

31st & Pearl

The CoB's "Jungle Rules" Ethos

At the beginning of his job interview presentation in September of 2005, CoB Dean Harold Doty told faculty and administrators at the University of South Florida that, when it came to asking questions during a presentation, he favors "jungle rules." Unfortunately, for those in the CoB, many of whom were digging out from under the devastation of Hurricane Katrina at the time Doty made this remark, "jungle rules" pretty much describes the CoB's ethos, in all things academic, since Doty's arrival in the summer of 2003. Because of that, the CoB now faces a second plagiarism scandal, and one that comes on the heels of another that played a role in what is being described as a "probation" ruling coming to the CoB from the AACSB.

The human cost of this ethos is mounting. Accounting professor Charles Jordan will long be linked to the phrase "without proper citation." There is nothing about that phrase that any academic would, nor should, want to be associated with, in the CoB or elsewhere. Given the half-life of CoB stories, this one will be around for quite some time. As for Laurie Babin's participation in the alleged plagiarism of the CoB's Academic Integrity Policy, the stories will live on as well. However, in this case the stories will more than likely be perpetuated by Babin's students -- past, present, and future -- given her past crusades against similar behavior within their ranks.

One of the main rules of lifeguard safety is to avoid becoming a casualty from the distress of another. Lifeguards are taught methods to avoid becoming a drowning victim at the hands of the person or persons they seek to rescue. Sadly, many in the CoB are falling victim to the flailing arms of Doty and other CoB administrators who are drowning in an angry sea of controversy and misguided actions. The "jungle rules" ethos that pervades the CoB is doing as much harm to those attempting to support its creators as it is to anyone else.