

The State of the CoB, June 2007

A Unit-by-Unit Analysis

Accounting

In many ways, accounting is as it has (seemingly) always been. However, beneath the surface there are some problems that will soon rise. Two prominent members of the unit, Stanley Clark and Charles Jordan, are in the "PERS window." Accounting almost never enters the job market, and there's little indication that anyone there now knows how to make a hire. This is a unit facing a huge turnover-by-retirement situation and seems ill-equipped to handle it. Its most recent hire, Mary Anderson, continues the "Morgan hold" on the unit. She also seems to understand the numbers game (quantity over quality) when it comes to research. Finally, the unit is now under continued interim leadership, this time in someone (Steven Jackson) located at the Coast. Things don't seem to be aligning well.

Business Law

After being consolidated into SAIS, business law is now in a better position than it's been in for quite some time. The unit is much the same as in the past, though the "PERS window" is now opening up. Look for this unit to be outsourced in the future. It's a non-factor.

Economics

In terms of numbers economics is probably (still) over-staffed. In terms of quality, sources say that economics is now at its lowest point in two decades. The recent retirement of Charles Sawyer is the latest hit, resulting in the loss of 37 refereed journal articles. Last year's losses of Melody Lo, David Sharp and Sunny Wong began the slide. Even with inordinate turnover, economics is still top-heavy in terms of having faculty with 20 or more years in academics. Economics' fall from grace is inevitable, and you can bet some factions in the CoB will make sure it's permanent.

Fashion Merchandising

This unit lost most of its credibility with the departure of Joy Kozar. That's understandable considering that she was good enough to land a post at Kansas State University. Now the shrinking unit is involved in a political split, with half of it slated to join the College of Science & Technology as soon as new USM President Martha Saunders replaces

Associate Provost Cynthia Moore, who will reportedly attempt to revive the unit under Dean Rex Gandy. At this point no group, faculty or students, is being served by the current situation. The CoB should perhaps concede the unit to CoST now.

Finance

If sources are correct, the loss of assistant professor Stephen Haggard (to Missouri State) carries with it the loss of a *Financial Review* and a *Financial Management*. However, finance is now beyond worrying about the loss of this-or-that publication. The unit is down to John Clark, Matthew Hood, and Tom Lindley. Finance hasn't seen a point this low in quite some time. The unit is basically irrelevant now.

Insurance

Professor Iskandar Hamwi is still teaching a course or two for the CoB, though he is officially retired. All that stands in the way of this program's elimination is his goodwill.

International Business

This historically one-person show remains just that. However, IB is taking things in a new direction with the hiring of John Lambert, who holds a PhD in management. Sources say that Lambert is arguably the CoB's most prominent grade-inflator. If so, the short-run effects will look positive, while the long-run results could be disastrous, at least for the EFIB.

Management

As hard as it is to believe, management is becoming the most vibrant unit in all of the CoB. Associate professor Jon Carr, the 2007 Louis K. Brandt winner, brought that trophy back to management for the first time in quite a long time. However, there are some obstacles impeding management from completely taking advantage of the downward spiral of the CoB. Joseph Peyrefitte's move into the Associate Dean's chair stunts the unit's research profile quite a bit, though it appears that Peyrefitte is making the choice to administer, and sources indicate that he will likely retain the AD post even after a new CoB Dean is installed. Also, the loss of Brian Gregory arguably takes away the unit's best instructor, while a lot of research potential reportedly exits with Dana Haggard. How long management can retain its top position on the sinking ship remains to be seen. The unit is overstaffed thanks to Doty, a fact that will stand in its way.

Management Information Systems

We are only a few months from the time when Doty sat with MIS faculty (in the JGH Faculty Lounge) and threatened to dismantle the entire group and disperse it throughout the CoB, a speech sources say was cheered on by MIS professor Donna Davis. Now, in June 2007, long-standing member Stanley Lewis is leaving for Troy University, and assistant professor Kuo Lane Chen's tenure status is in limbo. Nothing positive is happening in a unit perpetually locked in the doldrums.

Marketing

The fall of marketing has been well-documented. The departures of Barry and Laurie Babin and Tara Lopez are the latest. Barry Babin is headed to Chair the unit at Louisiana Tech. With these three go almost 50 refereed journal articles. In terms of PhD-qualified, non-administrative faculty, marketing is now down to Beth LaFleur, Talai Osmonbekov, Bill Smith, and Michael Wittmann. Osmonbekov's research credentials are growing each year, and one would think he could replicate the moves made by former CoB marketer David Hardesty, who left USM for the University of Miami (FL). Hardesty is now at the University of Kentucky. If he is going to do it, now is the time. Of course, such an occurrence would be the final straw for marketing.

Real Estate

Despite a vibrant real estate industry in Hattiesburg, the CoB's real estate program is turning the final pages in its final chapter. When assistant professor Sean Salter departs in May of 2008, with him will not only go a number of refereed publications in real estate, the entire program will be folded up and put away. To be sure the CoB will attempt to hire a replacement, but that process will not produce the desired results. RE is too small a community to overcome what has gone on with RE in USM's CoB under former Dean Harold Doty and Interim Dean Alvin Williams.

Tourism Management

The speed of tourism management's descent is mind boggling. Now, Mississippi's preeminent TM group is in Oxford (Ole Miss), about as far away from the Gulf of Mexico as one can get in terms of Mississippi's major universities. With the loss of Joe Hutchinson and Johye Hwang, to Central Florida and Missouri no less, this unit took a big hit. Now all that remains is Cherylynn Becker and Catherine Price, at least in terms of PhD-qualified faculty. And, sources indicate that Price is also a "PERS

window" faculty. This unit, now headed by marketing professor Tony Henthorne, is becoming a drain on the CoB.