

Quotable Doty

1st Edition: Doty on Economic Education

“In the past several years, the scholarship of teaching economics has become more of a focus in the discipline, and our college economists have stayed current with this trend. The level of expertise we have in the College of Business is a contributing factor in our recent launch of the Center for Economic Education,” said Dr. Harold Doty, dean.”¹

The quote above is taken from a USM Public Relations Release regarding USM’s Economics Education research record, which ranked USM (a 2006 U.S. News and World Report Tier IV University) 86th in the nation, tied with Boston University (a 2006 U.S. News and World Report Tier I University) and Florida State University (a 2006 U.S. News and World Report Tier II University). Apparently, the portion of the Economics group that has engaged in Economic Education research is truly a pocket of top-shelf producers surrounded by a Tier IV university.

The PR Release focuses on three USM faculty members, Melody Lo, Sunny Wong, and Frank Mixon. Of these three individuals only one (Mixon, Professor of Economics) remains at USM. Former Assistant Professors Lo (recipient of the infamous “shame on you” comment) and Wong departed USM following the 2005-2006 academic year for (respectively) the University of Texas at San Antonio and the University of San Francisco, earning substantial pay increases. How hard had Doty tried to retain these budding young scholars? In the 2004 Merit Raise process (Doty’s first and only opportunity to reward these faculty), Lo and Wong ranked 22nd and 24th respectively, according to the 2004 Merit Raise ranking at usmpride. It would seem that if members of a department are strong enough to warrant the initiation of a Center then these individuals should be retained at any reasonable cost, but Lo and Wong are long gone.

The Odds & Ends Department at usmpride.com’s Research Division found this quote intriguing. Doty states that “our college economists have stayed current with this trend” when in fact the USM Economics Group has produced at a much higher level (i.e., Tier I/II) than USM’s position in the academic world (i.e., Tier IV) would suggest. Rather than high praise, the first part of Doty’s quote sounds like forced confession that maligns rather than magnifies. Doty should be ashamed to have slighted the Economics group in this manner, but Doty apparently has no shame. It is, however, the second part of the quote that truly tells the tale: “The level of expertise we have in the College of Business is a contributing factor in our recent launch of the Center for Economic Education.” A contributing factor? Here we see Doty’s true colors showing through. Doty might as well have said, “I was going to start a Center for Economic Education anyway, but this press opportunity helps me justify it. Having another Center in my college will really look good on my vita when I go looking for my next dean job.”

Doty’s focus on Economic Education will be the focus of our next installment, which examines the Center for Economic Education.

¹ “Study Ranks Southern Miss in Top 100 for Economic Education Research,” USM PR Release, May 3, 2005. Available online at <http://www.usm.edu/pr/prnews/may05/mixonbookstory.htm>.