

Doty's Darkest Days

Part I

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 I 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 I we examine the details of a letter to Doty from former USM Provost Jay Grimes dated 26-February-07, just 41 days prior to Doty's surprise resignation. That letter is inserted below:



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February 26, 2007

Dr. Harold Doty
Dean, College of Business
The University of Southern Mississippi
118 College Drive #5021
Hattiesburg, MS 39406

Dear Dean Doty:

You are scheduled to brief the Executive Cabinet on Monday, March 5. The cabinet continues to have concerns about four programs in your college, and I would like you to specifically address these concerns.

You were approved to advertise for a Director of the School of Accountancy and Information Systems in November, 2006. As far as I can tell, that search is not progressing in a timely manner. Please be prepared to discuss this search and your plan to bolster the School of Accountancy and Information Systems.

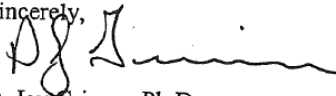
Please bring the Executive Cabinet up-to-date on the status of Fashion Merchandising. We would like to know how the searches are progressing in Fashion Merchandising, and we would like to look at Fashion Merchandising measurables (e.g., SCHs, majors).

The Executive Cabinet continues to have serious concerns about the apparent demise of Tourism Management. I personally made a major commitment to the Gulf Coast business community, a commitment that you were present to hear at a dinner meeting held in Hardy Hall. This program needs some serious attention and the cabinet wants to see your plan for rejuvenation.

Finally, please share with the Executive Cabinet recent trends in your MBA program and your plans for improvement and growth. Please include in your briefing any plans or ideas that you may have for on-line, hybrid or executive delivery.

We look forward to your presentation.

Sincerely,



D. Jay Grimes, Ph.D.
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

DJG/bb

cc: Executive Cabinet

As indicated by the letter above from Grimes to Doty, USM's central administration remained dissatisfied with Doty's job performance even *44 months* into Doty's tenure as CoB dean. According to Grimes, USM's Executive Cabinet had scheduled a 5-March-07 briefing from Doty because the Cabinet "continues to have concerns" about Doty's management of the CoB. Doty's briefing is meant to address four specific concerns, as outlined in Grimes' letter.

The first of these concerns the Cabinet's November 2006 approval of Doty's request to advertise for the position of Director of the CoB's School of Accountancy and Information Systems (SAIS). According to Grimes, "[a]s far as I can tell, that search is not progressing in a timely manner." Grimes then directed Doty to "be prepared to discuss [at the 5-March-07 briefing] this search and [Doty's] plan to bolster the [SAIS]."

The CoB's SAIS Director search woes were, at the time, reported by USMNEWS.NET. The first barrier to a successful search was erected by Doty himself, when he (Doty) inexplicably decided to place *marketing* professor, Barry Babin, at the head of the effort. Not only was (and is) Babin unqualified for the task, he (Babin) was wrapped up in his own efforts to escape the CoB. Babin accepted an offer from Louisiana Tech University during the 2006-07 academic

year -- the year referred to by Grimes (see letter above) for engaging in the SAIS Director search -- and Babin departed the CoB after that year was completed. Finally, about the only response by Doty to the Executive Cabinet's concern about the sluggish SAIS Director search that can be found is [Doty's 6-March-07 e-mail](#) to Ed Arrington (University of North Carolina -- Greensboro), the CoB's AACSB Peer Review Team leader for accounting, wherein Doty asked Arrington for help in locating a suitable candidate for the job. Sources tell USMNEWS.NET that Doty's e-mail appeared to suggest that Arrington consider the \$175,000/year position for himself. If true, such an offer would be problematic for obvious reasons.

USMNEWS.NET reporters also covered Grimes' third issue -- the demise of the CoB's tourism management program -- at great length. From the tremendous loss of faculty, [an academic journal](#), and [human resource instability](#) to [sketchy staffing decisions](#) and [stale and inaccurate publicity](#), the CoB's tourism management department can't seem to find itself anymore. The department has been referred to as [instructor-centric](#), and sources say that even interim dean Alvin Williams' recent [administrative decisions](#) vis-à-vis tourism management have compounded the problems that existed under former dean Doty. Of course, Grimes is correct in stating that USM's Gulf Coast presence demands a strong tourism management program, whether USM has made promises to that area's business community or not. One could argue that Grimes should have placed the issues with tourism management at the top of his letter to Doty.

Finally, Grimes instructs Doty to provide an overview of the CoB's MBA program. This issue dogged the Doty administration throughout 2003-07, and Grimes' use of terms like "hybrid . . . delivery" bring up only bad memories for many CoB faculty. As with the two other issues above, reporters at USMNEWS.NET covered the hybrid (digital) MBA delivery throughout the 2006-present period.

One thing is certain, Grimes' 26-February-07 letter to Doty is clearly one that Doty would not have been happy to receive. It foretold, more than anything else we've seen to date, the coming demise of the Doty administration of USM's business school.