

Special Report Series

Policies? . . . What Policies?

Former CoB Dean in Hot Water Once Again

PART 13

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 13 in a series of news stories about this developing situation.

As early as April 26, 2011 after repeated verbal requests, Dr. St. John began asking when summer contracts would be issued. Dr. St. John was told repeatedly by Deborah Brasher and Stephen Bushardt ("Bushardt") that his summer contract was being worked on, until the class started in May 2011. Finally, just as the summer semester started, Stephen Bushardt told him that he would be allowed to teach but would no longer get a contract. His contract was for a specific time frame and did not include the summer semester. He complained at length to Bushardt about the unfairness of the contracts and how Defendant had violated not only the verbal contracts but also the written contracts with him. Dr. St. John told Bushardt that was further retaliation and reminded him that Bushardt had agreed (after Dean Doty fired Karen St. John before Christmas) that the retaliation against him would stop. In obvious response to this report to Bushardt, Dean Doty sent an e-mail on August 11, 2011, explaining that some people would get contracts and some would not, which described Dr. St. John's position as one that would not. It was a very poor attempt to hide retaliatory treatment aimed specifically at him, threatening his job which is a strong and vicious threat in the current poor job market.

As the excerpt from the above legal filing indicates, Jeremy St. John's mobbing saga picks up in April of this year (2011), when St. John was waiting for his "summer

contract” to be issued. When he asked UT-T management chairman Stephen Bushardt about it, St. John was told that the summer contracts were being developed, and would continue to be so up until summer 2011 classes began in May-2011. When that day arrived, however, St. John’s contract had not been issued. At that point, Bushardt, the former management chair in USM’s b-school, informed St. John that there would be no contract, at least not one for him (St. John), though he (St. John) would still be allowed to teach during summer semester 2011.

St. John saw this latest move by UT-T administrators as further retaliation against him. At that point, St. John “reminded [Bushardt] that Bushardt had agreed (after Dean [Harold] Doty had fired Karen St. John before Christmas [2011]) that the retaliation against [Jeremy St. John] would stop.” This point is interesting because it offers evidence that Bushardt admitted that Jeremy St. John had been the object of a mobbing campaign – one that also targeted Karen St. John. As sources indicate, Doty responded to St. John’s contract concerns as expected, claiming that Jeremy St. John was simply among a group of UT-T business faculty that would not work on a contractual basis during summer 2011, even though *other* UT-T b-schoolers would do so.

On Monday February 21, 2011, in a special meeting held by President Mabry, College of Business Faculty, he told the staff explicitly that any and all complaints or concerns going forward should no longer follow UT Tyler’s policy by going to Compliance or to the Ethics Hotline, but rather they should be made directly to him and he would take care of them. That directive effectively left Dr. St. John no viable avenue for reporting Defendant’s retaliatory actions in light of the fact that Karen St. John had tried to go through the proper chain of command and was terminated.

The second excerpt (above) from St. John’s complaint points out that UT-T president Rodney Mabry made an interesting decision on 21-February-2011. In a meeting that day with UT-T b-school faculty, Mabry stated that *all* complaints/concerns about Doty or other b-school administrators *should no longer follow UT-T policy by going to Compliance or to the ethics hotline*, but instead should be submitted directly to Mabry. USMNEWS.net sources say that this change appears to be something right out of former USM president Shelby Thames’ administrative philosophy. St. John appears to have recognized it as such, by pointing out in his legal filing that Mabry’s action left St. John without a viable avenue for reporting elements of Doty’s mobbing campaign against him and his spouse. St. John’s wife, Karen, had gotten word to Mabry of her abuse at the hands of Doty and was thereafter terminated. Thus, Mabry’s new plan seemed more like walking a plank to the St. Johns, and perhaps to many others at UT-T.