

Doty's "Professors in Practice" Servitude

"Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as punishment for a crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction."
[United States Constitution, 13th Amendment, Section 1]

It is well-known throughout the CoB that USM Provost Jay Grimes has urged CoB Dean Harold Doty to select candidates for CoB faculty positions based largely on prior business experience. Opinions on such a policy are likely to be as varied as they are regarding tastes for foods. Doty has resisted past attempts by Grimes to enforce this hiring strategy from the Dome. One of the things many CoB faculty have come to understand is that Doty does very little in the way of decision-making that has no impact on his own "nest," nor those of his cronies in the College. It seems to us as the case of Doty's resistance to Grimes suggestion that the CoB seek prior business experience in its job candidates is no exception to Doty's rule.

Let's examine Doty's "Professors in Practice" program (hereafter PIP). Doty instituted the PIP, under the guise of providing CoB professors an opportunity to gain business experience, as a tool for building support within the business community for his development efforts. Under the PIP, Doty "assigns" various faculty to a week-long (or more) stint within a local business or agency (local includes a 100+ mile radius from Hattiesburg). The faculty that are assigned such duty are "awarded" a relatively small stipend, before overhead costs to the College are subtracted, for their "service."

Here are some of the many problems with Doty's PIP. First, CoB faculty are State employees, not Harold Doty's personal property (i.e., not Doty's slaves). Doty has no authority to accept private donations and use those to support "assignment" of State employees within the private sector. To do so gives private sector firms and organizations the opportunity to "buy" high-skilled labor at basement prices, where the CoB faculty are working under an implicit threat from Doty to do as told and ask no questions. Second, Doty told the faculty and administration at the University of South Florida that his PIP is currently oversubscribed, meaning that it is generating more interest than he is satisfying with his "indentured servitude." That means that he, Associate Dean Niroomand, and their cronies are getting access to private donations, "fun money" that can be used for international travel and other goodies, from the backs of rank-and-file faculty who are being "bought" from Doty by private sector organizations. Third, those faculty who are assigned to the PIP program lose valuable time they owe Mississippi taxpayers and USM students, time they need to spend pursuing knowledge creation through scholarly pursuits. This lost time, and lost output, will be "punished" by Doty, Niroomand, and the CoB Chairs when it comes time to assess annual performance and tenure/promotion qualifications.

Doty's PIP is certainly worthy of consideration by the Mississippi Attorney General and others who are sworn to uphold the Constitution/laws of the State of Mississippi and The United States of America. Doty's PIP is nothing other than an "indentured servitude" program, under the guise of providing experience, that ingratiate Doty and his cronies with local business leaders. University faculty work for the taxpayers of Mississippi, not for Harold Doty. If the PIP program is allowed to stand, then it should be okay for faculty to use graduate assistants to wash cars, mow lawns, and do other household chores. Neither of these types of assignments is allowable, nor should they be.