

Doty Theories . . . and More

by Duane Cobb

Discussions about former CoB Dean D. Harold Doty's chances of landing a job as dean elsewhere often place people in two separate camps. There are those who believe his bad behavior even before the AACSB visit in Feb-07 doomed his prospects for moving up, or on, in the academic world. Next, there are those who believed that his future prospects hinged on the CoB's ability, under his leadership, to secure a clean bill of health from the College's AACSB Peer Review Team in Feb-07. Now, these two groups – and they are large ones – have merged into one, and one that believes that Doty's ability to move on from USM has gone with the wind.

There is another camp (albeit a small one) that believes Doty still has a slim chance to move out of the CoB outhouse and back into the life of dean, at least at a small school. This group's theory is an interesting one. Doty needs outsiders to believe that the CoB's inability to secure a clean report from the PRT in 2007 is due more to the CoB's collection of redneck professors and good ol' boy ways of getting things done than it is to his leadership, or lack thereof. Put less crudely, Doty needs academia to understand that a serious lack of scholarship and intellectual life in USM's College of Business led to its downfall, and, given the state of USM's central administration from 2003 to 2007, there was little, if anything, that he or anyone else could have done about it.

An interesting proposition, and *not* an *unmarketable* one. There is some evidence on the CoB's own website, from the lack of posted vitae to the shoddy maintenance of general information, to support the idea. There is a tremendous amount of evidence at usmnews.net alone to push this proposition across the finish line. The problem Doty has now is that the CoB's webpage will not provide enough visibility to support the proposition, and he (Doty) has already waged a campaign to get Clemson (and perhaps others) to consider usmnews.net as nothing more than the rantings of a disgruntled faculty. He can't reverse course now and ask that UNC – Charlotte, or some other institution, consider usmnews.net as gospel.

Removing these two avenues of support, consider the remaining possibility: The CoB fails *again* (in 2008) in its attempt to secure a clean bill of health from the AACSB. Such an event would, at least to some extent, offer Doty an avenue to vindication, a chance to say "I told you so." Consider the alternative, wherein Interim Dean Alvin Williams and Interim Associate Dean Joseph Peyrefitte – one an almost 30-year veteran of USM and the other a newly tenured and promoted associate professor with no administrative experience to speak of – coax a passing grade from Theodore Cummings and the AACSB. If this happens, Doty will look like a chump, bested in the accreditation game by two locals with Tier III/IV pedigrees. If this happens, Doty will fall from the CoB outhouse and into the academic abyss.

What a strange place Doty may now find himself in, potentially cheering against maintenance of accreditation. Whether or not this story has legs, the 2007-08 academic year promises to be full of suspense and drama. The fact remains that the CoB is hemorrhaging faculty left and right – more than 10 have left in the past five months alone. On top of the AACSB debacle that the CoB now owns, much of next year's energy will be consumed by searches for a new Dean and a new SAIS Director, not to mention the countless searches to replace missing faculty that are now ongoing. A 2006-07 academic year search failed to produce a permanent person for SAIS Directorship opening, even though the CoB reportedly has \$175,000 per year in funding for the position.

This may seem like a great confluence, and it should. However, there may be more. Try this one on for size: Someone called me two nights ago and said that the CoB's Interim Dean, Alvin J. Williams, is the individual of choice of a number of people close to the (forthcoming) presidential search at Mississippi Valley State University. If you would like to see the pot stirred some more, this will certainly do the job.