

## Po-ta-to, Po-tot-to

“Deferred success” or an “F”? A “sixth year visit” or “probation”? Does the label matter? It is not a good day, a happy day, or a successful day for the College of Business (CoB) at Southern Miss. Just how bad or less bad it is depends on the letter from AACSB. It was not a good first step after the visit to refuse to send an email to the CoB faculty and staff about what was said before the team departed. Nothing good can come from that, but some harm and ill will can be avoided by including people in the news.

What is now needed is inclusion of all faculty and staff, not continued exclusion except for toadies and cronies. They got you here, right?

In the various sessions with the visitation team, the team asked some interesting questions. The questions were apparently asked because the items were not addressed in the report(s). Maybe – just maybe – if more people were asked for ideas and to read the report, some of these ideas might have been included in the report. It was clear from team responses and follow-up questions that they were surprised – frequently positively – at the responses given; that seems to indicate that the report was at least unclear on the topic. Not only are more people better in this kind of process, they are certainly better on the committees as well. When the visitation team sees the same people comprising 40%– 50% or more of many committees, what do you think that says to them? That these selected senior faculty members are wonderful? They are the most knowledgeable? Or that these are the only people Doty trusts to parrot canned answers and hope no one asks too many unexpected questions or follow-up questions. Personally, if I was on a visitation team and this occurred, I would immediately assume there was minimal faculty involvement in any way, and the dean had run the show. Of course I would be offended by the sophomoric lapel buttons, too.

The team also asked questions about the same issues in different sessions with different groups. I think it is clear the CoB did not approach the report or visit in this manner. For example, the level of research was addressed in several ways: what is going on in research, what happened to the former level of research, what level of research is needed for tenure and promotion, and why isn't the research committee helping those that need help in research? How can you take the across-the-spectrum answers as a positive sign? The best answer would be the faculty is not clear on what to do. Little does the team know that many of these insightful questions will never be linked together in the CoB under the current regime. For the research committee to help faculty in their research agendas they would have to know what the agenda is, and what progress is being made; they should also know how that is perceived by the appropriate administrator. In the CoB, all that information is *confidential*. The chairmen could handle that, maybe should handle that, but clearly they do not. How can this be accomplished if all the CoB departments did not even have to turn in annual planning documents this year, nor meet with the chairman about the year's goals? And how will this be better in the decentralized new system?

Get some rest. Try to relax. Lick your wounds, if that helps. If you charge back in to the fray when the letter from AACSB arrives in the same manner you did to get “probation”, why do you think the results will be any different? Will it be different because someone made a list of the

items to do this time? Wasn't there a list before? Do you want this to be the last "sixth year visit"? Be inclusive, not exclusive. Fix the obvious problems first, and then worry about what the letter says to do. You want to succeed, right Harold? Whether it is to leave here or not to get fired here, you need to succeed. Now is the time to act like it.