

## The Davis Departure: What does it mean for the CoB?

When Donna Davis retires on June 30<sup>th</sup>, even if she has a phased retirement deal in place, it will alter her participation in the CoB. This is major news because she has been a force in the Lance Nail administration. Except for a few weeks when she was at odds with the dean's office over the infamous Sonia Gaines-Littles email to the faculty and staff, Donna has been a constant planner, worker, supporter, and cheerleader for the Nail team. Given the lack of talent on the rest of the team, Davis was the team for most of the first year. She could see the positives of the Nail vision while over-looking the naïveté of the plans to achieve it. Seeing how Nail did (and does) not want to be involved in day-to-day administration within the CoB, Davis charged ahead with what she wanted to get done. Even routine events required her attention to accomplish because of the lack of ability of the associate dean and the other chairs; the prime example of this is the multitudinous office changes over the summer. As simple as that should have been to accomplish, and as obvious as it is that it was not her job to do it, had Davis not stepped in and pushed the issue, most faculty needing to change offices would be where they were and not where they are.

Given all this, what does Davis' administrative departure mean for the CoB? Ponder these points:

1. Dean Nail loses the engine on his administrative team. Skip Hughes is frustrated; Dave Duhon is clueless; Francis Laatsch and Catherine Price are narrowly focused, but not on the CoB; and, the new Marketing chair is not here. Beth LaFleur may be the new graduate honcho, but, as usual, no announcement has been made. Gwen Pate and Joe Peyrefitte are busy, but no one knows with what. With Nail outside the CoB at least 50% of time, and mired in budget issues the rest of the time, it does not paint a pretty picture for the CoB future.
2. MIS is doomed. No cover, no leadership, no drive, and no hope. Much like the economics malcontents, the MIS malcontents have floated along for too many years; the ride is over.
3. The MBA as anyone knows it is over after this year. Davis stepped back in over the MBA program after Ken Zantow nearly committed academic homicide on the program and got booted for his efforts. Nail still wants to move the MBA to the Coast. This will kill the program and everyone but Nail knows it; he may know it too and simply not care. Nail cannot understand a traditional MBA here and another form of MBA on the Coast is okay to try. Further, with the new budget model coming soon it is senseless to eliminate the vast majority of the graduate credit hours generated by the CoB. Without Donna's influence there is no chance of saving the MBA program as it exists. The MBA issue may soon be dead anyway if the number of CoB faculty continues to decline to the point where there are an insufficient number of faculty to cover both undergraduate and graduate courses.
4. More staff reductions are coming. With the BEDS dissolution, that secretarial position is gone. When the MBA program is moved to the Coast, the position

currently very well occupied by Machell Haynes will not be needed and surely will be eliminated. Davis is not wonder woman, but without whatever influence she has with Nail, there will be more unwise staff cuts. It now seems clear that all staff positions outside the dean's office are possible for elimination.

5. The CoB presence university-wide will be diminished due to Davis' serving on so many university committees. This is not the best time for less university involvement; in fact, this could be deadly.

Who will Dean Nail turn to July 1<sup>st</sup>?