

A 31st & Pearl Special Series

The Gunther Standard

A Look at How the CoB is Governed by Exceptions, not Rules

As part of the CoB faculty, CoB economist William Gunther is as snug as a bug in a rug. And, why wouldn't he be? He carries a 2/2 teaching load as part of his directorship of the CoB's Bureau of Business & Economic Research. Not only that, the BBER itself is open only 9 months out of the year. Who knew the regional and national economies took summer vacations? Thirdly, Gunther has completely ignored *academic* research for much of his career, including his 1998-present stint at USM. That's correct -- WG has completely written off the 1/3 to 1/2 portion of the job that Mississippi taxpayers are paying him a cool \$130,000 per year to perform.

Gunther came to the CoB in 1998 as dean of the then-College of Business Administration. He had just completed a lengthy tenure in the business school at the University of Alabama, just up I-59 from Hattiesburg. His reputation was as a money grubber -- he (and possibly his wife) were reported to have had a side business (or businesses) while at UA. He had also honed his "bureau skills" while in Tuscaloosa, all the while dodging a career in the knowledge creation business of *academic* research that he would ask so many others to engage in during his days atop USM's CBA.

Gunther's money grubbing rep was justified when CoBers learned that he continued to teach night courses in UA's graduate business program while simultaneously serving as dean at USM. Reports here at USMNEWS.net indicated that Gunther earned more than a pretty penny from UA while also working, supposedly full time, for the relatively poorer citizens of Mississippi. (Heck, there were even indications that Gunther had also been teaching business at the University of West Florida in Pensacola, making Gunther look like a modern-day academic mercenary. Do they give medals for that?)

Given all of this, it's no wonder that many consider the fact that Gunther maintains a permanent residence near Gulf Shores, *Alabama*, a serious slap in the Mississippi face. With a lengthy commute that occurs quite often during the semester, how could one possibly expect WG to maintain a viable academic research program? Of course, one couldn't. And for that Gunther is allowed (by CoB administrators) the special

dispensation of "professionally qualified," even though sources say that such a classification for an academic *economist* is entirely laughable.

Just how many of a b-school's faculty can at one time be called PQ? According to AACSB, few to none, assuming the b-school wants to maintain full accreditation status. That said, why has *William Gunther*, of all CoB people, been allowed to reside in that special place, put aside for such a select few (if any)? One would think that PQ fibs would be reserved for long-time CoBers, not out-of-state, do-nothing academic carpetbaggers.

You see, albeit a weird one, Gunther's is a special case . . . an exception. In USM's CoB, that sort of thing is the rule.

31st & Pearl is a series housed at usmnews.net that features commentary on aspects of life in the CoB from a variety of columnists.