

CoB News, 29 January 2009

Integrity Policy Not Boilerplate, Says *The Chronicle*

According to USMNEWS.net sources, Thomas Bartlett's 29-Jan-09 article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* entitled "2 Universities' Plagiarism Policies Look a Lot Alike" only deteriorates even further the arguments made by the Harold Doty/Farhang Niroomand administration of the CoB (2003-07), that a university's or college's academic integrity policy (or, for that matter, AACSB documentation) is simply "boilerplate" and open for use by any and all, even "without proper citation." In his article (shown below), Bartlett describes how officials at Southern Illinois University adopted in 2007 a 139-word plagiarism definition that is nearly identical the definition adopted by Indiana University just two years earlier.

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Today's News

Wednesday, January 28, 2009

2 Universities' Plagiarism Policies Look a Lot Alike

By THOMAS BARTLETT

In 2007, after several high-profile plagiarism scandals, Southern Illinois University released a 17-page report on how to deal with the issue. The report includes a lengthy definition of plagiarism, explaining exactly what does and does not merit the dreaded "p" word.

One problem: That definition appears to have been plagiarized.

The 139-word definition used in the report is nearly identical to the definition adopted by Indiana University in 2005. Here, for example, are passages from each definition, explaining what constitutes plagiarism:

Southern Illinois: "... directly quoting another's actual words, whether oral or written; using another's ideas, opinions, or theories; paraphrasing the words, ideas, opinions, or theories of others, whether oral or written; borrowing facts, statistics, or illustrative material; and offering materials assembled or collected by others in the form of projects or collections without acknowledgment."

Indiana: "1. Directly quoting another person's actual words, whether oral or written; 2. Using another person's ideas, opinions, or theories; 3. Paraphrasing the words, ideas, opinions, or theories of others, whether oral or written; 4. Borrowing facts, statistics, or illustrative material; or 5. Offering materials assembled or collected by others in the form of projects or collections without acknowledgment."

In other passages, just a few words of some sentences have been changed. For instance, Indiana University's policy says: "What is considered 'common knowledge' may differ from course to course." Southern Illinois's report changes the end of the sentence to "subject to subject."

Uncertain Authorship

So how, when writing a report on plagiarism, did Southern Illinois manage to lift much of the content without citation?

The chairman of the committee that put the report together, Arthur M. "Lain" Adkins, said he didn't know. Mr. Adkins, who is the director of the university's press, acknowledged that the language is "very similar" but wasn't convinced that his committee had done anything wrong. "It could be a coincidence," Mr. Adkins said. "Any definition by nature is going to be close to another definition."

While the report was signed by all 10 members of the committee, that particular section of the report was, according to Mr. Adkins, "most likely" written by R. Gerald Nelms, an associate professor of English at Southern Illinois at Carbondale. Mr. Nelms has been quoted as a plagiarism expert by publications like *The Wall Street Journal*.

Mr. Nelms said he wasn't sure if he was responsible for that definition and didn't know why the language would be almost exactly the same. "If there are any similarities," he said, "my suspicion is they are coincidental."

Both men said they did not believe that anyone on the committee had intentionally copied the definition. Mr. Adkins said he didn't remember any mention of Indiana's policy during the committee's discussions.

Indiana adopted the current version of its plagiarism policy in 2005, well before Southern Illinois issued its report. Pamela W. Freeman, an associate dean of students and director of the office of student ethics and antiharassment programs at Indiana University at Bloomington, has been involved in writing the university's policies on topics like plagiarism for 15 years.

"I don't think it would be the norm to verbatim use it without citing it," said Ms. Freeman.

Her response after hearing the two policies read aloud was simply, "Wow."

In fact, Indiana's policy has been cited elsewhere. Case Western Reserve University's School of Dental Medicine uses (and credits) Indiana's definition as part of its policy on academic integrity. The Web site Scriptovia.com, which allows students to share class notes, also includes Indiana's definition and conspicuously cites the university.

Previous Problems

In recent years, Southern Illinois has had more than its share of plagiarism cases. In 2006, the chancellor of the Carbondale campus was asked to step down after it was discovered that portions of a strategic plan he wrote for Southern Illinois had been taken from a strategic plan he helped write for another university (*The Chronicle*, November 9, 2006).

The following year it was revealed that the president of the system, Glenn Poshard, had copied large sections of his 1984 dissertation without citation (*The Chronicle*, September 10, 2007). A university committee deemed the copying "errors and mistakes" rather than plagiarism (*The Chronicle*, October 12, 2007).

The report has not been officially adopted by the university's Board of Trustees, which meets next month. Mr. Adkins said his committee plans to review its report in light of the similarities to Indiana's policy. "If we've made a mistake, we will cite it," he said. "And we will own up to our mistake."

Though SIU officials are claiming the similarities in the definitions are "coincidental," Pamela Freeman, the Director of the Office of Student Ethics and Anti-Harrassment Programs at Indiana University, and the IU official who developed IU's 2005 version of the definition, was shocked at the similarities. According to Freeman, it would be abnormal for one university to use, without proper citation, another university's plagiarism policy/definition. And, according to Bartlett, officials at Case Western Reserve who used IU's policy did so the normal way – with attribution.



Laurie Babin George Carter Harold Doty Charles Jordan Farhang Niroomand

Of course, this news is relevant to USM's CoB, which, under the leadership of then-dean Doty, copied, without proper citation, the academic integrity policy of the Whitman School of Business at Syracuse University. That episode, headlined by former CoB marketing professor [Laurie Babin](#) (now with the University of Louisiana at Monroe) and EFIB chair [George Carter](#), has been covered extensively by USMNEWS.net [reports](#) and [editorials](#). Even worse for the CoB is that the integrity policy plagiarism episode came on the heels of the now infamous [AACSB definitions plagiarism](#) episode, involving Central Missouri State University and which also fell under Doty's watch. The star of [that particular fiasco](#) was CoB accounting professor [Charles Jordan](#).

Excerpts from *Letters to USMNEWS.net*

In response to [Jackson Lets It All Hang Out](#):

"Not getting reimbursed for going to the Coast is very short sighted. It will create a lot of ill will and it will get more difficult to get faculty to agree to teach at the Coast or travel from the Coast to teach at the Burg. It will also give crappy administrators another lever with which to screw certain faculty."

"I don't get how you can choose not to reimburse for travel to and from the Gulf. Does anyone know what is happening to development accounts? I would bet that even the fund for the Louis Brandt award is seriously depleted and that the award will only come with a certificate this year . . ."

"Now what? Budget cuts and future budget cuts surely eliminate the outside hires for the new department chairs [under the IHL-approved CoB reorganization]."

"The 2% budget cut is now 5% this year; 10% projection next year. Zero travel dollars. Can you feel the . . . agony now?"

No Lai-ing Down Yet

Our earlier report [1 Month](#), published around 1-Dec-08, showed that CoB decision sciences associate professor Fujun Lai was a virtual lock for the 2009 Louis K. Brandt Research Award. With the **premier-level** hit *Communications of the ACM*, and **A-level** publications in both the *International Journal of Production Research* and the *International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management*, Lai's publications in the *Transportation Journal*, *Industrial Management & Data Systems* (2), *Supply Chain Management*, *Total Quality Management & Business Excellence*, and the *Journal of Supply Chain Management* hardly seemed necessary in declaring that Lai would ultimately take home the award this spring. Lai, however, is not one to settle, as our [CoB News, 5 January 2009](#) report showed. There it is reported that Lai added another **A-level** journal publication – this one in *Tourism Management* – to his 2009 LKBA portfolio. Surely, Lai would then rest. Not so. Reporters at USMNEWS.net recently discovered that Lai has added yet another **A-level** publication to his LKBA application. This one comes via co-authorship – with former CoB marketing professor Barry

Babin, now with Louisiana Tech University, and Bradley University’s Mitch Griffin – of an article recently accepted for publication by the *Journal of Business Research*.

Table 1 below reprints the top 3 LKBA candidates listed in the table from “1 Month,” with the addition of Lai’s two recent **A-level** publications in *Tourism Management* and the *Journal of Business Research*.

Table 1
2009 Louis K. Brandt Award Predictions

Rank Name	Unit	2007-08 Journal Publications
1 Lai, Fujun	MIS	Transportation Journal Communications of the ACM Industrial Management & Data Systems Supply Chain Management: An International Journal Journal of Business Research Tourism Management Total Quality Management & Business Excellence Journal of Supply Chain Management Industrial Management & Data Systems International Journal of Production Research International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management
2 Anderson, Mary	ACC	Journal of Business & Economics Research Advances in Accounting The CPA Journal
3 Green, Trellis	ECO	Applied Economics Applied Economics

According to sources, based on the data above the engraving of Lai’s name on the LKBA trophy can commence.