

# Special Report

## Let's Spin the Wheel

### Gut Courses and Gut Profs in the TM Department

It's that time again -- time for CoB students to spin the wheel on the course scheduling process and see what comes up. In this report, USMNEWS.NET provides its annual look at grade distributions across courses and faculty in USM's College of Business. As always, the grades are provided to us by **pickapprof**, and, in the words of **pickapprof**, these "[g]rade histories are (painstakingly) obtained directly from university records."

We begin with Table 1 below, which contains grading histories from the Tourism Management (TM) department.

Table 1  
Gut Courses and Gut Profs in TM, May/June 2008

Course Prof	#Grades	A	B	C	D	F	George Carter Rigor Ratio
TM 200 Price, C.	21	11	2	6	0	2	0.154
TM 240 Price, C.	20	12	3	3	0	2	0.133
TM 345 Price, C.	25	3	9	6	2	5	0.583
TM 368 Becker, C.	40	7	14	11	6	2	0.381
TM 378 Green, E.	36	15	12	5	0	4	0.148
TM 445 Becker, C.	50	4	16	22	8	0	0.400
Green, E.	22	6	8	3	3	2	0.357
TM 467 Price, C.	30	19	11	0	0	0	0.000

**Notes:** Only data where #Grades>19 are included above. The "George Carter Rigor Ratio" is equal to (D+F)/(A+B).

There are several troubling details in Table 1 above. First, there are at least four gut courses in TM. These are TM 200, TM 240, TM 378 and TM 467. Interestingly, three of these are taught by professor Catherine Price (only). The fourth, TM 378, is taught by instructor Evelyn Green (only). Second, despite all of the positive media coverage Green seems to generate for herself, her courses

are anything *but* rigorous. Green's "George Carter Rigor Ratio" (GCRR) is never higher than 0.4, and it begins at only 0.148.<sup>1</sup>

Third, there is only one course in TM -- TM 345, taught by Price -- where the GCRR exceeds 0.5. Even then the GCRR is only 0.583. And Price's GCRR for this course is a departure for her, given that outside of TM 345 Price's GCRRs range from 0.000 to 0.154. Price's TM 467, where she scores a 0.0 using the GCRR, is an unmitigated gut course. Fourth, outside of former TM chair, Cherylynn Becker, there is very little rigor at all in the TM department. Becker's GCRRs range from a low of 0.381 to a high of 0.400, figures that compare fairly well across the CoB as a whole.

Based on the data in this report, new CoB dean Lance Nail has cause for concern. Perhaps the solution for Nail is to follow the advice of a USMNEWS.NET reader and combine TM, MGT and IB into a single unit -- the Department of Administrative Sciences. That way the instructors in TM may find a role model when it comes to course rigor. Of course the opposite could occur in that situation, which is a further slide by the CoB's IB and MGT instructors.

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<sup>1</sup> The "George Carter Rigor Ratio" is equal to  $(D+F)/(A+B)$ . Sources say Carter first developed this ratio for use in the EFIB's spring 2007 annual evaluation, though none of the other CoB departments adopted the GCRR for annual evaluation purposes. CoB insiders have told reporters at USMNEWS.NET that Carter created the GCRR with the assistance of former EFIB economist Charles Sawyer, who is now at Texas Christian University, in an effort to develop a weapon that could potentially be used to lower the teaching ratings of so-called EFIB dissenters.