

Behind the 8

Eight Current CoB Faculty USM Doesn't Need to Lose

by Duane Cobb

As you can tell, I like to rank CoB faculty against one scale or another from time to time (e.g., "the 5 best moves from the CoB," "the 5 worst moves from the CoB," etc.). I'm often told that my CoB faculty ranking essays are both controversial and oft-requested by readers of USMNEWS.NET, and that I should provide more of them when possible. I am doing so again here, and this time my ranking of "the eight (8) current CoB faculty USM doesn't need to lose" is probably no less controversial than past topics.

It starts this way – then-CBA faculty who worked under the William Gunther administration (1998-2003) often heard that Gunther maintained a list (kept on his desk) of the more mobile, more would-be-detrimental-to-lose CBA faculty. Though many CBAers heard of the existence of this "list," whether or not Gunther did anything in particular to prevent the departures of those individuals on it is not known. The evidence on this possibility is, at best, mixed. During the Harold Doty (2003-07) and Alvin Williams (2007-08) administrations (interim in Williams case), however, there was never any inkling that such a list existed. Doty would probably have remarked that "[he] doesn't have a dog in that fight [i.e., faculty departures]" if asked about the existence of such a list during his administration. And by all accounts, Williams was more concerned with keeping the marketing and management faculty cupboards flush than he was retaining who associate professor of economics Sami Dakhliia once proclaimed were *our most talented colleagues*.

So, assuming new CoB dean Lance Nail has a list, who is on it? Your guess is as good as mine. If I were CoB dean, however, here's what my list might look like:

8. Lance Nail (FIN) – You may find this selection odd, but let's face facts – like former b-school deans Tyrone Black, William Gunther and Harold Doty, current CoB dean Lance Nail will one day (maybe soon?) find himself teaching a 3/3 load as a rank-and-file faculty in USM's (Tier 3 or 4?) business school. When that day comes, the CoB will need Nail to step up in both the research and teaching departments. According to the record – *Journal of Financial Economics* and *Journal of Banking & Finance* – Nail possesses the research skills to help the CoB out one day. By some oral accounts, he's also decent in the classroom. These qualities may one day be all that separates USM's b-school from the institutional ranking abyss.

7. John Hansen (MKT) – Hansen may have rated higher on my list of 8 if not for the number of unknowns that currently apply to him. Early reports here at USMNEWS.net indicate that Hansen may have some of the skills the CoB's MKT unit needs to climb up out of the doldrums. For one, he was hired from Northern Illinois University, which is not bad as far as the CoB's general hiring history is concerned. It has also been reported here that Hansen has publications in the *Journal of Business Logistics*, *Supply Chain Management*, and *Industrial Marketing Management*. The first and third of these are A-level journals in USM's b-school, which indicate that the young Hansen (assistant professor) may possess some research skills.

Why didn't Wesley Pollitte or Bret Becton make this list? All three are new to USM, yet Pollitte is a new PhD. He does, however, have a publication in the *Journal of International Business Studies*, the premier journal in IB, but one needs the fingers on both hands to count the number of co-authors on Pollitte's *JIBS* (there are, like this report, 8 of them, and in the alphabet soup of co-authors Pollitte is the 7th), a fact that serves mainly only to make CoB IB assistant professor John Lambert look bad. If the CoB needed some *JIBS*, it should have retained Len Trevino and Linghui Tang, as recent reports have shown. As for Becton, he's a "bring 'em all home product" from Winthrop University who also came to the CoB just recently. Becton's best publication is the *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, a B-level journal. The rest are in C-level or lower journals. So, the choice of Hansen as MKT's next best hope wasn't that hard after all.

6. Yosef Bonaparte (ECO) – If you've been keeping up with USMNEWS.net at all over the past several months you've noticed that CoB-Gulf Coast has fallen on hard times. In fact, that division of CoB is dangling by a thread. That thread may, however, have gotten a boost with the recent hiring of new PhD Yosef Bonaparte, an assistant professor of economics. Bonaparte packed up and came to CoB-GC just in time, and judging by his performance in the Google Scholar Citations Tournament that was held on this website a few weeks ago, Bonaparte may be the best ECO has to offer, Gulf Coast or elsewhere. By that I mean that Bonaparte remained alive in the tournament for several rounds, due solely to citations to his *unpublished* work. When he gets the publication thing going, he may just take over the Business Economics side of Business Economics and Decision Sciences (BEDS). Admittedly, that's not difficult to do at the moment, but Bonaparte appears to have some game. As far as CoB-GC goes, he's a sight for desperate eyes.

5. Ernest King (BL) – King, an associate professor of business law, was one of few CoBers to even touch DS' Fujun Lai's atmosphere in the race for the 2009 Louis K. Brandt Research Award. It was mainly with publications in the *Journal of Real Estate Finance & Economics*, *Journal of Real Estate Research*, and the *Real Estate Law Journal* that King was able to do that. Of course, the first of this journal trio is one of the two premier journals in the field of real estate. With King you also have the CoB's top dog in terms of SCH production, and thus tuition revenues, and with King you also get a BL guy with nice legal credentials from Samford University (Tier II) and the University of Miami (Tier I).

4. James Lindley (FIN) – Amazingly, Lindley has had multiple, shining academic careers over the past decades, and he's still putting out quality research, as noted by his recent publication in *Financial Management*, an A-level finance journal in the CoB. Lindley is arguably the only remaining quintessential faculty mentor on the CoB's faculty, putting him in a unique position of value to the organization. Lindley's "CoB graduates" (i.e., young finance faculty who moved on after benefitting from his tutelage) have moved up to places like the University of Mississippi, Texas Tech University, and the University of Rhode Island, to name a few – all nice moves for people starting from the USM block. The CoB has been fortunate to have Lindley over the past 20 or so years. Unfortunately for Lindley, it has only been over the past few months that the CoB has had a dean who fully understands that fact.

3. Marc DePree (ACC) – It has been said time and again (by reporters and editorialists) on the pages of USMNEWS.net that CoB accounting professor Marc DePree has what is easily the most diversified set of A-level accounting journal publications in the CoB's accounting department. The list includes *Abacus*, *Management Accounting*, *Issues in Accounting Education*, and the *Journal of Accountancy*, to name four. Not only does DePree maintain the most diversified set of As in accounting *now*, he (1) has done so for quite some time, and (2) also has one of the most diversified sets in all of the CoB. Let's face it – the CoB offers an MPA, and DePree is arguably the only current faculty member who is *really* qualified to serve on a faculty that offers such a degree. By virtue of the importance of accounting to the CoB *and* to USM, DePree's accomplished record demands a top 8 spot on this list. This fact may never have won DePree the highly politicized *Morgan Professorship in Accounting*, but his academic record *is* what it *is* – a must have for USM's CoB.

2. Sharon Topping (MGT) – It's a sad state of affairs to hear what one regular reader of USMNEWS.net recently said about the state of USM's CoB today, but what that reader said – "The faculty in MGT & MKT care more about what Dolly Loyd [instructor] thinks than they do about what Sharon Topping [full professor] thinks, and always have, but that's just the way things are in USM's CoB." – is true, and probably always has been. The "home girl" Loyd offers little in the way of *real* academic value to the CoB. Sharon Topping's academic contributions to the CoB are both *real* and *large*. Not many can say they've published A-level work in public administration (*Public Administration Review*), finance (*Financial Review*), and real estate & economics (*Real Estate Economics*). Topping can. Topping can also boast about being the CoB's only *major* grants-procuring faculty across JAG's three floors. If Nail wanted to see how hard life can really get at USM, particularly given current funding problems, he should let Topping go. Of course, that's not what he's looking for, and so he should keep **Topping** near the **top** of his mind when merit raise season rolls around again.

1. Fujun Lai (DS) – This choice has become, especially over the past few months or so, a "no brainer." Fujun Lai, an associate professor of decision sciences, is burning up the charts, and we can all enjoy his success with him when he picks up the 2009 Louis K. Brandt Research Award, which is just around the corner from now. Lai's research accomplishments have become too numerous to list in my list of 8, but they are certainly what it takes to get to the top of my list. CoB dean Lance Nail should keep his eyes on Lai, and not let petty unit-level or CoB-level jealousies work to keep Lai from reaping what he's sown for USM's CoB. The whole organization is better for the work that Lai has been doing on the research front, and because of it he takes the #1 spot on my list. Unfortunately I can't offer Lai a merit raise of any sort, but Nail and USM president Martha Saunders can. If they (Nail and Saunders) have any sense about them, they should be doing so, even in tight budget times like those today.