

New Era Dawns

With all of the crises (e.g., budget, numerous interim administrators) facing USM these days, one hardly noticed that the calendar turned on July-09 at midweek last week and that the "new CoB" was born. Gone is the CoB that former associate CoB dean Farhang Niroomand told the world, or at least all of the colleges and universities he applied to during the past 18 months, *he alone* created. Yes, 1-July-09 ushered in the "new [Lance] Nail CoB," complete with about twice as many departments as the old version headed by former CoB dean Harold Doty. There were no parades or fireworks, just new administrators, like Kirby "Skip" Hughes in accounting, moving into their new suites.

The new organization reminds us of so much. For one, we can't help but remember what an utter failure the Doty-led CoB was, especially vis-à-vis the AACSB. With six new departments, the new CoB is poised, on paper at least, to navigate the accreditation waters much more safely than did the older version. However, with six new departments come six new chairs, which reminds us how badly Nail's six national searches (over this last year) worked out. One department – accounting – has a new faculty (Hughes) at its helm. Several others – business economics and decision sciences, management and IB, marketing and fashion, and tourism management – have CoB faculty retreads. This statistic – 1 in 6 now, and 2 in 6 after Dec-09, does not bode well for the newly hatched Nail administration.

At this point, mid-summer 2009, and under a new organization, it seems the CoB's future hinges on the success of the inside dean/outside dean model that Nail has retread from the old William Gunther/Niroomand administration of 1998-2003. That administration didn't fare too well. Gunther was fired by then-USM president Shelby Thames in Jan-03. The then-associate dean Niroomand came into 1998 with some experience as chair of a department. The current associate dean, Joseph Peyrefitte, lacked that luxury when he was elevated to his current position back in 2007. His inexperience shows almost every day. It's too bad he's not the *outside* dean.