

EFIB News, June 2007

There have been a few news items coming out of the EFIB in the past few days and weeks. We touch upon a few of those in this issue.

Clark Out?

There has been a lot of speculation in recent days about future additions to the current wave of turnover in the EFIB. For USMNEWS.NET readers who have been away in recent weeks, economics professor Charles Sawyer announced his retirement from USM a few months ago, and just a week or so ago USMNEWS.NET broke the story that finance instructor Michael Madaris is leaving the CoB for William Carey University. Much of the recent speculation has centered around associate professor of finance John Clark, who some report may be joining Sawyer and Madaris in flight. That speculation was given additional fuel in the last two weeks through a new installment in the “What George Carter Thinks” series here at USMNEWS.NET. That installment is shown below:

What are George Carter's Additional Thoughts about the Recent Spike (Under his Leadership) in EFIB Faculty Turnover?

“ . . .everybody's saying . . . John [Clark] will be leaving next year . . . I think . . . [it is] ill-advised . . . to leave before . . . actually get[ting] tenure, to show you can do it, but Melody [Lo] and Sunny [Wong] obviously don't feel that way, and . . . maybe . . . it's not the 'red flag' it used to be.”

George Carter,
on the recent spike in EFIB faculty turnover,
2006

Carter's quote indicates that “everybody's saying” John Clark is leaving the CoB. Presumably, “everybody” extends to the CoB's administrative structure. The fact that the quote was made in 2006 and refers to “next year” supports that interpretation, given that Harold Doty, who was Dean at the time, reportedly maintained a “marketable faculty” list, a practice that sources tell USMNEWS.NET was begun by former CBA Dean William Gunther. Though Carter implicitly advises Clark to remain on board (through the quote above), we'll have to keep watch over the summer for any breaking news on this front.

Sin or Sinner? A Case Study

Just yesterday USMNEWS.NET staffers were forwarded some interesting e-mail correspondence between faculty in the EFIB. The correspondence refers to the possibility for CoB faculty participation in USM's QEP program during fall semester of 2007. The correspondence was initiated by USM QEP officials via an e-mail to Interim CoB Dean Alvin Williams on 16-May-07. That e-mail, shown below, indicates that (1) the

CoB is the only *un*represented College for fall 2007, and (2) participating faculty may choose either a \$1,500 stipend or a one-course release from teaching as an inducement.

Eight days later, on 24-May-07, Williams forwarded that e-mail to members of his management team. The next day, 25-May-07, Carter forwarded the e-mail to EFIB faculty, soliciting responses. These e-mails are also part of the colored insert below.

Associate professor of economics Akbar Marvasti (shown below) provided a somewhat amazing response (on 6-Jun-07) to Carter's query. Marvasti reports to Carter that he (Marvasti) is "interested" in the QEP Training possibility, and that he (Marvasti) would like to take the course reduction (fall 2007) instead of the \$1,500 stipend. Marvasti then proceeds to tell Carter, the EFIB Chair, exactly which course he (Marvasti) would like to see Carter remove from his fall 2007 teaching duties – ECO 201, 1:00-2:15, TR!

Date: Wed, 6 Jun 2007
From: Akbar Marvasti <Akbar.Marvasti@usm.edu>
To: 'EFIB Department' <cob-ecfinintbus@usm.edu>
Reply-to: EFIB Department <cob-ecfinintbus@usm.edu>
Subject: RE: [Cob-ecfinintbus] FW: Recruiting Faculty for QEP FacultyDevelopment Seminar

George,

Thank you for the suggestion. I am interested and I like to take the course load reduction in the fall. If possible, I like the following class to be dropped from my fall schedule.

3278 ECO 201 H006 3 Prin Of Eco I 1:00pm-2:15pm TR

Do you happen to know when the class meets?

Akbar

From: cob-ecfinintbus-bounces@usm.edu
[mailto:cob-ecfinintbus-bounces@usm.edu] On Behalf Of George Carter
Sent: Friday, May 25, 2007
To: cob-ecfinintbus@usm.edu
Cc: Joseph.Peyrefitte@usm.edu; Alvin.Williams@usm.edu
Subject: [Cob-ecfinintbus] FW: Recruiting Faculty for QEP FacultyDevelopment Seminar

To EFIB Faculty:

Anyone interested?

George

From: Alvin Williams [mailto:Alvin.Williams@usm.edu]
Sent: Thursday, May 24, 2007
To: 'Barry Babin'; 'George Carter'; 'Cheri Becker'; s.lewis@usm.edu; 'Tony L. Henthorne'; 'Linda Jordan'; joseph.peyrefitte@usm.edu
Subject: FW: Recruiting Faculty for QEP Faculty Development SeminarColleagues:

The QEP is seeking faculty participants from the CoB. We need two faculty members to participate for the fall. There is a \$1,500 stipend or course

reassigned time. Please identify faculty in your unit to participate. We are the only college on campus without representation.

Thanks for your help.

Alvin J. Williams, Interim Dean

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From: Julie Howdeshell [mailto:Julie.Howdeshell@usm.edu]
Sent: Wednesday, May 16, 2007
To: Alvin.Williams@usm.edu
Subject: Recruiting Faculty for QEP Faculty Development Seminar

Dr. Williams,

I have been working with Dr. Peyrefitte to recruit faculty from your college for the QEP faculty seminar this fall and am enlisting your help as well. Currently, we have participants from every college except the College of Business. I have attached a list of faculty by college and a copy of the application. Faculty are rewarded for participating (either with \$1500 stipend or course reassigned time). The seminar is not only for faculty teaching capstones. We encourage faculty teaching courses with formal oral and written components to participate.

The seminar is also valuable for the college in that participants learn more about rubrics and assessment. We have two new facilitators on board. Dr. Wendy Atkins-Sayre is the new Speaking Center Director and will also serve as a co-facilitator of the seminar. Dr. Lajuan Davis is a Technology Education professor with a background in organizational communication and business grammar.

Please nominate two faculty from your college to participate in this faculty development opportunity. You can forward their names to me for me to contact or ask them to send their applications to me.

With much thanks,

Julie

Julie Howdeshell
Director, Quality Enhancement
The University of Southern Mississippi
118 College Drive, #10046
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
phone: 601-266-4525
email: julie.howdeshell@usm.edu

It's hard to imagine Carter "letting Marvasti get away with" making such a request, especially one so "out in the open" as Marvasti's. However, sources indicate that Marvasti is "on the team," and any admonishment he (Marvasiti) receives will likely be dispensed behind closed doors. This is a good example of the kinds of situations

described in an older report here at USMNEWS.NET entitled “Sin or Sinner?” For a look at that report, visit our archives at <http://www.usmnews.net/Sin%20or%20Sinner.pdf>.



Akbar Marvasti

USMNEWS.NET readers will recall that Marvasti, a 20+ year veteran in higher education, was hired by the EFIB in spring of 2006. He came to USM after serving as a visiting professor at Pomona College, a position he held after leaving a tenured full professor position at the University of Houston, Downtown. Sources have indicated, and USMNEWS.NET has reported, that EFIB job search guru, Charles Sawyer, told EFIB faculty that Marvasti had conflicts with administrators at UHD and had gone to PC to escape the situation. Now, after having taught a year on a 2-course, 1-prep schedule, Marvasti appears to be generating a way to replicate Year 1 for his second year.

Hiring Stats

Based on the story above, it’s difficult to understand why Carter believes so strongly in Sawyer’s “sixth sense” about hiring, but he does. In a recent report entitled “CoB Mystic,” Carter describes Sawyer as someone who “can . . . read recommendation letters and resumes for stated and **unstated** content” (emphasis added) better than anyone else in the profession with whom Carter is familiar (for a look at this report, please see <http://www.usmnews.net/CoB%20Mystic.pdf>). However, another recent report posted to USMNEWS.NET, this one entitled “Rock, Paper, Scissors . . . Rock! [Part 2],” contradicts the Sawyer mystique in hiring. In that report, the following table and analysis appears (<http://www.usmnews.net/Rock%20Paper%20Scissors%20Rock%202.pdf>):

Name	Offer	Answer
Dakhliya, Sami	#1	Yes
Liu, Xuepeng	#2	No
Servatka, Maros	#3	No
Marku, M’glen	#4	No
Marvasti, Akbar	#5	Yes
Asarta, Carlos	#6	No
Naufal, George	#7	No
Troost, William	#8	No
Sayre, Ward	#9	No

The data in Table 1 above now indicate that seven (7) of the last nine (9) job offers extended by EFIB Chair Carter have been declined, for a rejection rate of 77.8 percent (over the 2006-07 period).

A success rate of 22.2 percent from the past academic year's job search process in the EFIB fails to support the Sawyer mystique (or mythology). It also calls into question Carter's recent lamentation:

"I do not know how our department, and I, will conduct faculty searches in the future [without Charles]."

Perhaps the department will have to dig down deep to replicate the 22.2 – only the future will tell.