

'Skip' Carter

by Duane Cobb

The tapes of new accounting director Kirby "Skip" Hughes are a hot item in the USMNEWS.net library. Of course, they don't represent the first time we've heard a CoB administrator denigrate the research accomplishments of a CoB faculty. Former EFIB chairman George Carter once told a junior CoBer that his research wasn't up to snuff. He also let it slip that some CoB faculty get tenure/promotion on the good ol' boy track, while others have to produce a meritorious record. That bit of audio was nothing short of amazing, as it showed the world how CoB governance works.

Hughes' criticisms were aimed at a tenured, senior professor. In that sense, Hughes' effort was much different than Carters'. There was, however, a moment in each episode that displayed an eerily similar tone. After deriding the junior professor, Carter backed up and pointed out that his (Carter's) was but a single opinion, and that the CoBer in question should seek advice from other senior CoB faculty. Hughes did something similar by pointing out that his was simply a single opinion. Listening to both episodes side-by-side makes one think that there is some sort of manual in the JAG dean's suite that contains all of the "how to" elements of cornering unsuspecting faculty.

The problem now, though, is that CoB faculty (and many faculty around the country) are no longer *unsuspecting* about all of this. For

that everyone owes USMNEWS.net a "thank you," as reports and editorials here have exposed the administrator playbook like no one from that quarter could have ever imagined. Exposed, Carter was forced into retirement by the Martha Saunders administration of USM (Carter referred to it all as a "subterfuge").

Hughes, on the other hand, is brand new. Some editorialists also believe that he was brought to USM to put faculty into a corner. To do that, it appears as though he is willing to ignore the CoB's recently approved journal ranking lists. Hughes refuses to commit to counting As as As, and to rewarding As with 4.0s (at a minimum) on the research continuum. These ideas, straight from the 1970s/1980s CoB, should be unacceptable to present-day CoB faculty. Whether they will or not remains to be seen. One suspects, though, that payoffs will turn heads, as so often happens in Greene Hall.

With Carter's imminent departure, the CoB is closing a dark chapter in its history. Listening to the aforementioned audio tapes, Hughes' arrival signals a perhaps even darker chapter. That's a sad conclusion, indicating that changes for the good seem as elusive today as they were decades ago.