTube videos?

Next, Danny launches into the stock AACSB speech: AACSB...blah, blah, blah...highest standards...blah, blah, blah.... Of course, Danny failed to mention that he’s neck-deep in the AACSB game and that AACSB gives him inroads to earn extra money consulting with schools hoping for AACSB accreditation. Or that he gets to go on all-expenses-paid trips. Or that his AACSB campus visits are opportunities to interview for future jobs. Isn’t AACSB awesome?!?!

The following screen shot contains Arnold’s “achievements” as dean at Frostburg.

years include:

- Developed new mission and vision statements
- Developed “applied business” focus and expanded number of “real world” student projects
- Developed new strategic plan
- Revamped the organizational structure
- Redeployed the support staff
- Added a Graduate Coordinator
- Added some office and classroom space
- Developed a set of governance bylaws
- Revised the undergraduate curriculum
- Added a course in ethics
- Added courses to enhance students’ professional development
- Added assessment and assurance of learning processes
- Added a new option in integrated business
- Upgraded the entrepreneurship/small business option
- Added core courses for all FSU*Business* majors
- Revised MBA program
- Streamlined and updated existing MBA curriculum
- Developed new MBA entrance standards
- Revised scheduling rotation for MBA courses
- Developed standards for graduate faculty membership
- Revised MBA capstone course
- Developed a Teaching Excellence Workshop Series
- Developed a Research Excellence Workshop Series
- Enhanced and enlarged the college’s Advisory Boards

The faculty are continuing to work hard to make FSU*Business* even better!

New Mission and Vision Statements? New strategic plans? Why does every dean find it necessary to restate/revamp/reiterate/retread mission and vision statements and strategic plans? Perhaps it's because there isn't a Dean's Mansion with a boudoir that is in *desperate need* of remodeling. The motivation is the same, however. New is better, and change is good. Maybe all this change is why USM is so much better than it was ten years ago.

"Developed an 'applied business' focus..." sounds a lot like the old Thames line that ended with Grimes telling the CoB to cease basic research. We're not sure this is a bragging point, wither, Danny.

"Revamped the organizational structure." Didn't Gunther revamp the CBA org structure in the 1990s? Didn't Thames revamp the org structure of USM in the early 2000s? Yeah, those worked out well. More change for change's sake.

"Added a course in ethics." Does that course include a lecture from the dean on why it's OK to use AACSB as a springboard to future employment opportunities?

"Upgraded the entrepreneurship/small business option." Don't you deans have any original ideas, Danny? Every AACSB dean is doing *something* with entrepreneurship education. Harold Doty mortgaged the Business Administration curriculum at USM to what avail? To the present, there seems to be no real positive impact, other than "forcing" general business majors to become "entrepreneurship" majors?

"Revised MBA program." Does that include making it a night program? Or adding a 5-year MBA option? Or denying access to some of Frostburg's best undergraduate students? Maybe that last one is covered under "Developed new MBA entrance standards."

"Enhanced and enlarged the college's Advisory Boards." Is that anything like the BAC, which has experienced membership turnover and cancellations because of Doty's habit of overpromising and underdelivering? Heck, Danny – reviving the BAC will be a snap for you. Doty didn't tick *every* BAC candidate off. He just ticked *most* of them off.

Finally, there's a chilling caveat: "The faculty are continuing to work hard to make FSU *Business* even better!" How are they doing that, Danny? Are they "rolling up their sleeves and working harder" à la Thames? Just what are you doing to "lead" them to these new efforts? Did you, as one USMNEWS.net columnist suggested, have a nose ring installed for every faculty, bull-style? This statement has Plantation written all over it.

Take a long, hard look at Danny Arnold's list of accomplishments. They mirror Harold Doty's wish list very closely. New curriculum. New MBA program. New mission, vision, and strategic plan. New administrative structure. New organizational structure. It seems that every AACSB dean gets handed a playbook at his or her first AACSB Deans' Conference, since they all have the same ideas and the same methods for carrying out those ideas.

USM has already has Danny Arnold as dean, except that his name was Harold Doty. Arnold is more "folksy" than Doty (an accomplishment not difficult to reach), but he is, for all intents and purposes, the same as Doty, and a Danny Arnold deanship will almost certainly result in failure. That result would be yet another similarity to the Doty regime.