

# What CoAL Needs to Know

## OVERLOOKED DETAILS ABOUT THE MOVE OF ECO TO ARTS & LETTERS

As USM administrators prepare to move the CoB's economics major, and its remaining economists, over to the CoAL, there are some oft-overlooked details that need to be brought to the fore. Some of these are the subject of this new, multi-part USMNEWS.net series entitled "What CoAL Needs to Know." This is Part 2.

### Legal Issues

CoB associate professor of economics Trellis Green is one of the group of five economists who are being made to retire so that four others – Deniz Gevrek, Sami Dakhliya, Akbar Marvasti, and Daniel Monchuk – can be saved, and moved into CoAL. Green has a child who is, at this point, years away from college. Thus, many believe that Green was forced into the group of five by the group's other members, particularly George Carter. Carter was the economics chair (from 1989-1997) who denied Green a promotion to associate back in 1994. Green sued USM in 1994. The case went to trial in 1997, at which time USM decided to settle. Almost all reports are that the institution knew its defense was defenseless. Green was awarded, via settlement, (1) his promotion to associate, (2) the raise from assistant to associate, and (3) an undisclosed financial settlement. Reports are that Green could contact his attorney, Kim Chaze, and have his inclusion in the group of five blocked on the grounds of continuing harassment. Green's case would look good, to his lawyer and to a jury. Should he do that the legal ball will land, at least in part, in CoAL dean Denise von Herrmann's court. Will this happen? Only time will tell.

In the meantime, CoB economist Yosef Bonaparte was uncustomarily terminated during 2008-09 by the USM administration. Is he seeking a legal remedy? Time will, once again, tell. He is currently working on a terminal contract for 2009-10. If a remedy is sought, von Herrmann will be right in the mix of it. Additionally, sources say there are other former EFIB faculty who could bring legal action against the institution. Doing so would further complicate the plans of von Herrmann and her other CoAL administrators. All of this spells one potentially big mess for the CoAL and its existing faculty.

### Extra Time for Tenure

*The Hattiesburg American* is reporting that there are two economists (among the four who will be saved) who are due for tenure decisions during 2009-10. However, USM provost Robert Lyman will likely give them, should they request it, additional time on the tenure clock. We know one of these individuals is Daniel Monchuk. The other is believed to be

Sami Dakhli, though it is possible that *THA* is referring to Akbar Marvasti instead. In any case, additional time for tenure is likely to have problematic political consequences inside von Herrmann's CoAL (and possibly university-wide). For one, any anguish that may have resulted from USM's decision to consider terminating ECO faculty is confined to the period spanning only August and September of 2009. This period is much too brief to warrant anything more than granting them an additional two months to submit their dossiers, and even then they would have to cite having spent two months time organizing protests against, and media-based criticisms of, the Saunders administration in their requests for this time. Next, nothing that would have happened in the Aug-Sept period of one's sixth year has any bearing on one's tenure status. If a case is being made that there is bearing, then the university has a *prima facie* case against tenuring the person in the first place.

George Carter was granted 12 years to get tenure. When word spreads throughout the CoAL that other economists are being given between 6 and 12 years to get it as well, the political fallout will be enormous for von Herrmann.

## **Akbar Marvasti**

Akbar Marvasti is not a junior faculty. He's been in academia since 1985. He came to USM in 2006, after a spotty career spanning multiple institutions. His scholarly record was, and still is, shaky. According to former EFIB search guru and former CoB economist Charles Sawyer, Marvasti fled the University of Houston – Downtown for Pomona College for political reasons (he was fighting with other faculty/administrators). Finally, he is not caring for a young child in the same way that Trellis Green is doing so. Keeping Marvasti and waiving Green is a political, and probably legal, disaster for USM. Throw in the fact that Marvasti is currently facing some thorny "tenure issues" at USM and you have the makings of a potential windfall.

## **Resources**

The economists are infamous for using the CoB's resources. All last year they reportedly ran, without proper approval, a speakers series on funds from the USM Foundation. Reports at USMNEWS.net show that assistant professor Daniel Monchuk was reimbursed a four-figure sum that represented the "publication fee" of a C-level journal. From the travel (by almost all), to the speakers series, to Edward Nissan's notorious spending on editing/typing fees, the list goes on and on. Can the *CoAL* handle the expected tab? Most think not.

Stay tuned for Part 3.