

Professionalism

Dean Lance Nail said at his faculty meeting that “the College of Business is open for business.” The specific reference was aimed at departments not shutting their doors between 12:00 and 1:00 for lunch; lunches should be staggered and staff and administrators should cover the offices so they are open at least 8:00 to 5:00. That is, for the most part, being done.

Surely this idea can be expanded further in a natural manner: the College of Business will act like a business while it is open. This is not happening nearly enough. There are many faculty members who apparently believe they are still students – if there are no classes, there is nothing to do so I stay home and play. Examples of this include fall break, spring break, and Mardi Gras non-class days; these work days rival weekends for poor attendance in JAG. It is so bad that some long-term slugs even ask why they should be here on those days. When they are here, the level of dress for class has taken a sad down turn, even after the Doty years when most people ceased caring about anything in the CoB. There are faculty members going to class in jeans and T-shirts, and even backwards baseball caps; some faculty members are making some of the Liberal Arts faculty look professional and stylish. Even longer-term people like John Clark routinely wear a polo shirt to class; we suppose the idea of a shirt and tie died for him when he believed he had enough pubs from co-authors to get tenured.

The academic life affords flexibility in many areas, but it should not erase professionalism from any business school, especially in JAG. The first generation college students need positive examples. Professionalism, like quality research, is one part of moving up in the ranks of business schools.