

# Dear Donna,

By now many USMNEWS.net readers have learned that you (CoB decision sciences professor Donna Davis) have been named chairperson of the CoB's new department of business economics and decision sciences (BEDS). Regardless of [how the selection of you occurred](#), most CoBers outside of ECO are pulling for you to make a positive change in the BEDS. It is probably a safe bet to also state that many, if not most, long-time readers of USMNEWS.net are hoping that you will be able to corral the often wayward economists in a way that allows the rest of the CoB to become more productive. New CoB dean Lance Nail certainly needs ECO's better angels to prevail.

This open letter to you is written in the spirit noted above, and meant to warn you of one possible pitfall in your governance of the ECO faculty. This Aug/Sept ('09), the faculty in your department (BEDS) will gather to choose a faculty governance option. The economists will no doubt band together and choose a governance option that consists of three faculty members. This group may not include you. In fact, it won't include you if the group of ECO faculty fails to consider all of the possibilities. By not including you, the ECO faculty will be able to forge evaluations of ECO and DS faculty that do not comport with those that you produce. In this event, Nail will have the option as to which "advice" he accepts as he determines raise money allocations. He will no doubt accept yours. Easy enough.

Of course, this is where the ECO faculty may get crafty. By including you, along with two economists, among the 3-person governance committee, they can out-vote you in a majority rule-based setting, get the evaluations they want for ECO and DS faculty, and put you, as a chair who gets to also write a separate evaluation, in the position of having to contradict evaluations you were part of producing on the 3-faculty governance committee. Though Nail should still have little trouble "choosing" your evaluations as chair, at least in this case the economists will have created a sort of appealable set of outcomes. This is a situation you and Nail will probably want to avoid.

Assuming you and Nail do want to avoid the aforementioned issue, here's how: if elected to the 3-person faculty governance committee, resign immediately. To provide some cover for your decision (not that you need any), state that you do not feel comfortable sharing confidential information about faculty (e.g., student and parental complaints about faculty) with non-administrative types. In accordance with the USM Faculty Handbook, the BEDS faculty will be forced by your resignation to re-vote on faculty governance. This time, however, there will be only two options left – chair only, which is good, or a 3-person committee *not to include* the chair. The latter puts you right back into the original situation described above, which is also good. Follow this advice and these steps and things should go smoothly for you. There are no other avenues by which the ECO faculty can threaten the progress that you, dean Nail and the rest of the CoB administration want to provide the CoB in the months ahead. Good luck to you, and Godspeed.

**An Interested Onlooker**