

No Confidence . . . by the Numbers

A GUEST COLUMN

Votes of “no confidence” have spread from the Shelby Thames administration of USM (2002-07) to the University of Houston at Victoria, where former USM (Thamesian) provost Tim Hudson served as president until Aug-2010, and where former USM (Thamesian) associate dean Farhang Niroomand now serves as b-school dean. As USMNEWS.net reported on 9-May-2011 and 10-May-2011, UHV provost Suzanne LaBrecque [suffered a vote](#) of “no confidence” at the hands of the UHV Faculty Council. Table 1 below reviews three “no confidence” votes involving USM and UHV administrators, all occurring since 2004.

Table 1 – No Confidence . . . from USM to UHV

Vote	Voting Body	Date	“No Confidence”	“Confidence”	Abstain
“No Confidence” in USM President Shelby Thames	USM Faculty Senate	7-Mar-04	100% [40]	0% [0]	0% [0]
“No Confidence” in USM President Shelby Thames	USM Overall Faculty	10-Mar-04	93% [430]	7% [32]	0% [0]
“No Confidence” in UHV Provost Suzanne LaBrecque	UHV Faculty Council	6-May-11	94% [45]	2% [1]	4% [2]

Table 1 shows that the “no confidence” bug – that was incubated within the Thames administration at USM, and carried to East Texas by Hudson and Niroomand – hit LaBrecque in a major way on 6-May-2011. Ninety-four percent of the UHV Faculty Council expressed “no confidence” in LaBrecque’s leadership, with only 2% of that same body indicating that she remains fit for the post of UHV provost. Though not nearly as bad as the USM Faculty Senate’s 7-March-2004 verdict on Thames, the UHV Faculty Council did grade LaBrecque one point below the USM faculty at-large graded Thames back on 10-March-2004. In all, these actions encompassed 515 votes of “no confidence,” to only 33 votes in favor of fitness to lead (with two abstentions). This is a remarkable 515-33-2 overall vote.

Word is now circulating about “no confidence” votes on the campus of a second East Texas institution – the University of Texas at Tyler – where another handful of former Thames administration cronies in Peter Fos, Gregg Lassen, Harold Doty, and Stephen Bushardt have been, or are still, serving in administrative posts for UTT president Rodney Mabry. When this is all over, we could easily have well over 1,000 votes of “no confidence” in one or another of these aforementioned administrators, including UTT’s Mabry. And even with the “no confidence” total eclipsing 1,000 votes, the “confidence” tally isn’t likely to exceed even 100.