

# CoB Civility 101

by Duane Cobb

Now, about 25 days into the Alvin Williams regime in the CoB, we learn just what Williams' plan for "getting civility back into Joe Greene Hall" was all about. It's too bad the plan was such an utter failure, and that May 4, 2007, was about as sorry a day as the CoB has seen in quite some time. **The one bright spot was management professor Sharon Topping, who comes away from the whole sad episode that was the CoB's Spring Faculty meeting of 2007 looking more Deanly than Williams on his best day so far.** In fact, Topping's speech to the CoB should be framed and hung on the walls of Joe Greene Hall in place of former Dean Doty's missions and visions.

Let's apply some "rubrics" to the meeting and see how the CoB came out. 2=the number of USM Police Officers that were called in to adjourn the meeting. That's 2 more than I expected would be there. That's "continuous . . ." something -- pretty sure it's not ". . . improvement." 1=the number of French diplomats who were *not* listed to speak on the agenda. One day we're pinning medals in the home of the brave, the next day we're denigrating the land of the free.

Many=the number of "whereas" statements introduced in the "cease and desist" order from 1=French diplomat. **Who knew after all the havoc wreaked by the likes of Doty, Stan Lewis, Barry Babin et al., and the**

**backlash all of that has caused, that all the CoB needed was a nice dose of "whereas-es" to get things back to normal.**

Let's get back to Topping for a bit. She was once the target of many of those who championed Sami Dakhli's cause. Given her authority to speak on matters before the CoB these days, to hear her speak with such eloquence convinces me that there is probably some untapped administrative talent in the CoB. Why do we have to keep going back to the same old wells (i.e., Carter, Niroomand, etc.) to find administrators? **Hopefully, new President Martha Dunagin Saunders will realize that fresh starts are sometimes the way to go, and she will also look deeper than "the usual suspects" and find some hidden gems.** Though I won't hold my breath, I will hope.

As for Williams, his story is not yet written, and there is still a chance for him to turn lemons into lemonade. **However, his start was about as inauspicious as they come. Hopefully he's coming up with some better ideas to get the CoB back on track than the one he trotted out before CoB faculty on May 4.** And, given the sad episode that he presided over on May 4, *it should be* and *is* incumbent upon him to make the next move. It's time for leaders to lead.