

# Top Stories of 2008

by Duane Cobb

**5. New Journal Rankings** -- Within the first few months of 2008, the CoB's 2007-08 Journal Ranking Committee, which was chaired by *untenured assistant* professor of economics Sami Dakhliya, presented its new (2008) journal classifications to the CoB. These classifications were then passed by a vote of CoB faculty, and have since become the official list for evaluating the research efforts of CoB faculty.

The selection by then-interim dean Alvin Williams of [Dakhliya to head](#) this committee was controversial. Dakhliya had only recently been, to use EFIB chairman George Carter's term, "canned" by the University of Alabama for failing to measure up to its research standards for tenure and promotion. Dakhliya was joined on the 2007-08 JRC by other *untenured* faculty, such as Michael Wittmann and John Clark. (It was only later discovered that Clark had placed himself on the JRC.)

A number of reports here at USMNEWS.net showed why these choices were so controversial. These [reports](#) showed just how [positions](#) on the JRC were [used](#) to inflate the research portfolios of various CoB faculty.

**4. Clark Gets Secret Raise** -- What began as a story in the GH Chatter series turned out to be true once the 2008-09 USM Budget Book was examined - - accounting professor Stanley Clark had gotten a secret raise in the amount of \$7,500 during the final days of the interim administration of Alvin Williams (2007-08). According to the USMNEWS.net [story](#) that broke the details, Clark's \$7,500 secret raise took his 9-month salary to \$112,125, making him the second-highest paid accountant in the SAIS. Before the raise, Clark's 9-month base salary ranked fourth.

Recently reporters at USMNEWS.net learned that Clark's secret raise caused waves all the way up to the highest levels of the USM administration. Sources say that it was slipped past the Martha Saunders administration, and that it became a significant part of a hefty portfolio put together by central administrators at USM containing many ill-advised actions taken by Williams and his staff. Williams is now part of the business faculty at the University of South Alabama.

**3. New Dean Lance Nail** -- In mid May of 2008, USM officials [announced](#) that Lance Nail had been [chosen](#) as only the fifth permanent dean in the history of USM's College of Business. Nail came to USM during the summer

of 2008 from his prior position as the chairman of the finance department at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

**2. CoB Reorganization** -- The [speculation](#) of a CoB [reorganization](#) under new dean Lance Nail began back in the summer of 2008. The reorganization came to fruition in October of 2008, when Nail announced that several new departments would constitute the CoB of the future. During the Halloween college-wide faculty meeting, Nail announced that the CoB's current departments (EFIB, MGT & MKT, SAIS, and TM) would be [replaced](#) by six new departments beginning in 2008-09. The new departments are Business Economics & Decision Sciences, Finance, Real Estate & Legal Studies, Management and International Business, Marketing and Fashion Merchandising, Tourism Management and the School of Accounting.

As part of the re-organization, Nail plans to hire six new department chairs during the spring of 2009. This [part](#) of the plan led at least one USMNEWS.net editorialist to [conclude](#) that the plan was not well-thought out by Nail and company. That conclusion was reached upon considering that the better part of \$1 million would have to be sunk into *new CoB administrators*. Because of this expenditure consideration, speculation remains that [internal](#) candidates will be named to fill these positions.

**1. Secret Plan to Ship Away ECO** -- New CoB dean Lance Nail was a busy man during the month of October of 2008. Part of that month was consumed attempting to ship the CoB's economists over to the College of Arts & Letters. That plan was ultimately [rejected](#) by international development and political science faculty in the CoAL. Few episodes in modern CoB history have entailed as much intrigue as this one. [Follow-up](#) reports appeared here at USMNEWS.net over the days after the story was originally broken. Each [one](#) revealed more of the [drama](#) that surrounded this particular episode.