

Above Your Pay Grade?

Military men (and women) often use expressions that reflect their experience in the military. One such expression is “That’s above your [my, our] pay grade.” This saying is used to indicate that the recipient of the statement has no business involving himself or herself in whatever “that” is. This particular expression has been (over)used by EFIB Chair George Carter through the years as part of his crusade to create a culture of detached submission among rank and file faculty, but the concept is supported by almost all administrators in the CoB.

Take, for instance, CoB Dean Harold Doty. Doty used to claim to want faculty input into his programs and planning processes, but he regularly became defensive when suggestions for improving his ill-considered proposals were offered and soon began relying on his cronies (Bushardt, LaFleur, Barry Babin, and others) and blocking input from those who offered a conflicting point of view. You rank and file CoB faculty need not concern yourselves with lofty concepts as the Secret Degree Program, the Dress Code, the Digital MBA, or an online undergraduate program – they’re above your pay grade.

Next, consider Farhang Niroomand. Niroomand’s worst nightmare came true when www.usmpride.com began publishing tables of salaries, research productivity, class sizes, teaching schedules, teaching evaluations, service assignments, and other measurements of professional contributions, because having this type of information public limits Niroomand’s ability to “operate” – to play different parties against each other and to trade favors with those who are on the short end of the stick, informationally. Don’t mention inequities in teaching or service to Niroomand, or you’ll end up with a five day a week teaching schedule. It’s none of your business what perks Niroomand gives those who do his bidding – anyway, that’s above your pay grade.

As previously mentioned, Carter is a horrible offender in this area. From what appears to have been a rigged departmental governance elections (with a possible misrepresentation of the University Counsel), to punitive teaching schedules, and concocted courses are not the business of faculty. Sure, Carter’s screwing you, but it’s above your pay grade, so you should just take it and move on. Back in Spring 2006, Carter told Professor of Economics Frank Mixon that his (Mixon’s) questions about Assistant Professor of Management Francis Daniel’s tenure status delved into “confidential” information – an expression used almost interchangeably with the “pay grade” saying. What has been exposed since then is that Carter was telling Mixon an **outright lie**: according to the USM Faculty Handbook, when a faculty member is tenured, the change in his or her tenure status is noted in the IHL Board minutes, and the IHL Board minutes are available online to the public. It’s a little hard for any reasonable person to comprehend how a piece of information could be at once *confidential* and *a matter of public record*. Maybe the meaning of that active oxymoron is also above your pay grade.

George Carter’s use of USM facilities for personal gain is above your pay grade. The location of Rod Posey’s 100 articles is above your pay grade. How Beth LaFleur came to

USM (shoddy research record in hand) and received tenure one year later is above your pay grade. Charles Sawyer's summer teaching schedule is above your pay grade. David Duhon's Letter of Agreement for promotion, Alvin Williams' Kaetsu Chair, Donna Davis' course release for SEDONA, Stephen Bushardt's continued employment at USM, Edward Nissan's absences from courses, Jon Carr's dynamic grant work, and the Babins' world tour are all above your pay grade. And now, we find out that the CoB Accreditation Committee may have plagiarized an entire AACSB document; but don't concern yourself with it – it's above your pay grade.

The truth of the matter is that, in academics, **NOTHING IS ABOVE YOUR PAY GRADE**. Glamser & Stringer were correct to pursue Dvorak's fraudulent claims. CoB faculty are correct to expose corruption and to file grievances and, when the time comes, other actions. CoB administrators have done a lot of damage over the years. They need the complicity your silence lends them.

Next time you see a CoB administrator, simply smile at him. If he asks you how you're doing, just reply "That's above your pay grade."