

# HVAC Tales

## *A Look at Dean Doty's Revisionist History*

A big theme during the agenda-less CoB Fall 2006 Faculty Meeting was the impending success of the \$1,000,000+ Joseph Greene Hall HVAC project that was initiated during December of 2005. CoB Dean Harold Doty and members of his administrative team are beating the "HVAC project remains on schedule. . ." drum continuously these days, as if CoB faculty and staff have no memory whatsoever of the original schedule. The original schedule was based on a three-phase process, with phase one *beginning* well after Hurricane Katrina, in December of 2005, and with phase three *ending* by late August of 2006. That original schedule is clearly explained in the USM Press Release below, which was written by Jana Bryant (former Director of Public Relations in the CoB) and released on January 12, 2006.

### **Joseph Greene Hall Gets Heating/Air Conditioning Makeover**

**Date** 1-12-06

**Contact** Jana Bryant 601.266.5854

HATTIESBURG -- Work began in late December on a major overhaul of the heating and air conditioning systems in Joseph Greene Hall, home of the College of Business at the University of Southern Mississippi.

Replacing the outdated systems is a needed improvement for the building that was first occupied in 1968, said Harold Doty, dean. "We realize that in the short run this inconvenience is painful, but in the long run, it will improve our learning environment tremendously," said Doty.

Work is being done in phases, beginning with the first floor, excluding the two auditorium rooms, and should be completed by around mid-March. The second floor renovation will take place during the second half of the spring semester, and the final phase that includes the third floor and the first floor auditorium rooms will take place over the summer with a target completion in late August. Contractor for the \$1 million-plus project is the Pat McKenzie Company of Ellisville.

The renovation is resulting in a schedule change and relocation of classes and offices during the work. Undergraduate business classes this spring are scheduled in two eight-week sessions while night classes -- mostly MBA and MPA courses -- will meet for the traditional 16-week semester.

"The COB faculty worked very hard to create new schedules as we cope with the HVAC replacement, and we are committed to causing as few student problems as possible," said Doty.

In addition to the schedule change, some faculty and staff offices will be temporarily relocated during the renovation. Faculty and staff of the School of Accountancy are housed in Weathersby Hall, while the Office of Undergraduate Academic Services is in College Hall, Room 310. All telephone numbers remain the same.

Late August of 2006 has come and gone, and mop-up work on phase two of the project is still ongoing, though phase three is also underway. When you hear Doty say that "the HVAC project remains on schedule," he is referring to a *revised* schedule and not the original plan (as explained above). If he tells you otherwise, he is revising history to his advantage. Fortunately, we have written records, such as the press release above, that provide a link to actual history regarding the matter.

If one examines the record, one sees why Doty has a desire to provide a false reality. The original schedule began to disintegrate from the start. On March 23, 2006, Doty sent the following e-mail to CoB faculty and staff, indicating that the original schedule was falling apart:

**From:** Doty  
**To:** ALL CoB  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** HVAC update  
**Sent:** 3/23/06 3:59 PM **Importance:** Normal

As of yesterday the HVAC system was scheduled to begin producing cold air sometime next week. No promises, but I hope the AC will begin working before the building becomes too hot. We could encounter some problems early in the week as the outside temperatures rise.

At this time it looks like the entire third floor of the building will be under renovation over the summer, from about May 15 into August. This will be a major inconvenience for faculty over the summer, but we have been assured that the south end of the third floor, and thus most faculty offices, will be completed by August 15, and the north end of the third floor by August 31.

Most of the work on the second floor is not scheduled for the fall rather than in the summer. We are doing our best to focus on getting the faculty office space completed before the beginning of the fall semester so work on the second floor was delayed.

JGH 115 and 116 are scheduled to be under renovation from May 15 until December.

We still do not have an iron clad date for the construction, and as we have learned on the first floor even iron clad commitments are subject to change.

D. Harold Doty

Dean, College of Business

In the e-mail above, Doty explains that the entire third floor of Greene Hall, the phase two portion of the building, was to be under renovation over the summer of 2006, instead of the second half of Spring semester of 2006 (i.e., March - May of 2006). He also notes that the second floor work --- phase three --- was to be done during fall of 2006 rather than summer of 2006, as originally planned. Doty made no attempt to characterize the construction efforts as "on schedule" at this point. To do so would have been laughable.

The following e-mail was sent by Doty on August 23, 2006.

**From:** Doty  
**To:** ALL CoB

**Cc:**  
**Subject:** FW: Rooms  
**Sent:** 8/23/06 9:41 AM **Importance:** Normal

I have a feeling that the CoB is not an issue in this case. The Chairs and Gwen Pate are the only individuals who should contact the registrar's office, and the Chairs normally should check with Gwen before making the call. Classrooms are very tight this year, but Gwen has done an excellent job coordinating things for the CoB. While I'm sure we have a few issues, I believe that most of our problems were cleared up prior to the start of the semester. I realize some people have been assigned rooms outside of JGH and that those rooms don't have all the technology you need. Fortunately, our HVAC project is right on schedule and we should have all our rooms back by the beginning of the Spring semester.

D. Harold Doty

Dean, College of Business

University of Southern Mississippi

The final sentence in the e-mail above from Doty states: "Fortunately, our HVAC project is right on schedule and we should have all our rooms back by the beginning of the Spring semester." Nowhere in the Jana Bryant press release above is it stated that the *original plan* called for work to be ongoing right up until the beginning of Spring semester of 2007. In fact, the original press release indicated that the work was to be completed by late August of 2006.

One of Doty's major shortcomings is his inability to admit to a mistake or to admit fault. When plans go awry, as they often do in the Doty Administration, you will never hear a *mea culpa* from Doty himself. If anything, he will push one of his subordinates to the fore to take the heat for broken promises and failed plans. Such was the case in the HVAC episode, wherein Doty sent the CoB's Director of Undergraduate Programs, Gwen Pate (also Associate Professor of Economics), to face the media. Pate's Spring of 2006 interview with *The Student Printz* contributed to a May 4, 2006, article in *The Student Printz* by Brittany Brown. That article, which details the costs imposed on CoB students from Doty's administrative failures, is inserted below:

### **College of Business plans return to semester-long classes**

[Brittany Brown](#)

**Issue date:** 5/4/06 **Section:** News

Junior Meagan Watts finished her last economics test, had a 20-minute break and began her final exam during the seventh week of her eight-week class.

Watts, a public relations major and marketing minor, is one of many USM students within the College of Business who struggled in the eight-week classes offered this semester. She said she was excited about taking her first business classes but has considered changing her minor.

"I was hoping to lay a foundation for my minor this year, but I feel like it's just been wasted time," she said. "I've covered so much material at such a rapid pace, that I haven't learned anything. I haven't gained the knowledge I needed."

Watts said aside from added stress, the main problems within classes were testing and the overall learning environment.

"Usually the first test was given on time, but the rest were pushed back. We would have a test on Wednesday covering three chapters, have class Friday, then be tested on three more chapters Monday," she said. "Plus, there was no heating in the winter or air conditioning in the summer, which made it a horrific testing environment."

Watts said she is not against eight-week classes, but thinks they are not suited for all students, including her.

"A college student should not have all mandatory eight-week classes," she said. "It's just ridiculous students and faculty have had to put up with this."

Gwen Pate, director of Undergraduate Programs for the College of Business, said she knows faculty and students have had a difficult semester but they will not have to deal with it this fall.

"It's been hard on everybody, and we're not doing this again," she said. "At the time, we felt it would be the best thing to do, but in retrospect, we see it's been very hard on the students and faculty."

Pate, a member of the management team who decided to have eight-week classes, said the decision was made because of necessary renovations to the heating and air conditioning system in Joseph Greene Hall.

According to a press release from the department of marketing and public relations, renovation began with the first floor as phase one. It also stated the over \$1 million project will end in two phases for the second and third floors in fall 2006.

"Based on the information we had then, it seemed like the best thing to do to offer the classes we needed to offer," she said. "But we were only dealing with the Physical Plant at that point. Things changed when the contractor got involved."

Pate said though the construction will continue throughout the fall, the management team will find a way to provide all classes, even if they have to be spread across campus.

As the article points out, junior Meagan Watts, a marketing minor, had tremendous difficulties dealing with the HVAC problems (as a student) during the Spring 2006 semester. Things were so bad in JGH that Watts is considering changing her minor from marketing to, presumably, a non-business discipline.

Speaking of the rapid pace of classes and the substandard learning environment in JGH, and likely speaking for hundreds of other CoB students, Watts states that she did not gain the knowledge she hoped she would, and that she feels as though Spring semester of 2006 was a waste of time. If so, it was also a waste of money.

Watts' expression that "It's just ridiculous that students and faculty have had to put up with [the HVAC situation]" sums it up pretty well.

How did Doty respond to the stinging comments made by Ms. Watts to *The Student Printz*? No one knows. We're still waiting. He did, however, send Gwen Pate out to front for the CoB. Pate had to admit that the poor HVAC planning by the CoB's administrative team had been "hard on everybody." She was also associated with the decision-makers (Doty, Niroomand, Carter, Babin, and Posey), as Brown writes that Pate was "a member of the management team who decided to have eight week classes." That Doty sent Pate out to the media to absorb the heat for a bunch of males (i.e., Doty, Niroomand, Babin, Carter and Posey) who earn a collective salary (at the time) of about \$630,000 is nothing less than despicable.

Doty's current statements, that the HVAC work is "right on schedule" is insulting to everyone --- students like Ms. Watts, and CoB faculty/staff --- who has had to make allowances for Doty's ineptitude in managing this situation. We may never know how much of students' time and money were wasted during the 2005-2006 academic year, and perhaps beyond, due to Doty's ineptitude. As per Ms. Watts' sentiments above, future CoB graduates may find themselves paying a second, future cost due to Doty's mishandling of the JGH HVAC project.