

Perks for Buds XIII
(Not) Working 8 to 5, What a Way to Make a Living

Once upon a time, CoB administrators were typically in the building from 8:00 to 5:00, Monday through Friday, except for the obvious things like lunch. Many did not do much, but they were here to sign forms for faculty, staff, and students, and make a decision if it could not be avoided. Donnie Daniel, a former Finance chair, was infamous for walking to the convenience store to get a newspaper most afternoons, especially in the summer. He would sit in his office and read the paper, drink coffee, and wish he was hunting or fishing somewhere else; but he was here.

Under the Bill Gunther deanship, the idea of “being at work” started to fade, in large part because Gunther was frequently out of the building trying to raise money for a new building. Having hired mainly lousy administrators, they followed Gunther’s lead, but without being out of the building for a CoB purpose. This continued and gained momentum under Harold Doty. He hired worse people who performed more poorly than had ever been seen in the CoB previously. Under the interim deanship of Alvin Williams, everyone was part-time. It appears it was a requirement to *not* be in the CoB from 8:00 to 5:00. The lone exception to this rule was Joe Peyrefitte, who apparently did not get the memo. Steve Jackson is on the Coast; he came to Hattiesburg two days a week, normally – which were class days here – so he was in Hattiesburg, as Director, perhaps 2 hours a day, twice a week. Dr. Jackson is probably ahead of the curve – USM’s first online administrator. George Carter was – well – George Carter. Between more frequent coffee runs and “going home to work” more and more afternoons (if not complete days), he was not here as often, which was one of his rare claims to fame. Even Tony Henthorne, who was chair to half the CoB, and the best chair in the building last year, was frequently “in transit” and not in the CoB.

Does “being there” matter? It does. Do some people actually work at home? Absolutely. But those people have evidence of that work, and not just a deeper tan, a lower handicap, or a hangover. Let’s put it this way: if a faculty member told his or her chair that s/he was working at home when not in class or having office hours, and had little-to-nothing to show for it at annual evaluation time, what would your conclusion be about all of their working at home? Exactly. And that is the same conclusion for the CoB administrators who are not here. Most do little-to-no research, teach fewer

classes, so the service component of “being there” matters greatly. It is also an integrity issue: everyone is welcome to time off, but account for it as leave time. That is why you have it. Go visit friends, play golf, spend time with your family, but stop stealing from us while you do it.

No one cares when an administrator leaves a little early on a rough day, or takes a leisurely lunch. We do not expect you to punch a clock; many of the previous administrators, and some current ones, could make that activity a good idea. To some current administrators, 8:00 **and** 5:00 *never* occur inside the CoB. To others it is a rare occurrence. Given the level of compensation, that does not seem too much to ask. Many people hope under the new dean, Lance Nail, this practice will stop. Are you leaders? Are you the “managers” of the CoB? Act like it. Stop acting like 9:00-ish to 4:00-ish “work” days are one of your perks for buds.