

*The Following is a **Mock Interview** with EFIB Chair George Carter — All of the Answers to Our Fictitious Questions Come from the “What George Carter Thinks” Catalogue of Quotes*

The Southern Miss CoB: Past, Present and Future

A *Mock* Interview with EFIB Chair George Carter

USMNEWS: Just to get us started, I noticed that as we usher in the Martha Saunders administration, many USM faculty, especially those who frequent the *USM Forum* — “*to build trust, build a team and build a campus*” — *Message Board*, seem to see a return of true faculty governance to USM. Are CoB faculty supporting a rebirth of faculty governance?

Carter: There are not many . . . that . . . [do].

USMNEWS: Interesting . . . One of the problems the AACSB Peer Review Team found during their 2007 visit was a lack of scholarship in the CoB. In your view, what’s the reason for that?

Carter: Other than our department [the EFIB], you just don’t have a lot of professionalism from a scholarly standpoint like we do . . . you wouldn’t consider . . . members of the Management and Marketing Department as . . . the caliber that we have [in the EFIB] . . . as far as members of the scholarly profession . . . You wouldn’t say accounting has anybody to speak of.

USMNEWS: Wow, that’s a blistering indictment of practically the whole CoB. You don’t have a problem putting it out there like that?

Carter: This institution is rapidly spiraling down. If that's the way it *is*, that's the way it *is*. I live with whatever *is*. I don't try to make any judgment on that.

USMNEWS: You mention the EFIB as a “scholarly” unit? Who are you talking about?

Carter: You look at the people we have [in EFIB] who are scholars . . . like Ed Nissan . . .

USMNEWS: Our sources warned that you seem to always want to call out Nissan and leave it at that. The last time we checked, Nissan is still only one person, not “people.” Why doesn’t your list of scholars usually go beyond Nissan? Why not include John Clark in finance, for example?

Carter: [E]verybody's saying . . . John [Clark] will be leaving next year . . . And, you’re on ‘the team’ or you’re not on ‘the team.’

USMNEWS: So, it seems from your earlier response, then, that favoritism toward Nissan will continue, even in light of the 1979 report that debunked the so-called Nissan mythology. Why is that?

Carter: It's just something about him . . . it's who he is. It may not be right and it may be unacceptable . . . , but that's . . . what I'm going to do.

USMNEWS: And if your superiors try to intervene?

Carter: . . . they . . . get 'stuffed'. . .

USMNEWS: You seem to be a calculating person. Some call you the "Smiling Assassin." Your thoughts?

Carter: One of the things a person has to be in this profession [academia], if they're successful, is to be a very unpleasant person as a critic . . . I know of no [other] person . . . who's willing to say . . . that Doty is a jerk.

USMNEWS: Now you bring former CoB Dean Harold Doty into the discussion. Did you have anything to do with his resignation of 9-Apr-07?

Carter: I don't think this is a new concern . . . Academic administration basically attracts people who aren't that good that's my opinion . . .

USMNEWS: Your answer is non-committal, to say the least. Would you care to elaborate on your thought process as you participate in answering my questions?

Carter: As I do that, I recognize that I am part of the CoB administration and system.

USMNEWS: Let's switch gears for a bit. The new USMNEWS.NET series *1979* is drawing a lot of attention from readers. What would you say is the common link between 1979 CBA administrators and those atop the 2007-08 CoB?

Carter: They're just good ol' boys. That's what good ol' boys do. They . . . get into the administrative game . . . I can work with [them] real well . . . so as an administrator, things can get done. People who are scholars don't want any part of administration . . .

USMNEWS: Is this, at least in part, another shot at Doty?

Carter: Doty is a jerk . . . he's not somebody I want to be around. . . I can't take him.

USMNEWS: Why do you hold back from jabbing at other CoB administrators? What about former CoB Associate Dean Farhang Niroomand?

Carter: [Former CoB Associate Dean] Farhang [Niroomand] is a person I can work with real well.

USMNEWS: Can you say something bad about Niroomand for us? Practically everyone in the CoB has a story that illustrates something bad about Niroomand. Give us something.

Carter: I just can't.

USMNEWS: Some have criticized the CoB's recent move to support the hiring of faculty who have attained *online* doctorate degrees. Do you see any drawbacks to this course of action?

Carter: . . . the problem with an online course is that . . . [the students] don't have access to an instructor in any real way. . . Other than our department [the EFIB], you just don't have a lot of [it].

USMNEWS: Next – How would you describe your (and the CoB's) approach to determining merit raises?

Carter: One of biggest responsibilities that administration has is fairness in salaries and in all things, of course.

USMNEWS: Well, can you explain why you set aside one of the lowest 2007 staff raises in the CoB for your assistant, Ms. Lola Ingram?

Carter: There's a lot of inefficiency in staff around . . .

USMNEWS: You seem to want to say more. Any other reasons?

Carter: How good service you do isn't even going to be recognized, in this or any other place. . . [and] . . . [if] you don't produce in research, you don't make it around here [in EFIB] . . .

USMNEWS: Speaking of the 2007 merit raises, why did economists Sami Dakhli and Akbar Marvasti do so much better than marketing's Talai Osmonbekov – someone who had a demonstrably superior record to the two of them?

Carter: It may not be right and it may be unacceptable . . ., but that's 'what is' and that's what I'm going to do – this [the CoB's] evaluation system being one [example] . . . [Besides] . . . merit raises confuse the issue. The evaluation system as defined by the new Faculty Handbook provides measures of productivity. When we tie merit raises to an overall average of the evaluations, a dimension is added that is not considered in the evaluation process.

USMNEWS: Some are figuring this out, and word is spreading that the 'added dimension' is one about compliance and political support, which is something both Dakhli and Marvasti appear willing to provide. So, let's keep this in the EFIB and turn it around: Why did more productive EFIB faculty do worse in the 2007 merit raise process than Dakhli and Marvasti?

Carter: A group [in EFIB], in general, has a reputation of being uncooperative . . . [they] don't temper criticism with collegiality. And [they've] basically become pariahs.

USMNEWS: But, Professor Carter, you said yourself just a moment ago that to be successful in academia one had to be a very unpleasant person as a critic. You followed this statement by calling Doty a jerk. How was that particular 'criticism' of Doty tempered with collegiality?

Carter: . . . [Y]ou can really put a person into an awkward situation.

USMNEWS: I don't mean to, it's just hard *not* to pick up on all of the inconsistencies in your thought processes. So, how would you sum up your extraordinary support of Dakhlia and Marvasti vis-à-vis Osmonbekov and the other, more productive EFIB faculty?

Carter: People are going to go to bat for you regardless of whether you come up to snuff or not . .

USMNEWS: Now, how does this square with '[if] you don't produce in research, you don't make it around here [in EFIB]?'

Carter: I will not get into [it] since how raises are determined will be above my pay grade.

USMNEWS: Will the CoB ever be a meritocracy?

Carter: I don't think there's a hope in hell . . . [our] system doesn't leave much differentiation, and you see stuff that's not appropriate. . . And, there's a certain injustice to . . . [our system], but that's the way it is . . .

USMNEWS: You seem to be a shady, sketchy administrator. Any comment?

Carter: It's always somebody doing something.

USMNEWS: Let's close on a lighter note. What do you enjoy most about being a CoB administrator?

Carter: [D]oing what somebody wants you to do, even though you don't think it's the right thing to do . . . one of the great things . . . is that you do have a club over somebody's head . . . you can really put a person into an awkward situation professionally for a number of years, if not the rest of their career, by 'canning' them. I mean they become a pariah on the profession.

USMNEWS: Amazing. What would you say, in the third person, to help those who may be having difficulties dealing with you, George Carter, as an administrator?

Carter: He's just someone to be endured until the next one comes along, who's probably not going to be a whole lot better.

USMNEWS: Thank you.

Carter: I'm a 'what is' kind of guy.