

Special Report

Changing of the Guard in MIS?

An Investigative Series on CoB Faculty Research Credentials

A USMNEWS.net reader recently commented that the list of CoB faculty who have exited the CoB since 2003 contains the names of individuals who are arguably the best scholars to have ever represented their particular units in USM's business school. That comment inspired the idea for a new series on the greatest scholars to have graced the suites of each unit in the CoB. Interestingly, the common thread among these individuals is that they were generally brought to USM under the business school leadership of former CBA dean, Tyrone Black. And, among the ones who have left the business school for other pastures (usually greener ones), most of them departed under the leadership of either former CBA dean, William Gunther, or former CoB dean, Harold Doty (usually the latter).

The race for "the greatest ever" in the CoB's management information systems unit is arguably the most interesting. Reporters had no idea what would be uncovered once this particular installment began. For what we found, continue on. It is almost certain to surprise most readers of USMNEWS.net, and possibly even some past and present members of the CoB's MIS unit. Of course, the only logical place to begin is with MIS professor Chang-Tseh Hsieh, the current *McCarty Distinguished Professor of Management Information Systems*.



As the insert above indicates, Hsieh has published in three separate A-level MIS journals. These are *Computers & Education*, the *Journal of Computer Information Systems*, and the *Journal of Information Technology*. This record is not going to put Hsieh in the Top 5, or even Top 10, all-time CoB scholars, but it would seem to be good enough to compete for the title of "the best ever" in the CoB's MIS area. To see just how good or competitive Hsieh's record is, we move to another current CoB MIS professor, Donna Davis.

As the insert at the top of the next page of this report shows, Davis has published in an elite-level (A+-level) MIS journal. In this case that journal is the *Journal of Management Information Systems*. On its own, this *may* be enough to supplant Hsieh's record above. Fortunately for USMNEWS.net reporters, that decision bridge does not have to be crossed. Davis bailed out reporters by publishing, over the course of her still ongoing career, in no fewer than five other A-level journals. These include *Computers & Operations Research*, the *International Journal of Project Management*, *Omega*, the *International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management*, and the *International Journal of Operations & Production Management*. Each of these is shown below, and when combined with her elite-level *JMIS*, easily propel Davis above Hsieh in "the greatest ever" race in MIS.



The idea that Davis' record would easily surpass Hsieh's came as a surprise to USMNEWS.net reporters. After all, Hsieh is a long-time holder of the *McCarty Distinguished Professorship*, a title that Davis has not only never held, but also one sources say that Davis would not likely even be under consideration for by selection representatives.

Having presented Davis' superior portfolio, it would be premature to crown her "the greatest ever" without investigating the profiles of other candidates. One of these is Davis' husband, Donald Davis, a former CoB MIS professor, and a previous holder of the *McCarty Distinguished Professorship*. While reading the analysis above regarding Donna Davis, most CoB insiders were probably waiting for a discussion about Don Davis, who is a former faculty member many CoBers believe "carried" Donna Davis in terms of research.

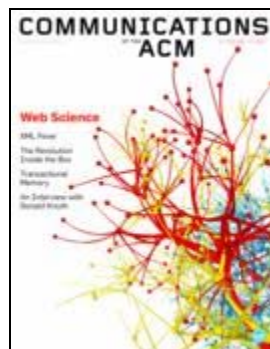
While covering Don Davis' research record, reporters at USMNEWS.net did report that all of Donna Davis' top-flight journal publications came via co-authorship with her husband Don. As the insert below shows, that includes the elite-level *Journal of Management Information Systems*. It also includes all of Donna Davis' other A-level journal publications, which are shown (again) at the top of the next page.





USMNEWS.net reporters are fortunate once again in that Don Davis managed to put together some research that did not involve Donna. For Don that came via publication in an additional A-level journal -- the *Journal of Operations Management*. This gives Don six A-level journal publication outlets to go along with his *JMIS*, enough to edge his wife Donna for the crown of "the best ever" in MIS. Don's victory over Donna also relegates Hsieh's record to *no better than* third all-time as far as the CoB's MIS unit is concerned. This result is likely to come as a shock to many CoB faculty whose tenure in the CoB coincided with the public relations barrage (from CoB administrators) about Hsieh's research skills.

Though Don's victory over Donna indicates that MIS will be ruled by a king instead of a queen, it just might be premature to place the crown on Don's head. And, as we continue on, we run into some information that makes this report even more surprising. For that surprise, we turn to the record of Fujun Lai, a **junior** professor of MIS in the current CoB. Lai's record begins just as the Davis' record began, with an elite-level (A+-level) publication. However, in Lai's case that comes via a publication in *Communications of the ACM*, which is shown below.



With his *CACM*, Lai's record is roughly equivalent to Hsieh's, and we have not yet delved any further into Lai's portfolio. The A-level journal outlet portion of Lai's portfolio is inserted below, and as one can see, Lai surpasses Hsieh on the merits of his output at this level alone, a result that will almost assuredly shock many in the CoB.



As the insert above indicates, Lai has published in the *International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management*, the *International Journal of Technology Management*, the *International Journal of Production Research*, and the *International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management*. When Lai's CACM is combined with these four, his record easily surpasses Hsieh's, pushing Hsieh further back into no better than 4th all-time in MIS. This is an amazing feat when juxtaposed with conventional CoB wisdom. Unfortunately for Lai, however, his record is not *yet* good enough to remove the crown from Don Davis' head.