

Sin or Sinner?

The CoB has a longstanding tradition that those in charge like to punish not the sin, but some of the sinners; the rationale is if the “sin” (wrongdoing) itself is punished, then eventually (if not constantly) one of the favored “sinners” (administrators or a toady of one of them) would have to be punished. That would certainly never do. The way to evade that outcome is to look not to what was done, but who did it. This approach is highly effective at rewarding “us” and punishing “them”, assuming you have no problems with legalities, ethics, or morals. Historically, the sins have included anything from misuse of graduate assistants to not going to “required” commencement exercises to not holding classes and office hours when scheduled. The results are such that no rules are discernable for all the exceptions. If a faculty member points out the inconsistencies in enforcement in the CoB, it only angers the administrators and risks a greater than usual punishment for the perceived offense (being one of “them”, not one of “us”). Some examples:

One faculty member used her graduate assistant to get her dry cleaning, pick up items from various stores in town, and put gas in her car. When this clearly egregious behavior was reported, the first question was “Who is doing this?” Not shock. Not anger or frustration. When asked why that matters, the original question was asked again. When told who this was, the senior administrator merely said “I will talk to her; this will not happen again.” Suppose a “them” was the sinner?

At the height of concern about faculty attendance at commencement, not only did some faculty members not go for years (decades?), their chairman sought to buy junior faculty members’ surrogate attendance for them with travel funds and other desirable goodies. The market approach is a wonderful thing, but it should not be for only certain participants. That is not an open, efficient market. If a “them” tried to play in their limited “market”, “they” were told they had to personally attend or dire consequences would follow. If “they” asked why, the response was consistent: “It is the rules.”

One faculty member in particular is infamous for arriving a couple of weeks after the semester began and leaving about that much early for no articulated reason other than he could. His chairman not only covered for him, apparently not requiring the loss of leave time for this, but frequently actually taught the tardy faculty member’s classes while he was not quite ready to return yet. This may be the clearest example of the sinner and not the sin. Many other faculty members

have had personal health problems, family medical and other emergencies, had the classes covered by volunteer fellow faculty members, and were docked leave time for that. Is there anyone who honestly cannot see the problems with this inconsistent treatment? It is not that a faculty member missing classes should not lose leave time for it – that is what the time is there for; it is obviously that other faculty members miss more time for no reason other than choice and are not docked for it.

Given these few examples, and there are a myriad more, it is clear that there is really only one “rule” in the CoB: Who is the sinner, not what is the sin. If you are one of the chosen sinners, there are no rules.