

Perks for Buds IV Size Really Doesn't Matter

MIS has been under scrutiny - again - recently for a drop in their number of majors. They were asked again, this time by Interim Dean Alvin Williams, to, in essence, justify their existence. Part of the decline in student credit hours was the elimination of the two one-hour skills courses; arguably those classes are no longer necessary, but if you query the CoB faculty you find a consensus that the CoB students do not possess enough computer skills. Even if the students were competent, why give away so many credit hours when it is that very basis that budgets are allocated at USM? In addition to the decrease in credit hours, there is a decrease in the number of MIS majors. There are several offered suggestions for this: the major is no longer "hot"; it is merely a cyclical event; the MIS major is no longer covering what students need to be as marketable as they once were; there is a lack of communication in the classroom, mainly due to lack of fluency in English by some of the MIS instructors; and, whatever the MIS courses are, too many of the instructors teach only what they want in each course and not the material needed to be covered. The bottom line is there is only one three-hour course from MIS in the CoB core. The number of majors is down. Therefore, size matters.

What makes the MIS inquiry of interest is that same microscope has rarely, and not in recent memory, been focused on the Economics majors. At any given time the number of Economics majors may be a dozen students. Given that, how can USM rationally offer multiple variations of economics degrees? How can there be so many Economics faculty members? There are many reasons for this: all CoB deans until Doty were economists – how can you eliminate jobs for the homeboys?; with the backing of all the econo-deans, the Economics department stuffed the COB core with economics courses and courses taught by Economics faculty members to justify an extraordinary number of faculty members (two principles courses, two statistics courses, and one international economics course in the core); and, with the backing of the econo-deans, the Economics major was paired with other - larger - areas for cover. If forced to stand alone, the Economics major would make MIS look mighty by comparison and would (probably negatively) compare to Fashion Merchandising and Tourism Management. Therefore, size matters, but only if you are *not* part of the inside group: Perks for buds.