

Jackson Hole

How Ill-Advised Administration Staffing is Stifling the CoB

The recent decision of USM president Martha Saunders to have political scientist Tom Lansford serve as the new dean of academics down at USM-GC is yet another indication of how USM has lost its way. Having an *academic* (not *administrative*) dean for the Gulf Coast reeks of separatism and special consideration for Gulf Coast students and faculty. With this latest decision we now know that all of the words about there being one USM, and not USM-H and USM-GC, were just that -- words. Now we are left to believe that there must be separate admissions/retention, curricula and tenure/promotion standards for GC students and faculty. If otherwise, wouldn't simply having USM provost Robert Lyman around suffice?

The CoB knows full well what differences there are between CoB-H and CoB-GC standards. One only has to ask former CBA dean Tyrone Black, or any CBA-H faculty from the Black era, what life was like when the Hattiesburg branch of the CBA integrated the GC business school operation for accreditation purposes. In more recent times CoB-H faculty have seen how CoB-GC faculty like Kenneth Zantow get the benefit of a "4th Year [T&P] Review" when the traditional 3rd Year Review process results in bad news. CoB-H faculty also learned in recent years how CoB-GCers like (former management assistant professor) Francis Daniel can be treated as a "special cases," such as when Daniel was allowed to hang around the CoB-GC for about a decade without having to ever submit a T&P dossier.

The latest debacle caused by the divergent standards between Hattiesburg and Long Beach are the problems associated with the 2008-09 tenure and promotion process. For the unfamiliar, the CoB's 2008-09 T&P process has been clouded by incomplete dossiers, failure to hold faculty votes on the candidates (i.e., missed deadlines) and the like. And, much of this disaster emanates from the CoB's accounting area, which is headed by *untenued* associate professor Steven Jackson of CoB-GC. Jackson's tenure began in January of 2007 with him (Jackson) complaining openly about being expected to wear a shirt and tie. In the fall of 2007 the accountants failed to hold a proper faculty governance vote, largely because Jackson failed to show up to the annual departmental faculty meeting. Now the former CoB dean Harold Doty-appointed Jackson has failed to meet the requirements called for in USM's Faculty Handbook (and other sources) regarding the annual tenure and promotion process. The result has been missed deadlines, out-of-order activity, and, no doubt, anxious (junior) faculty.

The appointment of Jackson to head the CoB's accounting department was a big mistake, and the chickens have been coming home to roost ever since. Jackson's failures now only highlight the myriad differences between the CoB-H and the CoB-GC. It's really too bad that one of these (CoB-H), and one which has been struggling with its own demons (i.e., Doty, etc.) in the recent past, had to also be infected by all of the ailments that plague the other (CoB-GC). As for Jackson, he represents little more than an administration black hole. Isn't it time for the CoB to close up some more loops?