





**It's Not "Mission Difficult" nor "Mission Impossible" --- It's "Mission Irrelevant"**  
**A Preview of the CoB's "Sixth Year Review" Sentence from AACSB**

Finally, after about 1.5 months since the AACSB Peer Review Team's departure from the CoB, Dean D. Harold Doty releases word about the PRT's findings with regard to the CoB's AACSB Accreditation status. On the morning of 16 March 2007, Doty sent the following e-mail to CoB faculty, USM Public Relations Director Margie Jepson, USM Provost Jay Grimes, and USM VP for Accreditation, Planning & Articulation Joan Exline:

<b>Date:</b> Fri, 16 Mar 2007
<b>From:</b> Harold Doty <Harold.Doty@usm.edu>
<b>To:</b> cob-facstaff@usm.edu
<b>Cc:</b> 'Margie Jepson' <margie.jepson@usm.edu>, "Dr. Jay Grimes" <Jay.Grimes@usm.edu>, "Dr. Joan Exline" <Joan.Exline@usm.edu>
<b>Subject:</b> [Cob-facstaff] AACSB reports
<b>Part(s):</b>
 2 usm.doc application/msword 147.11 KB 
 3 Final team accounting report USM.doc application/msword 105.37 KB 

All:

I have attached copies of the AACSB visitation reports we received from our Peer Review Team. The department chairs received the reports earlier in the week and I wanted to be sure everyone had a chance to review the reports before returning to campus next week. Please remember that according to the AACSB these reports are internal documents not intended for external or "public" circulation. The results aren't final or official until after the April AACSB Annual Meeting.

As you will see, the team was very impressed with our progress and with the things we are doing. I would like to thank each of you for the efforts you have made to contribute to our progress. I spoke with Ted late Wednesday to make sure I understood all the recommendations. He again said that we don't need to do anything different, but we need to keep doing what we have been doing since the new standards took effect 3 and ½ years ago. We have great momentum and the team will visit again next year to be sure we continue the momentum.

Based on our conversations with the team members, the Management Committee has already outlined a plan to address the team recommendations. We will meet early next week and adapt our plan (if needed) based on the written report. The AACSB Leadership Team will meet later in the week and review the plan to make sure it addresses all the issues and is easily implemented. We will probably have a faculty meeting the week after next to make sure everyone understands the things we need to work on over the next year to complete the maintenance of accreditation process.

Hope everyone enjoys the last weekend of spring break!

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There are a few items in the e-mail that are worth a comment or two. First, in paragraph #1 Doty warns CoB faculty that “according to the AACSB” the attached reports are “internal documents” that are not intended for “external or ‘public’ circulation.” Having said this, without offering proof of any kind within the e-mail itself that the AACSB considers the reports “internal documents,” Doty chose to include USM’s Public Relations Director Margie Jepson on the addressee lines. In fact, Doty thought of Jepson before Grimes or Exline, even though the latter is responsible for all accreditation-related issues for the University. Readers of usmnews.net can rest assured that copies of the two AACSB report contained in Doty’s e-mail *will be* uploaded to the website in the coming days (i.e., before the April AACSB meeting). USM is a public institution; these are not “internal documents.”

Second, Doty’s e-mail bears little relation to the wording in the reports themselves. His second paragraph begins by telling CoB faculty and USM administrators that the PRT was “very impressed” with the CoB. However, both of the reports – the overall report for the CoB and the report for Accounting’s separate accreditation – indicate, right at the beginning, that the AACSB will be returning to the CoB for a 6<sup>th</sup> Year Review of each program. In both cases, a number of shortcomings are listed, many of which suggest that, with regard to academic matters, the CoB is currently doing no better than the University, and perhaps even worse. For example, the PRT noted that the CoB appeared to have met all of its 5-year intellectual contributions requirements in the final year or two of the 5-year cycle, *even though* the CoB had 10 years to complete the 5-year cycle! Not only that, the report indicates that the PRT also felt that the intellectual contributions that the CoB did produce in those final two years were generally published in low-quality outlets. The vanishing quality of the CoB’s so-called intellectual pursuits over the past few years has been reported extensively by usmnews.net in recent months. This finding is not a surprise to us, nor should it be to anyone who has followed reports on this website.

Based on our reading of the two reports themselves, there is little chance that Doty is accurately representing Ted Cummings’ (the PRT leader) comment that the CoB doesn’t need to do anything different (i.e., the CoB should simply keep doing what it is already doing).<sup>1</sup> Thus, Doty’s comments about “momentum” seem to represent little more than semantics games – the

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<sup>1</sup> Cummings reportedly became ill just before the PRT’s visit to USM President Shelby Thames’ office on the final day of the PRT’s trip to Hattiesburg. Sources indicate that Cummings appears to be, by far, the “weakest” member of the PRT, and presumably didn’t have the courage to face Thames and other administrators with the 6<sup>th</sup> Year Review sentence news. Thus, there is some chance that Doty isn’t mischaracterizing Cummings’ remarks; in that case, Cummings’ remarks aren’t likely to correspond with the thoughts of the other PRT members.

kinds of games that usmnews.net readers have come to expect from the Doty administration when it comes to explaining bad news of any sort.

Before concluding this report, we do want to give usmnews.net readers a hint of what's to come when the reports are released. One of the items that the PRT wrote about is the CoB's Mission – "Developing Careers." To provide some context, the CoB's current Mission is the now *infamous* two-word mission that Doty so proudly handed down to the CoB shortly after his arrival in Hattiesburg in the summer of 2003.<sup>2</sup> A majority vote of approval sums up the CoB faculty's participation in the process of developing the current Mission. As it turns out, the PRT said time and again in the reports that the mission does little, if anything, to explain what the CoB actually does. About the only thing the PRT did cite that relates directly to the CoB's Mission (i.e., Doty's Mission) is the launch of an in-CoB (in-house) job placement center for CoB students. Thus, to the PRT the CoB's current Mission, "Developing Careers," is largely irrelevant for the purpose of describing all that the CoB does, or is supposed to be doing.

As a result of the PRT's reports, what will begin to occur over the next weeks and months is a complete re-writing of the CoB's Mission. Once complete, the CoB's *new* Mission will be a much longer statement, or statements, that will probably resemble something more like the Mission developed by the College for its last accreditation effort (led by former CBA Dean Tyrone Black) in the mid-to-late 1990s. Watching that process take shape will be interesting and probably a bit humorous, and usmnews.net will be there to bring that story to you as it develops. Until then, we are left with the new, cheap Mission brought to USM from New York by Doty, instead of the old, sturdy (and comprehensive) Mission developed under Black in the 1990s. This story shows the truth in the old adage: "they don't build things the way they once did."

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<sup>2</sup> We say "*infamous*" not only because the PRT criticized the adequacy of the Mission, but also because usmnews.net reported several weeks ago that Doty may have copied the idea for the "Developing Careers" Mission *without proper citation*. For more, see [http://www.usmnews.net/Special\\_Report\\_26.pdf](http://www.usmnews.net/Special_Report_26.pdf). To see how "CoB copying" seems to be a pattern, read <http://www.usmnews.net/Special%20Report%2025.pdf>.