

Dr. Cut-and-Paste

George Carter, Chairman of the EFIB Department, and self-professed Mr. Ethics, has now added a new title to his collection: Dr. Cut-and-Paste (DCP). When he has been producing or forwarding anything to the department or college of late, he has been frequently using the cut (or copy) and paste method of production. Efficient and effective you say? Sure, if it is his own work on which he is relying. As has been previously demonstrated on the pride board, “Carter’s” ad for the CEE Director position was a modification of another department member’s work for a faculty job ad. Then there is his participation as Chair of the Accreditation Committee in the AQ/PQ language that was “borrowed” from another university. Neither of these situations had any attribution to the original source, as far as any public statements have said. Carter did mention something in the last faculty meeting to the effect that, for at least the AQ/PQ situation, he believes borrowing language from other schools who have been recently re-accredited is common practice, and therefore (one is left to assume) okay. Whether or not it is a “common practice”, it is wrong. Does anyone believe that if DCP had a student turn in a paper for one of his courses that contained the same kind of activity (using someone else’s work without attribution), DCP would think that was fine and award a high grade?

From where did DCP get this idea? Here is a guess: in his role as typist for Professor Nissan, he has seen, as many previous departmental secretaries have seen, that Dr. Nissan is fond of cutting and pasting from his old papers to create new papers. One long-time secretary said that she would be in big trouble if she ever lost one of the old disks with Nissan’s papers on them; she also frequently worried about those old disks going bad. There are many valid reasons to re-use parts of earlier papers in later works; that is not the point here. The point here is these are all Dr. Nissan’s papers, regardless of any “co-authors”. Perhaps DCP missed that fundamental point.

If DCP believes that anything on the Internet is freely usable without attribution, that erroneous view would not explain DCP’s use of the faculty ad. Ultimately, any reasons given for this are done as a smoke screen or out of ignorance. Any person who has earned a doctorate, and has been in a university environment for decades – especially as a professor – cannot claim ignorance. This appears to be another example in the line of DCP’s “I am sorry I got caught” philosophy. Is this any way for a faculty member or administrator to act?