

“egonomics”
by David Marcum and Steven Smith (2007)
Two Lessons for the CoB: Lesson 1

Egonomics is an interesting book. Many of the quotes praising it suggest it as a book that should be required for all MBA students. That is a good idea. Lessons in this book – and there are many – have applications in the CoB for faculty, staff and students, but especially certain administrators.

Ego can be helpful or harmful to an individual and an organization. One chapter deals with defensive spinning due to ego. The authors say that the wheel of defensive spin has 4 major spokes that lead to bias and error (see page 65 and continuing):

- Exaggerate - to inflate one's (or one's ideas) in importance
- Understate - to minimize or block certain information
- Manipulate - to twist information
- Fabricate - to create information with no basis in reality.

To most people familiar with the CoB, and certainly devoted readers of this board, four main characters instantly pop to mind: Harold Doty, Farhang Niroomand, Stephen Bushardt, and George Carter. Since Bushardt has mercifully retired and Doty and Niroomand appear administratively neutered (although ever-searching for another administrative job elsewhere), it is proper to focus on George Carter. Old George is virtually synonymous with these four traits. He is prone to exaggerate anything he or his cronies do, understate anyone else's accomplishments, manipulating information for his own use, and fabricating at will. Examples? Exaggerate: we are all good teachers in EFIB; scheduling is done in a fair manner; and, Ed is a great researcher. Understate: the Trellis Green lawsuit, secrecy in so many things, including over-load schedules and pay, and, creating Finance faculty out of Economics faculty. Manipulate: service evaluations scores, the z-score evaluation “statistic”, and the “presence in the literature” item. Fabricate: working on a letter to get rid of Sean Salter without cause, creating specialty areas to punitively assign faculty courses, and, deluding himself that he acts in the best interests of the department and/or CoB, rather than himself.

Carter appears to mirror all the negative sides of “ego” and the EFIB and the CoB have suffered mightily for it. Perhaps his long, murky chapter of administration will be soon drawing to a close. It will be difficult to move forward with such an anchor weighing down the CoB and its new dean.