

CoB Flashback: Fall 2006 CoB Faculty Convocation

Join us as we flash back to fall 2006, when the CoB was beginning a new academic year, though not any ordinary one. This was the academic year of the CoB's 2007 AACSB Maintenance of Accreditation Review.

Those new to USM's CoB might not know it, but the CoB's 2007 AACSB MAR was the first MAR involving the CoB since 1997, even though the AACSB had since moved to 5-year MAR cycles. So, for just this one time the CoB had 10 years to prepare for a MAR that colleges/schools of business ordinarily have only five years to prepare for. However, despite all of the extra time there was a definite air of nervousness about the AACSB's Review hovering over the Fall 2006 CoB Faculty Convocation.

For one, the Fall 2006 CFC was held on the first floor of Joseph Greene Hall, in an accounting lecture room. The CoB was, at that time, still in the throes of then-CoB Dean Harold Doty's ill-conceived plan to replace the Joseph Greene Hall HVAC system. The project, whose cost exceeded \$1 million, had already consumed the better part of one year **and** had displaced the usual spring 2006 course schedule for what turned out to be a disastrous 8-week mini-mester (two) plan. By the time of the Fall 2006 CFC, the project had quarantined the usual meeting site, JGH 303, for CoB faculty meetings, such as the Fall CFC. As a result of the Fall 2006 CFC being held in an accounting classroom, a significant number of CoB faculty/staff remained standing along both the back wall and side wall of the Greene Hall classroom-turned-meeting room.

Next, the Fall 2006 CFC began, as so many do, with an introduction (by the Dean) of the new CoB faculty and staff. During this part of the meeting, Tourism Management Chair, Cherylynn Becker, introduced Evelyn Kwan Green as a new instructor in the TM department. With the exception of Becker and perhaps a few others, CoB faculty/staff knew Green well. She was (and is) the ex-wife of CoB associate professor of economics, Trellis Green. Evelyn Green had spent the past few years working for USM's technology division, *iTech*. There she conducted various technology training courses, such as courses covering operation of the smartboard equipment in USM's classrooms. Before that Green had served a lengthy stint as a high-ranking administrator in USM's recreational services division. As far as CoB faculty/staff knew, Green had no real qualifications to serve as an instructor of tourism management. Even the TM department's chair, Becker, seemed to struggle during the introduction phase of the Fall 2006 CFC to explain Green's presence on the CoB faculty roster.

The introductions also included an introduction made by Doty of Steven Jackson, who was at that time the *LeBlanc Professor of Business Ethics* at Loyola University in New Orleans. As Doty introduced him as the incoming Interim SAIS Director, to begin in January of 2007, Jackson, the white-bearded man located at the back of the meeting room, gestured to the group in acknowledgement of his introduction. Doty pointed out to the assembled faculty/staff that the CoB's acquisition of Jackson was aided by the New Orleans higher education community's difficulties in dealing with the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, and that the CoB's acquisition of Jackson might well be the beginning

of a move by the CoB to raid other higher ed faculty in New Orleans. As Doty described a "plan" that was previously unknown, and sounded strange, to many CoB faculty/staff, some wondered why any "raid" of N.O. would involve faculty from a relatively obscure institution, like LU, and not the flagship institution of the "Big Easy," Tulane University. Others wondered how ethical it was to "raid" New Orleans at that time, or for a named professor at Loyola University to be attending, in a quasi-official (administrative) capacity, a faculty meeting at a public university in a neighboring state.

Shortly after the intros receded, Doty moved to the all important portion of the meeting -- discussion of the CoB's AACSB MAR activities. There he (Doty) described the working meetings that the CoB's AACSB MAR teams had conducted throughout the previous summer (2006), and he introduced those members present at the Fall 2006 CFC. It was at this point that former CoB marketing professor, Laurie Babin, who had been recognized by Doty as being an AACSB MAR team member, began to vocalize, before all assembled, her confusion about Doty's presentation. At one point Babin even stated that she didn't know at the time that the meetings she attended during the summer (of 2006) were AACSB MAR meetings. Many CoB members, sitting aghast at the comments, began to wonder just what had been done over the summer of 2006.

Fast forward to the end of the meeting. As Doty previewed the upcoming AACSB MAR schedule for CoB faculty/staff, he (Doty) became visibly uncomfortable. Then, as he (Doty) stood before the assembled group, he (Doty) stated that there was something he hesitated to say but thought it should be said. At that point, and as his face turned red, Doty informed CoB faculty and staff of the supposed existence of a secret plot to sabotage the CoB's AACSB MAR. And, as if he (Doty) sensed the so-called conspirators were present at that very time, he told CoB faculty and staff not to worry because he (Doty) had by then already had discussions with a high-ranking AACSB official -- Jerry Trapnell -- and he (Doty) had been told by Trapnell that such plots are commonplace with regard to AACSB matters and that the AACSB is well-equipped to handle them. Then, again sensing the so-called saboteurs were present, Doty warned that any activities such as sliding files under doors would be wholly ineffective in derailing the CoB's AACSB MAR.

Seeing through Doty's ineffective attempt to be decisive and clever at the same time, CoB accounting professor, Marc DePree, took the floor and explained to Doty that he (DePree) was not part of any secret plot to derail the CoB's AACSB work. DePree informed those assembled that he (DePree) was dealing with a formal complaint, put in writing, with AACSB officials about a potential violation (by the CoB) of AACSB standards, and that any contact he (DePree) would have with the CoB's AACSB MAR Peer Review Team members would be open and transparent. DePree then stated, in no uncertain terms, that there would be no sliding of files under doors from him (DePree).

At this point Doty grew even more uncomfortable and attempted to retort by telling DePree, and those assembled, that Trapnell and the AACSB knew what he (DePree) was up to with regard to his (DePree's) complaints. DePree maintained his composure as Doty's retort devolved into an unprofessional rant. Before he (Doty) could do too much

damage to himself, he (Doty) quickly adjourned the meeting and exited the room. For the next several seconds, many CoB faculty simply glanced in disbelief (at what had just happened) at one another. It took an unusually long amount of time for the group to rise, collect themselves, and exit the convocation room. The Fall 2006 CoB Faculty Convocation would, thanks to Doty's antics, be long remembered.