

Doty's Darkest Days

Part III

The first part of 2007 was the final Act of former dean Harold Doty's administration of USM's College of Business. These were Doty's darkest days. The CoB's AACSB efforts over the 1998-2007 period resulted in failure during the first few days of February 2007. CoB faculty were exiting the CoB in what appears to be record numbers. Faculty grievances regarding administrative malfeasance in the CoB were mounting, and staff members were filing out of the college at almost the same pace as faculty. And on 9-April-07, Doty would himself file out of the CoB's dean suite, resigning, along with his associate dean, Farhang Niroomand, under a cloud of rumors and suspicion.

This is Part III -- the final part -- in a new mini-series that examines heretofore unseen documents and other evidence from "inside" the corridors of USM's central administration that were recently uncovered in USMNEWS.NET's vast library of information on USM's College of Business. In Part III we take a look at some inter-office e-mail correspondence from the central administration of USM that relates to 9-April-07 -- the day Doty "resigned" as dean of the CoB.

The following is former USM Provost Jay Grimes' opening statement at the 10-April-07 CoB faculty meeting. This meeting was the culmination of Doty's darkest days.

Former USM Provost Jay Grimes' Opening Remarks at 10-April-07 CoB Faculty Meeting

"This looks like a fairly full house, so let's get started. I know some of you, and for those of you that haven't met me I'm Jay Grimes, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. I'm sorry that I've had to meet you like this for the first time, but I think as you well know now both Dr. [Harold] Doty and Dr. [Farhang] Niroomand submitted their resignations yesterday. When I met with Dr. Doty -- we met for some time yesterday -- he said that he had been contemplating resignation for the past several months and finally decided it was the right time to do it. He felt that with the new President [Martha Saunders] coming in that if he stepped aside it would give her an opportunity to develop her team and implement the transition. And so we talked at some length and I finally accepted his resignation."

In his opening remarks above, Grimes told CoB faculty that Doty "resigned" as CoB dean on 9-April-07. In describing the situation, Grimes indicated that Doty had met with him (Grimes) on 9-April-07, and explained that he (Doty) had been contemplating resignation for several months and that he (Doty) had finally decided that it was time to do so on 9-April-07. Clearly, Grimes' 10-April-07

words to CoB faculty indicate that he (Grimes) had no prior knowledge of Doty's thought process with regard to resigning his post as CoB dean. However, other internal USM administration documents found in the USMNEWS.NET catalogue point toward the conclusion of other, recent [reports](#) and [editorials](#) suggesting that Doty was fired by the Thames-Grimes administration.

The evidence being referred to here consists of e-mails between Grimes and USM Human Resources Director Russ Willis. These e-mails were exchanged between Grimes and Willis during the weekend of 6-, 7- and 8-April-07, just before Doty reportedly approached Grimes on 9-April-07 with his plan to resign as CoB dean.

We begin with the 5-April-07 e-mail from Doty to members of USM's central administration that was discussed in Part II in this series. This e-mail had the subject line "Mental health concerns," and it was forwarded on 6-April-07 by Grimes to USM Counsel Lee Gore, Willis and USM EEO Director Rebecca Woodrick.

From: Dr. Jay Grimes [mailto:Jay.Grimes@usm.edu]
Sent: Friday, April 06, 2007 7:51 AM
To: Lee Gore; Russ Willis; Rebecca Woodrick
Subject: FW: Mental health concerns

The latest word from Dr. Doty.

D. Jay Grimes, Ph.D.
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
The University of Southern Mississippi
Hattiesburg Office: (601) 266-5002
Cell: (228) 806-7700
jay.grimes@usm.edu

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As pointed out in Part II in this series, Doty's e-mail to Grimes prompted Grimes to use the phrase "The latest word from Dr. Doty" when forwarding the e-mail to Gore, Willis and Woodrick. What was not reported in Part II in this series is Willis' response to Grimes' e-mail containing the latest word from Doty. That response from Willis, which is inserted below, was sent to Grimes on the evening

of 8-April-07, only hours before Doty would "resign" his post as dean of the CoB (on 9-April-07).

From: Russell Willis [mailto:russ.willis@usm.edu]
Sent: Sunday, April 08, 2007 6:00 PM
To: 'Dr. Jay Grimes'
Subject: RE: Mental health concerns

Jay:

Once we get through Monday's event, I will start investigating this concern from the College of Business

Thanks,

Russ

In the e-mail above, Willis makes note of the "concern" raised by Doty in Doty's 5-April-07 e-mail to Grimes. However, Willis also tells Grimes that any action on Doty's latest concern about the CoB will come only after "we get through Monday's event." By Monday, Willis refers to Monday, 9-April-07. This is the day Doty "resigned." By "we" Willis certainly means himself and Grimes (and possibly others). These are the individuals charged with academic affairs and human resources issues at USM. By the combined term "Monday's event," what else could Willis be referring to other than Doty's resignation? Nothing, really. But, based on Grimes' statements to CoB faculty on 10-April-07 (see above), Grimes and Willis would not have known on 8-April-07 about Doty's thought process with regard to resigning as CoB dean. That thought process was revealed to Grimes by Doty only during the lengthy discussion the two had the next day, 9-April-07.

What are we to make of the "Monday's event" phrase? According to sources, it is yet another indication that Doty was asked to step down by Grimes. And, in the tradition of "saving face" that is so prominently part of USM's history, Grimes did so in a way that allowed Doty to claim he was resigning his post, not being terminated.

The first few months of 2007 were truly Doty's darkest days. As late as February-07, Doty remained on the receiving end of letters from USM's central

administration that called into question Doty's ability to manage the CoB. Doty's response to those criticisms was to raise various concerns about racism and mental health issues in the CoB. Finally, it appears that in the wake of Doty's odd behavior (i.e., raising the mental health and racism concerns) after late February-07, Grimes (the USM central administration) acted swiftly by "resigning" Doty from his post as CoB dean.