

## **Doty's Tipping Point: 2005-06**

Duane Harold Doty's administration of USM's College of Business spanned from the summer of 2003 through early April of 2007. It was characterized by ups and downs -- mostly downs -- and it ended suddenly, with USM Human Resources officials sending an e-mail to CoB faculty/staff on the morning of 10-April-07 announcing that Doty and his Associate Dean, Farhang Niroomand, had resigned the previous afternoon. Speculation about the reason for the resignations was rampant throughout Greene Hall. The CoB had only recently been assigned to a 6th Year Review by the AACSB, and many felt that decision must have played a role. Still to this day no complete explanation of the events of 9-April-07 have been given to CoB students, faculty and staff.

While Doty's tenure in the CoB got off to a bad start, and many would argue it went downhill from there, several events during the 2005-06 academic year worked to seal Doty's fate as the CoB's Dean. And, as bad as the CoB's AACSB accreditation debacle of 2007 rates now, the CoB's faltering AACSB efforts do not rank highly among the events that occurred during 2005-06 that worked to relegate the Doty Administration of the CoB to the proverbial historical trash heap. Among the many issues that arose during 2005-06, this essay highlights three that would join to doom Harold Doty's reign of the CoB.

### **A Natural Disaster**

In late August of 2005, the most devastating hurricane to hit the United States -- Hurricane Katrina -- wiped out USM's Gulf Coast campus and did millions of dollars of damage throughout Hattiesburg, including USM's main campus. Katrina was a *natural disaster*. However, it was Doty's reaction to it that so devastated his own prospects as the CoB's Dean.

While Hattiesburg residents, including USM faculty, staff and students, were digging out from underneath the devastation left by Katrina, Doty visited the campus at the University of South Florida in Tampa. While the USM community was out of school for a month, Doty took off for Tampa to interview for USF's b-school Dean opening. Shortly after completing his interview there, a video of Doty's speech to the USF business school hit the Internet. In that video, Hattiesburg, Mississippi, and the rest of the world got to see Doty explain the difference between his two checkbooks -- the *booze account* and the non-booze account. According to Doty, the fun money is the private money, and he (Doty) can pretty much do anything that he wants with the fun money.

The faculty and staff at USF also got a firsthand look at Doty's *hubris*, recklessness and immaturity. When faced with the man who proclaimed that he had been dreaming of being at USF since his days in graduate school at the University of Texas, the USF people balked, and rightly so. Doty had told them one falsehood after another. He had told them that there wasn't any real central

administration at USM to speak of, that he had saved the CoB's real estate program, that he had hired an African-American female without using any special offers or benefits, and that he believes in shared governance and treating people fairly. Just watching the video is enough to see that the USF family wasn't buying any of it.

When Doty *was* spending time in Hattiesburg in the aftermath of Katrina, he was his usual self. He was concerned about the welfare of some faculty, but not all. Outside of the Dean's office suite, there was little concern about the plight of CoB staff, a hardworking, underpaid group as a whole. People were taking note, especially staff. Doty was losing the little ground he had left.

Fast forward two years, to the end of 2006-07, and you have the failed third year review of assistant professor of management, Daniel Michael. Michael was a faculty member at the CoB's Coast campus, and when Katrina made landfall Michael's USM office and his home were devastated. As a result of the USM-GC devastation, USM Provost Jay Grimes instructed USM Deans to delay, by one year, the tenure decisions of all pending tenure applications. Doty's overly strict *interpretation* of Grimes directive led him (Doty) to inform Michael that Grimes did not mean for 3rd Year Reviews to be included.

It wasn't simply Doty's decision to push Michael out of the CoB that reeked of inequity, it was public remarks that Doty had made about Michael's plight, combined with the fact that Doty had previously given his good friend, Kenneth Zantow, an unprecedented 4th Year Review for no good reason, that damaged Doty's reputation so significantly. According to USMNEWS.NET sources, Doty bragged (in public) that Michael's home had suffered \$30,000 in damages from Katrina, yet Doty outpublished Michael despite having more than \$80,000 in damage to his (Doty's) home up in Hattiesburg.

Besides revealing much about Doty's character, the "Michael episode" fails to account for some specific facets of the comparison that are worth considering. First, Michael's office and research materials were lost to Katrina. There was no such damage to Doty's professional papers and resources, located safely on the second floor of Greene Hall in Hattiesburg. Thus, Michael's research agenda washed out into the Gulf of Mexico, while Doty's research agenda shouldn't have missed a beat to Katrina. Second, the "CoB Castles" report here at USMNEWS.NET shows that Doty lives in a \$353,580 home. Even if one assumes that \$80,000 of amenities are removed from that home for a time due to Katrina, one would still be talking about a home providing about \$275,000 worth of amenities to its occupants, the Dotys. Considering the low cost of living in Hattiesburg, this comes to more than \$300,000 in the average place.

Third, and most importantly, as Dean of the CoB Doty had access to all of the "fun money" raised on an annual basis. As readers of USMNEWS.NET are aware, Doty's Associate Dean (Farhang Niroomand) spent \$75,000 in professional travel over just a 59-month period. Not only that, Doty's recent publication in the

*Journal of Business Research*, an "A" in the CoB, came during the co-editorship of the CoB's Barry Babin, the chair of management and marketing at the time. According to sources, Doty came up the JGH stairwell late one afternoon (at a semester's end) and went into Babin's office. He emerged just minutes later, telling various CoB faculty in the JGH hallway that he (Doty) had published in an "A," a "B," and a "C" journal that year. He had just found out about the "A," and it was clear to those assembled that the "A" was the *JBR*, and that Doty had received the word directly from Babin, Doty's subordinate at the time.

These events are but a few that demonstrate that Doty's treatment of Michael was inequitable and unprofessional. They also represent part of how Doty turned a natural disaster into a man-made quagmire.

### **The HVAC Debacle**

Directly on the heels of Hurricane Katrina, Doty kicked off a major renovation of Greene Hall's heating and cooling system. The \$1,000,000+ project began in the weeks leading up to 2006. Much of the CoB's building was out of commission during the spring 2006 semester, and Doty's management team devised a two-term mini-mester plan (8 weeks each) to account for the loss of major portions of the building. The scheduling plan was a disaster. Business majors were put in a position of facing difficulty enrolling in the courses they needed. Sources told USMNEWS.NET at the time that at least one student organization drafted a petition for the CoB to reconsider extending the problematic scheduling plan. Student complaints were so widespread that Doty sent his Undergraduate Programs Director, Gwen Pate, to inform various media outlets (e.g., *The Student Printz*) that the CoB's management team had underestimated the difficulties that its HVAC plan would create for students.

The HVAC plan also scattered CoB faculty throughout the USM campus. Accounting faculty were relocated to a building scheduled for demolition, while other faculty and departmental offices were moved to a more southeastern portion of the campus. The schedule for completing various portions of the HVAC project were in constant flux, and some CoB faculty speculated that the contractor had never before installed a system as large and complex. In almost each and every e-mail update to CoB faculty, Doty continued to profess that the project was on schedule, something CoB faculty and staff clearly knew was not the case. Doty's inability to face harsh realities was never more crystal clear than it was throughout the HVAC debacle.

### **"Letter of Agreement"**

One decision that will likely follow Doty everywhere he goes is the now-notorious "agreement" he made with an associate professor of management who wanted to be promoted to full professor, but was having difficulty meeting the stated (in the Handbook) requirements. Doty agreed, with the backing of former management and marketing chairs Alvin Williams (now Interim Dean) and Barry Babin, to

write a so-called "letter of agreement" for associate management professor David Duhon. That letter instructed Duhon to publish less than a handful of refereed journal publications over the subsequent years. If accomplished, the letter indicated that Duhon would have both Babin's and Doty's support, the former of which would overstep the authority of the department's faculty to make recommendations, while the latter would diminish the capacity of the College's Advisory Comment to advise the Dean's office.

With what was clearly an implied contractual arrangement that would lead to the promotion of Duhon, Doty's decision to execute the "letter of agreement" will likely forever change the CoB. To date it has been the part of a number of grievances and complaints, one of which involves the "Michael episode" described above. As many have stated, the "letter of agreement" clearly diminished USM's CoB.

### **Postscript**

Since arriving in Hattiesburg in the summer of 2003, Doty has been making decisions and taking actions that have damaged USM's College of Business, as well as his own prospects for future administrative successes elsewhere. It began by retaining Niroomand as Associate Dean and elevating Mark Klinedinst to chair economics, finance and international business, and it ended with the assignment of a 6th Year Review (for the CoB) by the AACSB. This essay simply highlights three important episodes in that "damaged" history. That all three fell in the 2005-06 academic year means that the 2005-06 academic year was a tipping point, at least for Doty.