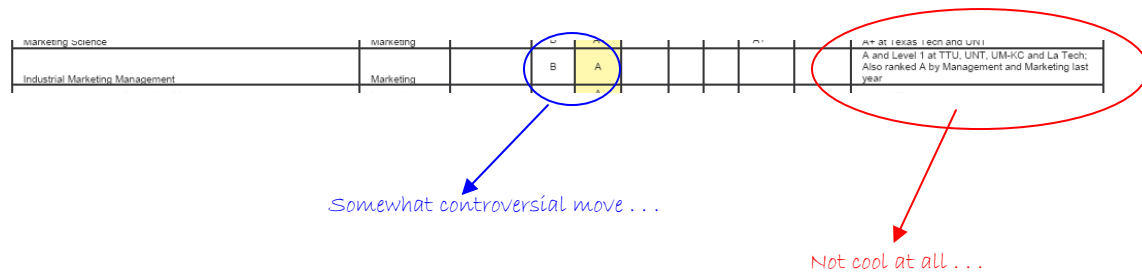


## A Taste of How the CoB Works: Journal Classification

One of the things USMNEWS.net has done over the past few years is to show just how politics in the CoB shapes just about everything that is done there. There is no better venue for doing that than the CoB's recent effort to classify journals across the various business disciplines. Politics affected that 2007-08 process from the jump. First, the CoB was being administered by an interim dean, Alvin Williams. Williams is certainly not known as a top-notch researcher, even by CoB standards. Thus, 2007-08 was not the proper time to re-classify business journals at USM.

One of Williams' first moves as interim dean was to appoint Sami Dakhliya, a then-*untentured assistant professor of economics*, to chair the 2007-08 journal ranking committee. Dakhliya had come to the CoB in August of 2006, after being "canned" by the business school at the University of Alabama for failing to achieve the scholarly production standards set by the faculty there. Assisting Dakhliya was another *untentured assistant professor in marketing's* Michael Wittmann, a USM alumnus who came to the CoB from the University of North Texas. To add to this situation, *untentured associate professor of finance*, John Clark, attempted to claim a seat on the committee for himself, and in fact attended some of the committee's gatherings before being told that he was not a member of the committee. Clark came to the CoB in 2003, from the University of Missouri at Kansas City, where sources say Clark would have faced some P&T difficulties had he remained.

One of an enormous number of changes that the committee made was to elevate a marketing journal -- *Industrial Marketing Management* -- from a B, which is how it was ranked by the mid-1990s USM business school, to an A. This change, which is shown below from the actual journal classification document produced by Dakhliya's committee, is considered by sources to be somewhat of a controversial one.



When the details of this change are examined, the intrigue begins. As the insert above shows, the CoB consulted journal classification schemes at both the University of North Texas, where Wittmann had been employed previously, and the University of Missouri at Kansas City, where Clark had previously been. So, while both of these CoB faculty would want to describe their moves to USM as upward ones, they both seem satisfied in using the standards set by their former employers. That's fine. However, the final line circled in red above tells the tale -- the CoB's marketing department did not feel the need to wait until the spring of 2008 to elevate *Industrial Marketing Management* from a B to an A. Instead, they went ahead in *carte blanche* fashion and began counting that journal as an A in the spring of 2007, before the journal ranking committee chaired by Dakhliya was even constituted. And, this change happened even though there is a process in place whereby any and all journal classification changes have to be approved on a college-wide basis.

Why did marketing approach the elevation of *IMM* with such a sense of urgency? Perhaps the answer to that question lies in the fact that it was about that time that Wittmann, who became the *de facto* top research dog in marketing, thanks to the departures of Barry and Laurie Babin and the move of Tony Henthorne to tourism management, had just "revised and resubmitted" a paper to *Industrial Marketing Management* and he

was hoping to publish in it for the first time in his career. That paper has since been accepted by *IMM*, and Wittmann's paper is now scheduled for publication. With Clark's and Dakhli's help, Wittmann got his A.



Michael Wittmann



John Clark

Wittmann and Clark are good friends, so it is no surprise they would want to help each other out. But, they are not the only CoB faculty with children to raise and bills to pay. And they certainly are not the most hard-working CoB faculty either. Hardly. Isn't it time for CoB shenanigans, like this one, to go away and never be seen again?