

# LIKE A PHOENIX

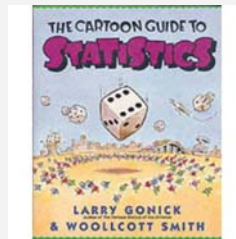
## *More on the Fall, and Possible Rise, of Statistics Education in the CoB*

With much of the CoB's statistics education (BA 301 and 303) program in the hands of the *incapable* John Lambert (IB) and George Carter (ECO), there is little ambiguity about why CoB students and administrators have been struggling with “learning-related” issues in stats over the past several years. There are enough reports on this issue here at USMNEWS.net to warrant a separate page devoted to the subject. Up until now, however, little attention has been paid to Lambert's history and role in statistics education in USM's b-school. This report addresses that hole to some degree.

As reported on a number of occasions, Lambert picked up an MBA from the University of Phoenix a few years ago, and he followed that with a business doctorate from France's Grenoble, another institution reportedly well-versed in *online* education. He was hired by USM's CoB from the University of Louisiana during one of the more controversial job search processes in recent memory. Here are some of the highlights:

Lambert was brought to campus in the early summer of 2006 by the IB search duo of Carter and former CoB economist, Charles Sawyer. Reports from Sawyer were that Carter was promoting Grenoble as a fine university the day before Lambert's visit, and early on the day of Lambert's visit. It is not known what formed the basis of Carter's opinion, but sources indicate it is believed to have been supported by information given to Carter by Lambert himself. Lambert's actual visit went badly, according to Sawyer – so badly, in fact, that Sawyer told a number of CoBers that even a *visiting* position for Lambert seemed like a stretch. Reports also surfaced that at about that time that Carter discovered that Lambert's educational credentials were rooted in online education. This discovery is believed by sources to have been the result of Carter's renewed interest in Lambert's education credentials as a result of the “disastrous” visit. Somehow, after all of this, Lambert was hired as a visiting assistant IB prof to replace the departed Linghui Tang.

CoB faculty reported, throughout the 2006-07 academic year, that Lambert's teaching style and methods were odd, at best. While maintaining a residence out of state, Lambert would spend few, but often *very long* days in Greene Hall, meeting with his ECO and IB students. At the same time, Carter made a number of curious visits with Lambert in various locations, ostensibly to discuss Lambert's research endeavors. Later it was discovered that Carter informed then-CoB dean Harold Doty that he (Carter) had promised Lambert that with publications would come a tenure-track position in USM's CoB. By publishing quite often in the Allied Academies stable of vanity press journals, Lambert fulfilled his obligation to Carter and Doty.



At the end of the 2006-07 academic year, Carter called an EFIB faculty meeting to discuss moving Lambert from a visiting to a tenure-track position. As pointed out above, this was a *fait accompli*. As a result, the meeting became contentious from the beginning, as Carter was almost forced to admit that Lambert had been giving away grades in order to receive high(er) teaching evaluations. A finance faculty also told the assembly that Lambert had been using a cartoon-based text in his (Lambert's) sections of statistics, much like the one inserted above. It was also pointed out by an economist in attendance that Lambert's salary had somehow more than doubled by moving from UofL to a visiting position at USM, and that it would be rising again should Lambert

move to tenure track. The fact that Lambert, who is trained in management, was also to be used heavily in teaching ECO in the CoB, by this point in the meeting, added very little consternation to the whole discussion, which had deteriorated badly. Former CoB associate dean Farhang Niroomand feebly attempted to defend Carter's use of Lambert to teach ECO by stating that Lambert had been doing such at UofL, prompting some faculty to invoke the age-old "if your friends are jumping off bridges, are you going to?" advice of mothers across the U.S. and elsewhere.

It was clear at the meeting, according to sources, that even the administrators' support for Lambert *as a viable academic* was less than half-hearted. As Lambert's *illegal* participation in the so-called "Black Tuesday" EFIB faculty governance vote back in September of 2005, when Lambert was a *visiting faculty* and not part of the CoB's *Corps of Instruction*, had shown, he was simply meant to be a cog in a political machine that by then was spinning out of control. This is all not to say that Lambert's candidacy was defeated that day. To the contrary, Carter marshaled more than enough support from Niroomand, et al. that Lambert was that day, and is to this day, a full-fledged member of the CoB's *Corps of Instruction*. Even Sawyer helped Carter, Niroomand et al. push Lambert over the goal line, even though he (Sawyer) reportedly could not muster up anything in the way of verbal support for Lambert on that occasion.

Lambert's future role in statistics education in the CoB remains uncertain, given CoB dean Lance Nail's reorganization of the college. It is clear that IB, Lambert's home unit, will become part of Management (MGT) on 1-July-09. Finance and real estate, currently part of EFIB, will then split off from ECO and form their own department, FINRELS, with legal studies. ECO will be merged with decision sciences (DS) into BEDS. What will become of BA? Some sources are saying that Nail is expected to hire a *real* statistician to resurrect the CoB's flailing statistics education situation. In doing so, it has been estimated that 1 to 2 lines in ECO will be eliminated, shrinking that unit even further. The recent loss of Niroomand to the University of Houston – *Victoria*, where he will become dean over the summer, coupled with ECO instructor Susan Doty's removal from the (ECO) scene, already account for 2 lines from that quarter. ECO also currently has a number of *untentured* faculty, offering up other possibilities for down-sizing in the near future. Finally, the department's demographic profile, particularly in the cases of Carter, Nissan, and William Gunther, will provide easy avenues for Nail to make drastic changes among the dismal scientists. Thus, even if stats remains the domain of ECO, there is some chance that improvements will be result from attrition, if nothing else.