

iCoB

by Duane Cobb

The recent report on the selection of Donna Davis and Evelyn Green to participate in USM's new Podcast Pilot Project fits real well with *usmnews.net* editor's recent open letter to former CoB Dean Harold Doty. The letter deals with aspects of the CoB's *Wall Street Journal Academic Partnership Program* (WSJAPP), a program that assesses a tuition fee to provide daily copies of the *WSJ* to CoB students, while CoB professors receive copies for free. Like the WSJAPP, students in Davis' and Green's classes may now feel it necessary to acquire iPods in order to keep up in class, given Davis' and Green's participation in the pilot project described in that report. Of course, Davis and Green get iPods for free.

We last heard from Davis during the heated debate over former Dean Harold Doty's Digital MBA (DMBA) Program. She told CoB faculty that equipping JGH 300 with digital technology might be useful in her research, a sentiment Management & Marketing Chairman Barry Babin echoed. Of course, we've learned from the recent release of SEDONA vitae that Davis is hardly doing research anymore, choosing instead to spend her time "coordinating" various activities, such as SEDONA vitae and AACSB Assessment. Given the "state of affairs" in these two areas, it seems Davis coordinates about as well as Fred Sanford.

USM's College of Business really seems to be going haywire when it comes to providing quality instruction. The incessant push to use "technology" in the classroom – technology that CoB can't even adequately provide and maintain – seems to trump anything and everything else. SMART boards, STAR boards, iPods, digital classrooms and programs – where does it all end?

As if all of this fru fru isn't enough, *usmnews.net* was recently sent a list of movies that EFIB Chair George Carter suggested EFIB faculty consider showing their classes. The movies are supposed to impart lessons in economics and/or finance. Here's the list:

- | Business and Finance Movies | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 1. | <i>9 to 5</i> (1980) |
| 2. | <i>Bank Dick</i> (1940) |
| 3. | <i>Barbarians at the Gate</i> (TV, 1993) |
| 4. | <i>Boiler Room</i> (1992) |
| 5. | <i>Bonfire of the Vanities</i> (1990) |
| 6. | <i>Casino Royale</i> (2006) |
| 7. | <i>Citizen Kane</i> (1941) |
| 8. | <i>Clerks</i> (1994) |
| 9. | <i>Desk Set</i> (1957) |
| 10. | <i>Double Indemnity</i> (1944) |
| 11. | <i>Enron: The Smartest Guys in the Room</i> (2005) |
| 12. | <i>Erin Brockovich</i> (2000) |
| 13. | <i>Executive Suite</i> (1954) |
| 14. | <i>Fatal Glass of Beer, The</i> (1932) |
| 15. | <i>For Pete's Sake</i> (1974) |
| 16. | <i>Glengarry Glen Ross</i> (1992) |
| 17. | <i>Godfather, The</i> (1972) and <i>The Godfather: Part II</i> (1974) |
| 18. | <i>Goodfellas</i> (1990) |
| 19. | <i>House of Rothschild</i> (1934) |
| 20. | <i>How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying</i> (1967) |
| 21. | <i>Hudstrucker Proxy, The</i> (1994) |
| 22. | <i>I'm All Right Jack</i> (1959-British) |
| 23. | <i>Insider, The</i> (1999) |
| 24. | <i>It's a Wonderful Life</i> (1946) |
| 25. | <i>Jerry McGuire</i> (1996) |
| 26. | <i>Ladykillers, The</i> (1955-British) |
| 27. | <i>Lavender Hill Mob, The</i> (1951-British) |
| 28. | <i>Man in the Gray Flannel Suit, The</i> (1956) |
| 29. | <i>Man in the White Suit, The</i> (1951-British) |
| 30. | <i>Matewan</i> (1987) |
| 31. | <i>Milagro Beanfield War, The</i> (1988) |

32. <i>Modern Times</i> (1936)
33. <i>Network</i> (1976)
34. <i>Other People's Money</i> (1991)
35. <i>Pajama Game, The</i> (1957)
36. <i>Patterns</i> (1956)
37. <i>Pi</i> (1988)
38. <i>Pirates of Silicon Valley</i> (2000)
39. <i>Producers, The</i> (1968)
40. <i>Promoter, The</i> (1952-British)
41. <i>Roger & Me</i> (1989)
42. <i>Rogue Trader</i> (1999)
43. <i>Rollover</i> (1981)
44. <i>Secret of My Success, The</i> (1987)
45. <i>Skyscraper Souls</i> (1932)
46. <i>Solid Gold Cadillac, The</i> (1956)
47. <i>Tin Men</i> (1987)
48. <i>Trading Places</i> (1983)
49. <i>Tucker</i>
50. <i>Wall Street</i> (1987)
51. <i>Working Girl</i> (1988)
52. <i>Wrong Box, The</i> (1966-British)

It has already been stated that economics professors William Gunther and Trelis Green were both teaching mass sections of economics, side-by-side (i.e., in JGH 115 and 116) during spring 2007, using Powerpoint. Now we learn that movie screenings are being included as a way to teach economics/finance. Dr. Davis will surely have a difficult time assessing which, if any, in the list-of-52 above works.

Let's start with the 1992 classic, *Boiler Room*, about a group of well-meaning youngsters who swindle hard-working citizens out of their life savings (see Carter-provided synopsis below).

□ *Boiler Room* (1992)

Director: Ben Younger. "Boiler Room," written and directed by the 29-year-old Ben Younger, is both an homage to Oliver Stone's 1987 fable of innocence corrupted by avarice and a critique of it. The baby sharks of J. T. Marlin like to play Gordon Gekko karaoke, bloviating along with Michael Douglas's Mephistophelean arbitrageur and mocking his windy grandiosity. Compared to them, though, the reptilian Gekko is a great intellectual and a devoted humanitarian. His mantra, "greed is good," strikes a sententious, faintly absurd note in the amoral world of "Boiler Room," in which greed is simply axiomatic.

The 1994 movie *Clerks* (below) is an interesting choice in that FIN 300 students will learn that most people in business could care less about prestige – most want only large paychecks.

□ *Clerks* (1994) Who said business is all about high stakes finance, law cases, media and real-estate empires? Having worked and been held up at a convenience store in high school, this is on the list for sentimental purposes. The hysterical look at life behind a convenience store counter has gone on to develop a cult following, despite the frugal budget of \$27,575. *Clerks* really is the story of your average slacker working-class stiff. And this is why this is a great business movie: the majority of people in business that you will have to win over could care less about making it to the corner office; most are interested in their paycheck. You must win these masses over in order to get the interest of the top dogs.

Of course, this is all contradicted by management professor Stephen Bushardt, who has argued in some of his Timbers Nursery writings that people want titles and corner offices.

The description (see below) for the 1996 hit *Jerry Maguire* fails to sell us on the usefulness of this “finance” flick.

□ *Jerry McGuire* (1996) Jerry Maguire was inspired by the life of super-agent Lee Steinberg (who makes a cameo appearance with client, Dallas Cowboys quarterback Troy Aikman). Despite doing a good job of showing other sides of sports agents, it does create other fallacies. Tom Cruise gets the boot and loses all of his clients except one: Cuba Gooding Jr.

However, the early sex scene between Tom Cruise and Kelly Preston might be an eye-opener for 8:00am sections.

Finally, how can any FIN 300 course be worth anything without a full screening of the 1987 epic, *Wall Street*?

□ *Wall Street* (1987)

Color, 124 minutes * * * Director: Oliver Stone. Michael Douglas, Charlie Sheen, Daryl Hannah, Hal Holbrook, Martin Sheen, Terence Stamp, Sean Young, Sylvia Miles, James Spader, John McGinley, Saul Rubinek, Franklin Cover, James Karen, Richard Dysart, Josh Mostel, Millie Perlines, Cecilia Peck, Grant Shaud. Young hotshot who's going nowhere in a N.Y. brokerage firm manages to buttonhole the highest roller on Wall Street (Douglas, in an Oscar-winning performance) and win his confidence — but he sells his soul, so to speak, in return for admittance to that high-powered world of wheeling and dealing. Modern-day morality tale by cowriter-director Stone (whose father was a broker, and to whom the film is dedicated) is short on subtlety but completely absorbing, especially in the wake of the real-life “insider trading” scandal of 1986. Stone, Monique van Vooren, and Liliane Montevercchi can be glimpsed. [R]

This is sure to help B&N sell a few more copies of *The Art of War*. However, the part where Holbrook describes *looking into the abyss* to Sheen’s character might be useful for CoB administrators to consider.

Until next time, see ya at the CoB movies!