

Special Report

How Much Longer will Dean Doty Remain at the Helm of the CoB? An Investigative Series on 2006-07 USM Presidential Transition

In her 1 February 2007 article in *The Hattiesburg American* entitled "Faculty surprised by dean's resignation," *HA* Staff Writer Rachel Leifer states that the ". . . resignation of a top University of Southern Mississippi official last week is drawing criticism from some faculty inside the College of Education and Psychology and beyond." Leifer is writing about the 26 January 2007 resignation of Willie Pierce, Dean of USM's College of Education & Psychology. Pierce's "surprising" resignation came about one week after the death of USM's College of Arts & Letters Dean, Elliott Pood.

USM psychology professor Mitch Berman told Leifer that he ". . . was extraordinarily surprised" by Pierce's recent announcement. According to Leifer's report, Pierce said on 26 January 2007 that the USM administration felt that new leadership for the CoEP was desirable at this time. USM Provost Jay Grimes told Leifer that the leadership change followed discussions between Grimes and Pierce about "recent happenings within the [CoEP]," which were said to include the CoEP's success in a recent accreditation effort, as well as an increase in external grants and contracts. In recent days, *The Hattiesburg American* has reported on a large grant obtained by Berman and another USM psychology faculty. The newspaper has also reported that the CoEP's doctoral teacher education program ranks in the nation's Top 10 based on scholarship.

Despite these accomplishments, Grimes informed Leifer that there were "certain indicators" that he, Thames, and other members of USM's administration wanted "to see go up," though Grimes gave no specifics about these other "indicators." Grimes told Leifer that he and other USM administrators ". . . felt some things needed to be improved in the college." USM Faculty Senate President Myron Henry and President-Elect Stephen Judd both told Leifer that the Faculty Senate is concerned about such a move at this time of transition. In fact, Judd suggested that, on campus, there ". . . is a fear that the shoe has not dropped and that there are other shoes that are going to drop."

Sources tell usmpride.com reporters that one of the "other shoes" may fall on Harold Doty's floundering deanship of USM's College of Business. The CoB is currently undergoing what promises to be a rather shaky re-accreditation attempt. As numerous reports available at usmpride.com have indicated, a significant part of the CoB's AACSB reaffirmation documentation consists of qualifications definitions that were copied from AACSB materials available on the Harmon College of Business website at Central Missouri State University. The CoB's own AACSB accreditation consultant, Dr. Karen Tarnoff of East Tennessee State University, issued a stern warning to CoB officials about adopting the AACSB work-product (e.g., definitions, etc.) of other institutions.

As Pierce's case indicates, even successful re-accreditation processes do not ensure longevity in the USM administrative hierarchy. There are a number of things that have occurred under Doty's watch that have weakened the CoB. Sources tell us that USM's Deans have been instructed to provide documentation, that can be forwarded to the next USM president, describing each College's accomplishment over the past three years. In anticipation of that, usmpride.com reporters will be putting together a list of "issues" involving Dean Doty's tenure in the CoB since he was hired as Dean about 3.5 years ago. Look for that report to emerge in the next few weeks.