

# The Top 10 CoB Stories of 2010

By Duane Cobb

Each year at about this time I provide USMNEWS.net *my* top ten news items involving USM's business school for the year. This is Part 2 in that countdown for the top CoB stories of 2010.

**6. Retirement Incentive Program to Hit CoB** – In its effort to bridge the expected \$15 million gap in the FY12 USM budget, the Martha Saunders administration secured the IHL's approval of a plan to pay eligible USM retirees one-half of their current salaries if they retire on 30-June-2010. USM chief financial officer Russ Willis reported that USM holds about \$3 million in unallocated reserves to make these expected payouts. Based on [a recent USMNEWS.net report](#), the CoB's portion of this mid-2011 expense could come to \$600,000, if not more (the report omitted marketing's William Smith, and possibly other eligible CoB retirees). The most disconcerting aspect of that report, however, was its indication that the CoB's accountancy school could be hit particularly hard by the retirement incentive program. Currently, accounting has at least five retirement-eligible professors. That could mean some last-minute human resources adjustments will have to be made by accounting director Skip Hughes and CoB dean Lance Nail.

**5. MBA Program Moved to Coast** – Another budget-savings strategy recently adopted by the Martha Saunders administration is [one that consolidates](#) all of the CoB's MBA activities at the CoB-Gulf Coast division in Long Beach. That consolidation puts all of the MBA activities under [CoB marketing professor](#) Elizabeth [LaFleur](#). Having [LaFleur](#) govern the CoB's MBA program reminds some of the [complete failure](#) that putting [that same responsibility on](#) Kenneth [Zantow](#), associate professor of management and [LaFleur's](#) CoB-GC colleague, was during the earlier part of the Lance Nail administration of the CoB. The general consensus among USMNEWS.net sources is that this consolidation to the coast of the MBA program will be a net negative in the end. *How bad* this will be, though, remains to be seen.

**4. Accounting Hires Michael Dugan** – [Michael Dugan](#), former University of Alabama professor of accounting, and former mentor to CoB dean Lance Nail, joined Nail and CoB accounting school director Skip Hughes at USM in 2010. Almost immediately, reports began circulating indicating that Dugan would become the [inaugural holder](#) of the CoB's new *Horne LLP Endowed Professorship in Accounting*. Such reports were quickly followed by [chatter](#) and [other reports](#) that Dugan was brought to USM to assume the new position of MPA director, one that was believed to be paying \$175,000 per year. As [the Dugan story shifted](#), hostility about the CoB's continued hiring of "six-figure professors," during a period when USM was working to slash \$15 million from its operating budget, [reportedly spread](#) throughout the campus. To combat [the campus angst](#) over Dugan's hire, the Nail administration seemed to go on [a media blitz](#) aimed at putting Dugan's [value to USM](#) under a spotlight. That effort backfired somewhat, when Dugan's accomplishments [were compared](#) to [those of existing](#) CoB accountants.