

“Smokin Dope” School of Accountancy Research Standard

Skip Hughes, Director of the School of Accountancy, USM, presented his ideas on IFRS (International Financial Reporting Standards) in his article, [“When it comes to IFRS adoption, the slower, the better”](#):

As a faculty participant in Southern Miss's British Studies program this summer, I accompanied a group of accounting and finance students in visiting the London headquarters of the International Accounting Standards Board.

His very brief news piece concluded with:

While at the IASB headquarters in London, a student asked if IFRS compliance would be ensured by international auditing standards. Another asked about legal enforcement of the standards. The response to both of these concerns was, in effect: "We just set accounting standards - auditing and enforcement are for others to worry about."

I asked about how certain IFRS (prescribing fair values) might increase stock price volatility. Response: "We just set the accounting standards," etc. Is financial accounting a means to an end? I believe it is, but by all indications, the IASB may not. Based on my visit to the IASB, I am thankful that the U.S. has not rushed to adopt IFRS. When and if it does, it will be for political reasons, rather than for any need to refine financial reporting.

These “field trips” (British Study program) have been characterized as very inefficient and expensive attempts at education. The cost to students and USM College of Business runs in the hundreds of thousands. And, be very clear, students do not have to travel abroad to learn what Skip concludes about IFRS. There’s another problem with Skip’s research junket.

Smokin’ Dope!

I have had extensive discussions with Skip about research. Odd as it may sound, he insisted that the conversations be recorded. So, if you want to hear Skip in his own words, let me know and they’re yours for the asking.

Okay, let’s explain Skip’s views about evaluating research. The “smokin’ dope” criterion is an important one. It’s obvious that Skip has a way with words. Down home, good ol’ boy lingo describes it. When I first met him for one of our recorded chats, he introduced himself by saying, “I jumped on this train [USM’s School of Accountancy] as the train is already moving down the track... Things are going to change around here [at the School of Accountancy].” He was referring to the research he would demand from faculty. Significant improvements. Now, after several years at the head of the School, he hasn’t changed anything. In fact, he’s joined

the old faculty's tradition in producing research that falls below the quality of his "Are you smokin' dope?" criterion.

Our reports at usmnews.net several years ago, predicted Skip would not change the "culture" at the School. Let me offer some details. Early in his USM stint, Director Hughes shared with me his "feelings" about research and his expectations for the School. According to Director Hughes topics of research should be in line with subjects like "how I love depreciation." Now, if you go against his "feelings" to do something in practitioner journals like *Strategic Finance* ["I (Hughes) rue the day *Management Accounting* changed to *Strategic Finance*—it doesn't have a lot of value for me (Hughes)."] So, faculty are not going to get credit for the research if it doesn't "connect the dots" with his "feelings" about how it compares with the standard, "how I love depreciation." By the way, the School of Accountancy's own Journal Ranking has identified *Strategic Finance* as an "A" journal—like grades, A is the best. To Skip, College of Business and School of Accountancy standards didn't alter his "feelings."

To sum up, according to Director Hughes' "feelings", "if you aim as high as you can and accounting is in the title of the journal, I [Skip] think that you would be safe [get his approval and good evaluations which translate to higher pay, etc]." If the research topic is other than something like "how I love depreciation," "I [Hughes] couldn't support it." Here's why: "I'm coming to you [from LSU] as your department chair, Director...and my feelings about [USM's College and School of Accountancy's] Journal Ranking...LSU would say you're smoking dope on this, okay?"

Well, Skip, I don't see "Accounting" in the title of your "research." Director Hughes is publishing in *al.com Newsletter*. We can only speculate why he's aiming so low. For example, might it be that he no longer is at a school [like LSU] with faculty who would include him on their quality research. USM's School of Accountancy has chased away faculty who published in quality journals, leaving Skip with no research coattail to ride.

Now, how does Skip rank his own "research" in the likes of "When it comes to IFRS adoption, the slower, the better" in *al.com Newsletter*? Applying his own research criteria, it has no value and to claim it does indicates "You're smoking dope on this," Skip.

Given our report on Friday, "Is Rodney Bennett Qualified to Be President of USM, Part 5," we have reason to compare Bennett's and Hughes' research.

Compare President Bennett's one and only research project, **Research for Publication:** Barham, J.D., & Bennett, R.D. (2005) Understanding the Use of Value Statements in Student Affairs Practice, Data collection in progress with Skip Hughes' "When it comes to IFRS adoption, the slower, the better." There's no doubt the rank of their research: "You're smokin' dope on these, Skip and Rodney."

Now, you've got a measure of the "research" trajectory at USM. Also note that taxpayers and students are paying well over half a million dollars in salaries for these two towers of research expertise.

While we're on the subject of research, and the very limited research experience of President Bennett, we'll publish and review his dissertation over the next couple of weeks.