

# Point/Counterpoint

## Should CoB Faculty be Evaluated on Their Attitudes?

### *Carter's Point*

Not only does EFIB Chairman George Carter believe that CoB faculty should be evaluated on the basis of their attitudes, he puts this belief into practice. Recently, a copy of one of Carter's evaluations of EFIB faculty (2007) was posted to this website. USMNEWS.NET readers got to see firsthand how Carter used a number of quantitative metrics to conclude that a professor of economics was clearly a very good teacher. In fact, Carter's own metrics indicated that the professor merited a rating of 4.22 (out of 5) in the teaching category.

However, Carter's evaluation did not conclude there. Carter went on to write that the professor's negativity adversely impacted Carter's ability to manage the EFIB teaching/learning environment. He also stated that the faculty's negative attitude affected the ability of others to perform in that environment. Carter's evaluation even went so far as to penalize the faculty member in question for denigrating his (the faculty member's) own degree, a move that indicates that Carter believes that self-deprecation (regarding one's private intellectual property) is punishable – a view most would likely say is extreme.

What was Carter's basis for asserting that this faculty member harbored a negative attitude? The professor filed a grievance against Carter for assigning to him (the professor) a 5-day/week, 3-course, 3-preps, 2 new preps, 2 nights, 2 locations (Hattiesburg and Long Beach) teaching load for the spring of 2007. How do you define negativity on the basis of that?

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### *Bushardt's Counterpoint*

In a 1981 *Management World* article with M.E. Schnake entitled "Employee Evaluation: Measure Performance, not Attitude," management professor Stephen Bushardt states that "[m]anagers who place a great deal of emphasis on attitudes in evaluating employees are emphasizing the wrong factor," and that doing so is "dysfunctional to the employee, the superior, and the organization . . ." The authors go on to point out that using attitudes as a proxy for performance is misguided for a number reasons, two of which are: (1) It is based on false assumptions; (2) We can't measure attitudes.

As they point out, in many cases managers erroneously assume that attitude affects performance. This was clearly a bad starting point in the case described here, wherein Carter's metrics resulted in a teaching rating of 4.22. Not feeling the professor's attitude, Carter "subjectively" lowered that rating to a 3.25, easily costing the professor and his family tens of thousands of dollars in lost (future) income. Next, Bushardt and Schnake indicate that most managers are not in a position to measure "such a nebulous concept as attitude." Carter failed to provide "attitude metrics," while the evidence showed that Carter was the most likely cause of any negative attitude harbored by the professor in question. Finally, one would think that if Bushardt had a copy of the current CoB Faculty Handbook back in 1981, he would've added an additional item to the "it's a bad proxy" list: *The rules don't allow it.*

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