

## *Special Report Series*

# **Bow Tied**

## **Former CoB Dean in Hot Water Once Again**

### **PART 15**

In light of former CoB dean Harold Doty's litigation history, USMNEWS.net reporters periodically check the courts near where Doty lives and works. Recent documents [obtained from](#) the Smith County, Texas Court Clerk, indicate that Doty is once again likely headed back to court, this time in his capacity as [dean of business](#) at the University of Texas-Tyler. These documents indicate that former UT-T business student advisor, Karen St. John, is suing UT-T for harm caused by [actions largely taken](#) by Doty vis-à-vis St. John's employment. In late fall of 2011, St. John's husband, Jeremy St. John, another former member of UT-T's business school, joined her cause as co-plaintiff in the case against UT-T. This is Part 15 in a series of news stories about this developing situation.

After denying the Dean's daughter's request for special treatment, in August 2011, Dr. St. John's name was removed from the teaching schedule for half his classes and replaced with another instructor's name. Stephen Bushardt also sent an e-mail July 27, 2011 to the entire Management and Marketing faculty, including Dr. St. John, notifying him that another course he taught and was scheduled to teach the next semester was going to be eliminated and removed from the degree plan. Finding out about this major change in such a public and blatant manner was not only humiliating but also deliberately retaliatory.

In May of 2011, Dr. St. John was notified by Bushardt, Department Chair of Management and Marketing that the Provost, Donna Dickerson, said that his employment contract would not be renewed and there were no reasons given for that decision.

Jeremy St. John's saga at UT-T did not end with being denied a summer 2011 contract. It also did not conclude with facing Michala Doty, the daughter of UT-T business school dean Harold Doty who struck fear in many business faculty in Tyler. St. John's troubles continued. On 27-July-2011, UT-T management chairman Stephen Bushardt, the former CoB management chairman, sent the entire department an e-mail indicating that one of the courses that St. John traditionally taught in the UT-T business school was to be eliminated from the curriculum. As the insert above points out, this action followed on the heels of other course eliminations involving St. John. This action played out in an even worse fashion, however, as Bushardt's e-mail was sent to the entire management

faculty. To St. John, Bushardt's move was "public and blatant," and also "humiliating" and "deliberately retaliatory." Of course, this nightmarish episode followed UT-T provost Donna Dickerson's May-2011 notice to St. John that his employment contract would, without justification, be terminated.

Dr. St. John was further subjected to the ongoing requirement of being evaluated based on research in the same way tenure-track research professors are. Research professors receive a much lighter teaching load in exchange for conducting research. Dr. St. John was required to teach more than a typical full teaching load (a full teaching load is known as a "4/4 load" meaning 4 classes in the fall semester and 4 classes in the spring semester with more credit given to graduate level courses and independent studies. Research professors typically get a 3/3 load or less - and a 2/2 load during their first year). This was despite being told by Bushardt that he would only be evaluated based on his teaching because he is a senior lecturer, whose primary responsibility is teaching.

In addition to a much higher teaching load, an unusually high number of "course preps" (new courses and new course formats) were required of Dr. St. John by the Defendant, increasing his stress and undermining his ability to excel at his job. Defendant continuously changed the courses that Dr. St. John taught and the format of them, with little to no notice to him. For instance, for the Spring 2011 semester, Dr. Fischer told him that he would be teaching the graduate level Operations Management class in a hybrid format which combined on-line and classroom teaching. Only a few days before the course began, Dr. St. John was told, not by Dr. Mary Fischer, but by his students, that the class had been changed to a completely online-only format. That same semester, Dr. Fischer also required Dr. St. John to teach an independent study (a class for one student) because "the graduate advisor had given the student false information and the student needed to graduate".

As the insert just above points out, Bushardt and Doty also used some old standards in their mobbing campaign against St. John. One of these involved assigning St. John to *more than* the standard teaching load for research professors, but then also subjecting St. John to the usual standards for research production. Thus, St. John was expected by Bushardt and Doty to perform research on a 4/4+ teaching load at the same level as those who were assigned 3/3 and 2/2 teaching loads. On top of the higher teaching loads given to St. John, an inordinate number of course preparations was also assigned to him. This combination of hits was a popular one when both Doty and Bushardt were in USM's business college, and it represents a mobbing program that was easily

exportable to Tyler. According to St. John's legal filing above, both the courses and the course formats that were expected of him to teach were continually altered by Doty and Bushardt with little or no notice. One example of this treatment that is provided by St. John (see above) occurred in Spring of 2011, when he [was assigned by](#) UT-T associate business dean Mary Fischer to a graduate level management course taught in [a hybrid format](#) (i.e., in-person and online combination), [something new](#) to St. John. After prepping the course and getting ready to deliver it, St. John was *told by his students* – just days before the first day of class – that the course format had been changed to online only. Not only that, St. John also learned that he was to teach an independent study course that semester, because, as Fischer put it, *a student's graduate advisor* had given the student false information, thus jeopardizing his/her goal of graduating on time.



*Stephen Bushardt*



*Mary Fischer*

Throughout his years in USM's college of business, Bushardt wore, as he is doing in the UT-T photo above, a bow tie of one sort or another. He did so in order to emulate a former USM president – one who was known as a genteel, southern gentleman. As this report, and others describing Bushardt's time in USM's b-school, indicates, the bow tie may be *the only thing* Bushardt and that former president have in common.

One commonly-held belief in academia is that it is bad policy to address personnel issues with curriculum changes. Not only would Doty and Bushardt break this rule, this report has shown that a business curriculum is not even immune to changes in order to facilitate downward mobbing of faculty that Doty and Bushardt happen to favor.