

Art Bedeian on "Dean's Disease"

With Commentary by Duane Cobb

Arthur G. Bedeian is an academic known to many in USM's College of Business. A management professor, and former editor of the *Journal of Management*, his name is widely known within the management group in the CoB. Bedeian's LSU connections make him known to others, such as Barry and Laurie Babin in marketing.

In 2002, Bedeian published a cogent piece -- entitled "The Dean's Disease: How the Darker Side of Power Manifests Itself in the Office of Dean -- in the first volume of the *Academy of Management Learning and Education* (issue number 2, pages 164-173). I would urge all readers of usmnews.net to take a look at this article. In the meantime, we have compiled an extensive series of quotes from Bedeian's article for you (see below). Underneath these, I provide some commentary on how the quotes might relate to the CoB. Though the points Bedeian makes in the article are broadly applicable to academia, when you see them you will get the sense, as I did, that he was writing about USM's College of Business.

Bedeian

Th[e] uniqueness [of the role of dean] stems from an absence of objective and immediate measures of performance combined with arcane governance procedures that may permit some deans to hold office for years without being confronted by those who disagree with their judgments . . .

Duane Cobb

Until usmnews.net came along, most faculty in the CoB were content to sit by and watch CoB Dean D. Harold Doty work to destroy it (the CoB), even though many of these same faculty agreed (behind closed doors) that what Doty was doing, and/or was attempting to do, was not healthy for the institution. E-mails written by current SAIS Director Stan Lewis, published here (in part), attest to this sentiment. From "secret degree" plans to 12 or 15 hour majors for CoB students, Doty's ideas have been anything *but* good. More and more CoB students are visiting this site daily. It's good that they get to see that they are not alone in the effort to make the CoB a better place.

Bedeian

[New deans] may develop a sense of superiority that makes it difficult for their faculty to communicate with them. . . and up-and-coming deans seem to be more interested in maintaining a high public profile than in discussing the basis for their decisions.

Duane Cobb

No one is more difficult to communicate with than Dean D. Harold Doty. He lets you know that he has a PhD from Texas, that he taught strategy to sophomores at Syracuse, and that he knows the market salaries for every discipline in academics. And, that's all just after he tells you his name and shakes your hand. "Superiority" oozes out of every pore of Doty's skin. The "one-upmanship" that accompanies every communication with him is hard to stand. For more on how difficult Doty is to be around, listen to EFIB Chair George Carter's views on working with Doty. Press "play" on the audio recording on the main page at usmnews.net.

Bedeian

If faculty wish to stay in the "inner circle," they will take care not to ruffle decanal feathers and only communicate the views that reflect the superiority of their dean's ideas. I call this series of changes the "dean's disease," a malady that may be irreversible and potentially fatal.

Duane Cobb

Unfortunately for the CoB, the "Doty disease" may have already metastasized. The CoB's inner circle is replete with non-rufflers, such as Stephen Bushardt, Donna Davis, George Carter, to name a few.

Bedeian

[D]eans find that they are able to influence faculty because of the resources they control. This control of resources becomes manifest as deans exercise both coercive and reward power . . . *Coercive power* is characterized by the use of verbal threats, confrontation, and punitive actions to force compliance from faculty members. . . *Reward power* involves the capacity to provide outcomes such as salary increases, promotions, favorable teaching assignments, praise and recognition. Studies have shown that individuals quite frequently employ ingratiation tactics as a means to secure favorable outcomes. A problem that develops in such cases is that

by relying on reward power deans become isolated from dissenting voices as sycophants vie for personal gains.

Duane Cobb

With this quote, you almost have to believe that Bedeian has been living in Greene Hall over the past few years. A number of CoB dissenters have felt the wrath of Doty's *coercive power*. This is particularly true for the EFIB, wherein Chair George Carter metes out punitive teaching schedules as an exercise in his own (and Doty's) distorted "ethics evolution" model (CoB students should read "Ethics and the Company Man," available here at usmnews.net). For examples of CoB sycophants from some of the reports at usmnews.net see the list below:

CoB Sycophants
Stephen Bushardt
George Carter
Donna Davis
David Duhon
Zaher Hallab
Tony Henthorne
John Lambert
Charles Sawyer
Roderick Posey

The list above is not a comprehensive one, by any means.

Bedeian

Such obsequiousness is destructive enough when it simply involves the garden-variety self-seeker . . . but it evolves into further depths when it captures a dean's associate deans, department chairs, and other close advisors.

Duane Cobb

Talk about describing what has happened in the CoB perfectly. The CoB's "Dean's Disease" problem has already evolved to something a thousand leagues below any garden-variety administrative malfeasance. The evolution table below shows how far the disease has spread:

<u>Associate Dean</u>	<u>Department Chairs</u>	<u>Close Advisors</u>
Farhang Niroomand	George Carter Tony Henthorne Stan Lewis	Stephen Bushardt Donna Davis David Duhon William Gunther Charles Sawyer

Bedeian

The behavior of inner circle members, especially those who are vulnerable as a result of not having a record of respected academic accomplishments to fall back on, is understandable. They soon realize that their continued privileged status and supply of rewards are dependent on maintaining a favored relationship with their dean.

Duane Cobb

Is this Duhon? Or, Francis Daniel? Is it Bushardt? It's all of these, and more (e.g., Donna Davis). This article is almost too good. Let's move on.

Bedeian

This is not to say that in backroom conversations, [inner circle members] do not describe their dean as "incompetent, ineffective, 'out of touch,' or a candidate for early retirement," but to their dean's face "nothing is said . . ."

Duane Cobb

Bedeian is an academic Nostradamus. This 2002 passage (above) actually predicts that George Carter will say that Dean Doty is a jerk, and that no one else in the CoB can stand him and that other "inner circle" members all wished Doty could get a job elsewhere. How embarrassing must it be to have your actions be so predictable, and to have to read this report (and Bedeian's article) about it? That's the case now for Doty, Carter, Bushardt, and others in the CoB's "inner circle."

Bedeian

When the [power-hungry, diseased] dean in question is also a management prof, it is enough to make one wonder if he . . . has ever read any of the books he teaches out of or may even have written!

Duane Cobb

Wow, he's talking about Harold Doty. Only, Doty may have an excuse in that he may have never read any of the book's Bedeian is talking about because Doty never teaches management classes (at least not since 2003 or before). And, Doty (and Glick) has (have) never written (coauthored) a management book.

Bedeian

A third reason the dean's disease may occur is that the control of resources requires that deans adopt a morality consistent with the power associated with this control. . . this often leads to instances where power holders believe themselves exempt from established mores, even to the extent that they may maintain one moral code at the office and another at home.

Duane Cobb

So, there's CoB Doty and Canebrake Doty. The passage above is quite insightful. It makes one wonder whether some of sycophants' spouses know how they (sycophants) behave while at work.

Bedeian

A colleague in an administrative position tells of an exchange that suggests how accustomed his dean had become to leading a double life morally. The two differed on whether a son of an influential donor should be admitted to the college's MBA program. Despite the son not meeting MBA admission standards, the dean insisted that he be admitted "for the convenience of the institution." My colleague objected, at which point his dean plaintively asked: "Do you not do things as Bob the administrator that you would not do as Bob the individual?"

Duane Cobb

Great anecdote. It is reminiscent of the usmnews.net editor's past problems with administrators who wanted him to change a student's grade. For current times, it still may make a nice hypothetical scenario, perhaps one involving a "secret degree program" and a food service magnate.

Bedeian

Believing that they are exempt from moral standards that apply to others allows deans to justify self-serving and self-interested actions, as well as the bending and disregarding of the truth. It would seem that all too many power holders come to believe that a special divinity, with its own code of ethics, surrounds their actions . . .

Duane Cobb

Sentence one above fits Doty's decision to steal regular faculty lines from the EFIB in order to staff the Bureau of Business and Economic Research and the Center for Economics Education. This decision benefited the Dotys (through Susan Doty's affiliation with the CEE) at the expense of the CoB, its students and alumni. Sentence two fits George Carter almost perfectly. Readers of usmnews.net will likely recall reports of George Carter's interview with *Episcopal Life Magazine* about business ethics. That article presents what amounts to an argument between Carter and an Episcopal Church representative -- an argument Carter lost. That article is also an interesting read, and new visitors to usmnews.net should take a look at it as well.

It's easy to get carried away with an exercise such as this. The extensive list of passages from Bedeian's article is just a small part of what he conveys in his excellent article. We can't help but wonder, given the quality of Bedeian's ideas in comparison to those in the essays of Stephen Bushardt (see www.timbersnursery.com), how much the CoB's management department could be improved through a trade involving these two. A secondary wonder, given Bushardt's ideas and the prevalence of sycophants in management, just how what the future holds for junior profs in that area (e.g., Brian Gregory, Jennifer Sequeira, etc.).