

Part 1 Gordon Cannon, Ombudsman, University of Southern Mississippi

The Gordon Cannon Doctrine of Plagiarism

Dr. Gordon Cannon, chemistry professor at University of Southern Mississippi, has never done research on the subject of plagiarism nor even studied it but he has surmised a foolproof method of determining whether a document is plagiarized.

Dr. Gordon Cannon, in his capacity as USM ombudsman reported his findings to President Saunders with regard to an allegation of plagiarism. His method? He asked a few friends: Would you consider copying bureaucratic boilerplate plagiarism?

Dr. Cannon did *not* provide the original or copied documents or any context to his friends. He merely asked, Would you consider copying bureaucratic boilerplate plagiarism? His friends' answer was axiomatic: No.

Dr. Cannon reported the results of his findings: There is no plagiarism.

And indeed there is no plagiarism. None at all. And in terms the University of Southern Mississippi would use: [there's no plagiarism] anytime, anyplace, anywhere. Indeed, Dr. Cannon's methodology proves that no document can be plagiarized. Simply ask a few friends without showing them the documents in question or providing any context:

“Would you consider copying bureaucratic boilerplate plagiarism?”

With mathematical certainty, their answer will be: “Of course not.”

QED

There you have it. Dr. Cannon has solved a problem that has plagued teachers and writers for eons. Students will be especially keen to use The Gordon Cannon Doctrine of Plagiarism.

It seems relevant to ask: Where did you learn the scientific method, Gordon?

If you wonder how we learned Dr. Cannon's approach to assessing whether a document, words, or ideas are plagiarized, we deposed him under oath. Email me for your copy of his deposition. (A complete copy will be made available on usmnews.net in the near future.)

Oh, before I forget -- one last note. Dr. Cannon's report to President Saunders sounded reasonable until he was asked a few questions. For example, how did Dr. Cannon determine whether the documents were plagiarized? The context and documents Dr. Cannon did not disclose to his friends included two documents submitted to the AACSB from USM's College of Business during its last reaccreditation. One was entitled “Guidelines for Participating and Supporting Faculty.” Charles Jordan asked Central Missouri State University for permission to

copy it “without proper citation” after it had been copied and the College of Business had been caught copying it “without proper citation” (“Without proper citation” is Professor Jordan’s phrase. Professor Jordan’s choice of terms implies that the copying was improper—not in accordance with rules—an admission of plagiarism). The other was The Academic Integrity Policy copied from Syracuse University. The one portion of the Academic Integrity Policy not copied from Syracuse University’s Academic Integrity Policy was Syracuse’s extensive citation list of sources for its “Academic Integrity Policy.” That’s right. USM’s College of Business copied Syracuse University’s Academic Integrity Policy but not the list of citations at the end of it. Then-Dean Harold Doty reported to the AACSB, after getting caught, that copying Syracuse University’s Academic Integrity Policy was simply “benchmarking.” (Benchmarking is defined as comparing something to a standard, not copying documents verbatim.) Without any reasons or support for the decision, the AACSB found that copying “without proper citation” did not violate its standards. Also note that the copied Academic Integrity Policy is still found on the CoB website without any citation. You can read the details at [Without Proper Citation](#).

President Saunders was informed years ago of the details. More about her views on the subject in future reports.

Marc DePree, Editor