

We continue a series recounting what a number of readers have characterized as misconduct and stupidity of past and current University of Southern Mississippi faculty and administrators. The facts underlying these conclusions have been fully documented. When one reader suggested this series, he opined “before someone comes to Southern Miss as a student or puts a career on the line as faculty member, “Ethics, Power and Academic Corruption” should be required reading.” The twenty second installment follows. (See, the [first](#), [second](#), [third](#), [fourth](#), [fifth](#), [sixth](#), [seventh](#), [eighth](#), [ninth](#), [tenth](#), [eleventh](#), [twelfth](#), [thirteenth](#), [fourteenth](#), [fifteenth](#), [sixteenth](#), [seventeenth](#), [eighteenth](#), [nineteenth](#), [twentieth](#) and [twenty first](#) installments here.)

Documentation: What AACSB Does in Practice

Although Researcher DePree offered an opportunity informally to discuss the apparent plagiarism with administrators and faculty who were involved in copying the AACSB submissions “without proper citation,” when ignored, he complied with the University Faculty Handbook. Its states the following procedures:

Every student and University employee is responsible not only to abide by the highest standards of integrity and professional ethics themselves but also to report violations when they are known or reasonably suspected to have occurred. Alleged breaches of scholarly integrity are investigated promptly and fully by the University... (Faculty Handbook 2006, p. 50.) Parties having reasonable cause to believe that a University employee or student has committed an act of scholarly misconduct must first consult informally with the University Research Ombudsman.

(2006, p. 93.)

AACSB also encourages faculty to offer information about accredited institutions. AACSB rules specify procedures for “complaints”. Their “white paper” publications also announce an unequivocal commitment to ethics and seem to encourage communication. (E.g., see, AACSB June 25, 2004) So, the researcher exercised the option to file “complaints” only after exhausting attempts to discuss concerns internally. To Researcher DePree, a full professor with tenure, this is like any other research question. Of significant interest was what the AACSB would do.

As stated above, AACSB was involved because the apparent plagiarized documents were submitted to it in partial satisfaction of AACSB reaccreditation standards. AACSB responded to the first “complaint”, instance of apparent plagiarism, (discussed above) as follows:

From: "Juliane Iannarelli" <juliane@AACSB.edu>
Date: December 6, 2006 10:19:45 AM CST
To: "Marc DePree" <marcdepree@comcast.net>

Cc: "AACSB International Accreditation" <accreditation@AACSB.edu>,
"Jerry Trapnell" <JerryT@AACSB.edu>
Subject: RE: Allegation of Plagiarism

AACSB International has received your memo dated December 1, 2006 and related documents alleging accreditation standards violations at the University.

In accordance with our complaint procedures, your complaint has been reviewed by the Chief Accreditation Officer, the Chair of the Maintenance of Accreditation Committee and the Chair of the Accounting Accreditation Committee. The Committees have determined that your complaint and supporting documentation will be provided to the members of the Peer Review Team conducting the next accreditation maintenance review at the [University]. The Peer Review Team will be asked to pay particular attention to the alleged standards violations within the context of the evidence presented in your complaint and the response from the school.

Sincerely,

Manager, Accreditation Services, AACSB International"

Clearly, AACSB recognized the researcher's right to file "complaints." By its membership in AACSB, USM and its College of Business and School of Accountancy were obligated, but failed, to recognize the Researcher DePree's and several colleagues' right to comply with AACSB procedures. Furthermore, Researcher DePree and several colleagues did not hear from AACSB concerning notification of the second instance of alleged plagiarism.

Then-USM President Martha Saunders suspended the researcher on the basis of the letters from the Dean Alvin Williams and involved faculty—including Charles Jordan, which demonstrates intolerance of different ideas on their part. The researcher then filed a "complaint" with the AACSB based on its Diversity Standard.

AACSB's Response To Diversity Concerns And The Resulting Dialog

AACSB provided the following response to the request to consider the USM's failure to follow its or AACSB's diversity principles:

Dear Professor DePree,

Your materials have been reviewed. AACSB previously addressed your [plagiarism] complaint, and there is no basis for any further

review or actions. AACSB is not a party to any individual disputes that occur between an institution and individual faculty members or students since such are beyond the scope of our accreditation standards.

Executive Vice President & Chief Accreditation Officer
AACSB International

The researcher's response was:

Dear Executive Vice President AACSB,

Thank you for your prompt response and I do respect your decision. However, let me make clear that I was not asking the AACSB to become a party to an individual dispute or reconsider its determinations whether copying "without proper citation" of submissions to AACSB is a violation of AACSB standards. My complaint relates to issues pertaining to AACSB's standard of diversity and whether faculty can file complaints in accordance with AACSB without fear of retaliation or being fired. This is not one person's view. If signatures of additional faculty will encourage you to consider this a complaint about diversity, even given the threat of termination for complaining, I believe I can provide additional signatures.

Your attention to my additional information is appreciated.

Researcher DePree

Nothing more was heard from the AACSB…