

The Dean's List, 2012

by Duane Cobb

Ranking all things USM and all things CoB has become a tradition here at USMNEWS.net. This particular column revisits a past ranking endeavor – ranking past CoB deans. Since USM has had a formal business college, there have been only a handful of deans. So, this task is not made difficult by the number of administrators to consider. Interestingly enough, the disparate performances of the CoB's deans also makes this particular effort a little easier. Let's begin.

1. Tyrone Black – the CoB's second dean took the organization to its highest ever point. That wasn't done by exceeding all others in terms of accreditation. What Black did was put together a collection of scholars and instructors that was unrivaled both before and after Black's tenure as CoB dean in the 1980s and 1990s. With such a collection, accomplishments like accreditation simply fall into place. If you are new to USMNEWS.net, you should Google "Tyrone Black" using the USMNEWS.net Google bar. What you will find is both interesting and instructive.

2. Lance Nail – the CoB's fifth and current dean just assisted in securing a \$5 million gift pledge from a CoB alumnus. That gift is the basis for a new facility that the CoB is now building, one that will bear the name of the donor, Charles Scianna. Nail also succeeded in getting the CoB's academic programs reaccredited by the AACSB, which is something that hadn't been *cleanly done* since the Black administration. Still, Nail falls short of Black given that the reputation of the organization is much lower now, in terms of scholarship, than during Black's tenure.

3. William Gunther – the former University of Alabama professor came to the CoB

in the late 1990s after a long run at UA. Many thought he came to retire. They were ultimately proven correct. Gunther did very little as dean of the CoB. Coming off of Black's regime, simply staying out of the way would lead to some measure of success. That's pretty much what Gunther did, and what he got.

4. Joseph Greene – the CoB's founding dean set the table for everyone else. He was generally well-liked, and did the hard job of getting the organization off the ground. However, his was not a meritocratic regime, and so rewards often flowed down winding paths that had little to do with accomplishment. As one of Greene's successors once said (in a college-wide faculty meeting), Greene was known for directing raises towards those faculty who had most recently had children born into their families.

5. Harold Doty – placing Doty last on this list is like breathing – absolutely no thought or contemplation is required. Never before in the CoB's history was such a mass exodus of quality faculty ever witnessed like that from 2003-07, the rocky period with Doty. When 2007 rolled around, the college was so ill-prepared for accreditation that the AACSB visitation team had little choice but to place the CoB on probation (i.e., continuing review). Doty was hired as CoB dean in 2003 by former USM president Shelby Thames. Many USMers would argue that Thames is the worst president in the 100-year history of USM. As such, little of what happened with the CoB under Doty is surprising to those who have some knowledge of Thames and his leadership qualities.