

Forward to Something, or Back to Nothing?

How John Clark's 2008-09 Tenure Decision May Tell the Tale on the CoB's Next Dean

Given current Interim CoB Dean Alvin Williams' decision to take a professorship at the University of South Alabama in the summer of 2008, the CoB will definitely be welcoming a new Dean in the summer of 2008. And, from the looks of the current CoB Dean search process, the CoB's next Dean will come from a pool of *external* candidates. To date, Lance Nail, the current chair of finance at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, and Danny Arnold, the current Dean of Business at Frostburg State University, have each either visited or scheduled a visit to the CoB. Some time in mid April of 2008, a third candidate will have also visited Hattiesburg and Long Beach to interview for the CoB's top executive position. Among the many issues one of these current candidates, or some other heretofore unmentioned candidate, will face is the CoB's recent AACSB difficulties. Another is an unprecedented faculty flight that is leaving many units in the CoB fighting for survival. Despite having credentials in human resource management, it was issues like the latter one above that doomed D. Harold Doty, the CoB's previous (permanent) Dean.

Foremost among the new Dean's concerns will be the CoB's human resources troubles. In addition to stemming the flow of departures, the CoB's next Dean will face the task of corralling a Tenure & Promotion process gone awry. From David Duhon's 2005-06 "letter of agreement" fiasco, to Akbar Marvasti's 2007-08 "T&P gambit," the CoB's Tenure and Promotion process seems to have fully succumbed to the many political forces that have dogged the CoB in other areas throughout the years. Fortunately for the next Dean, the opportunity to stake a claim to something, or nothing, in the P&T arena will arise in his or her first year at the helm, 2008-09. With whatever other T&P applications will be filed in 2008-09, associate professor John Clark will be putting forward a Tenure application in the fall of 2008. And, that application will come about 11 years after Clark's first academic stint with the University of Missouri at Kansas City began.¹ Clark took that position shortly after earning a PhD in finance from the University of Alabama. Though Clark occupied a tenure-track position at UMKC, he never "sat for" tenure there, instead moving to USM's College of Business at the beginning of 2003-04.

Clark's tenure at USM began alongside Harold Doty's (as Dean), and came eight months after then-USM President Shelby Thames sacked all of USM's Deans, reorganized the University, and hired five new Deans (including Doty) to lead the newly restructured institution. At the time Clark joined the CoB, the academic world knew all about the disaster that the Thames administration was creating at USM. Much of that world also knew that Doty had the potential to be ruinous to what quality remained in the CoB after five years of having Bill Gunther's administration sit and watch while the organization that former CBA Dean Tyrone Black built to relative prominence withered on the vine. Why, then, would someone like Clark give up a tenure-track position in a metropolitan setting to come to USM's CoB? Sources now tell USMNEWS.NET that, in the year leading up to his departure from UMKC, Clark's tenure-track fate at UMKC was all but sealed, as his publication record revealed the

¹ Though it did not all occur at one institution, Clark's 11-year road to Tenure is reminiscent of EFIB Chair George Carter's 12-year tenure ride at USM, and assistant professor of management Francis Daniel's decade long *mystery* ride in the CoB's management department.

all-too-common “too little, too late” mark that so many in academia have to reckon with each year.

Figure 1 below, which depicts Clark’s yearly finance journal pubs output, supports sources. After earning his PhD in the late 1990s, Clark sailed along at UMKC for almost five years. Then, in 2003, Clark’s first two finance journal pubs appeared, but it was too little and too late, according to sources, to salvage the UMKC situation.

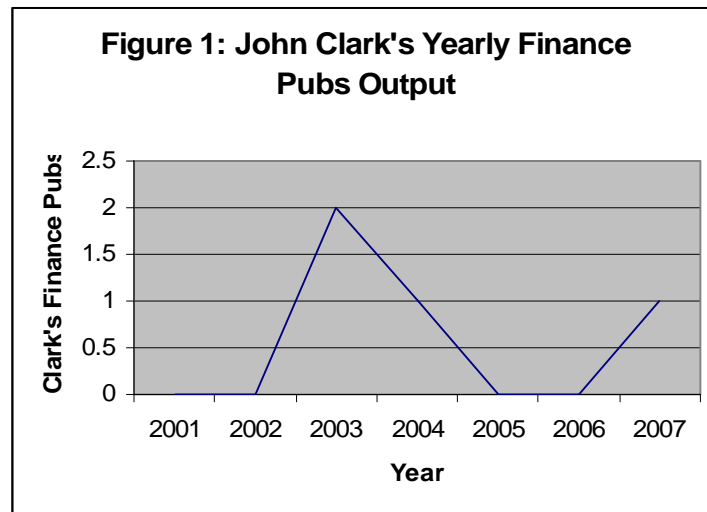


Table 2 below, which depicts Clark’s cumulative finance pubs output, perhaps depicts things more clearly than Table 1. The rush made by Clark in the year or two leading up to his tenure decision at UMKC is seen in Figure 2. Clark’s cumulative finance pubs total rose from 0 to 3 in a short period of time. However, as stated earlier this rush was too little, and it came much too late, as all of it appeared in print by the time Clark has settled in at USM. It all also followed a multi-year hibernation of sorts – a hibernation that evidently turned heads (in a negative way) at UMKC.

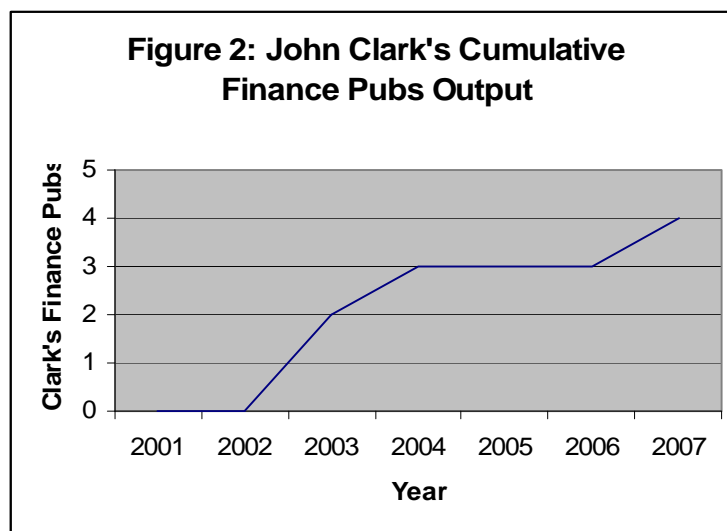


Figure 2 above also indicates that, shortly after arriving at USM's CoB in 2003, Clark began resting on the rewards (laurels) of his UMKC dash. Since 2004, Clark's lone finance journal pub has been a 2007 article in *Managerial Finance*, and that appeared four years after coming to USM. Had each of the figures above been extended to include 2008, Clark's slide into the 2008 Tenure decision in the CoB would be even more evident. As it stands, the CoB's new Dean will have a decision to make. One thing is certain, Clark is not the kind of personality, as few are, who works even harder *without* the discomfort of job *insecurity*. So, if he's resting now, he'll likely be sleeping deeply in the years to come. Therefore, it might be said that Clark's "T" decision will tell the tale on the CoB's new (next) Dean.