

CoB Flashback: keepgas.doc

In January of 2003 former USM President Shelby Thames fired all of USM's deans and reorganized the University. The reorganization of USM led to both new colleges and fewer colleges than before. One of these was the College of Business and Economic Development, and one of the finalists for the CBED dean's position (in the spring of 2003) was Syracuse University's Harold Doty. Doty told the crowd of CBED faculty and staff gathered for his interview presentation that he (Doty) viewed the inclusion of economic development (ED) in the business college (CB) as an opportunity to create an advantage and do new things. Shortly after taking the post as the dean of the CBED, Doty even taught a graduate-level course in economic development. It would be the only course he ever taught during his tenure as dean from July-03 through early April-07.

Clearly, Doty was a supporter of ED's presence in USM's b-school. Well, for a while he was. As the CoB's AACSB Maintenance of Accreditation year, 2006-07, approached, Doty cooled on the idea of having ED around. He began to tell the Thames administration, and anyone else who would hear him that ED's presence was going to jeopardize the b-school's AACSB re-accreditation aspirations. Doty's plan worked, and Thames withdrew ED from the CBED. Shortly afterward the CBED became the CoB.

However, by this time Thames had already cooled on the idea of having Harold Doty around. And, according to some, as a result of Doty's public complaints about the presence of ED in the b-school, Thames decided to remove all of the funded graduate assistants from the CoB. Thames' decision came down quickly, and it was decisive, as a fair number of GA positions exited the CoB, mainly for the College of Science & Technology. Thames' logic in doing so was solid, at least in the eyes of many at USM. Thames reminded the CoB that it (the CoB) did not have any PhD programs, and as a result it (CoB) retained a disproportionately high number of funded GA positions. You see, when Doty fought for and won the removal of ED from the b-school, the b-school lost its only PhD-granting unit. Thames had quickly turned the tables on the man, Doty, who often boasted publicly of never having been defeated by Thames.

Doty fought back. Shortly after Thames' decision was handed down, Doty circulated amongst CoB faculty a draft of a document arguing against Thames' action. Doty's e-mail presentation informed CoB faculty that he (Doty) and a few others had worked up the draft, which he (Doty) was pretty sure contained all of the points of argument that needed to be made, though he (Doty) would entertain suggestions about points that may have been missed. The hubris with which Doty presented the draft to CoB faculty had a fair number of them focused on Doty's failings instead of the immediate

problem at hand. Doty ultimately submitted the document to central administrators, and some time later the Thames administration relinquished a few of the GA positions -- just enough to help staff the CoB's administrative offices. Thames had taken more GAs than he really wanted, and threw a few back to Doty as part of the punch line. Despite keepgas.doc, the CoB lost GA positions under Doty. Thames had defeated Doty once again.

Postscript: It's interesting that, near the end of his reign over the CoB, Doty itched for the presence of a PhD program in his business school. When he had actually had one, he banished it. Now (near the end) his hope was to re-constitute the PhD program in industrial psychology, a program that, like ED, had previously been in another USM college. With the lack of quality on the CoB faculty, it's almost a certainty that this program would've given the CoB bigger AACSB fits than the ED program would have.