

Star Chamber Mobbing v. Open Review

Let's begin in 2000 when, in accordance with the Faculty Handbook, I requested a grievance proceeding - an open forum -- to consider evidence about potential mismanagement and misuse of taxpayer money:

"The purpose of this letter is a continuing request for a finding of fact with regard to an evaluation report written by Dr. James Crockett for Dr. Marvin Albin . . . Dr. Crockett was responsible for the integrity of Dr. Albin's evaluation . . . Regardless of how the College of Business Administration determines raises, the integrity of implementation is at the heart of my concerns . . ."

The request for an open forum was ignored by USM administrators in violation of the Faculty Handbook. Several years after I appealed the lack of administrative action to the IHL, I found a [copy of my letter](#) to the IHL in my personnel record. In the upper right hand corner is a handwritten note: "Jim [Crockett] -- this is what Carl [Nicholson, at the time a member of IHL] got plus most of what you gave me. *He said to tell you he will take care of it.* Patty [Polk Munn, USM Instructor whose husband works for Nicholson and Company] (Emphasis added.)

Ignoring my request for a public forum was nothing less than an administrative subversion of due process. **Furthermore, the application for a grievance committee remains pending even though Carl Nicholson said he would "take care of it".**

Compare my request for an open forum to the secret letters demanding Star Chamber discipline [of me]:

1. "It is our wish that the administration take whatever steps to put an end to the ridiculous and disturbing assertions which have been circulating concerning Jim Crockett's honesty and integrity." (See [link](#) for signatures.)

2. On February 16, 2000, Dr. Crockett wrote to Dean Gunther, Provost Henry, Lee Gore, and President Fleming: "As we discussed, I believe that Marc DePree has created a hostile work environment for both me and Marvin Albin . . . The USM administration should demand that DePree discontinue using university facilities to propagate false charges."

3. February 12, 2002, administrators got another secret letter: "We the undersigned faculty of the School of Accounting and Information Systems (SAIS) charge that Professor Marc DePree has created a hostile work environment . . . in which we feel a lack of physical safety for ourselves and our students . . . He has written and published on the Internet a "novel" that . . . twists and distorts

actual events . . . He has made and distributed widely . . . claims that Professor Jim Crockett “fixed” his appointment as the Morgan Professor . . . He has made and distributed widely . . . claims that former Professor Paul Torres and Associate Professor M. J. Albin were unjustly enriched by merit pay adjustments . . . This caused tension between the SAIS faculty and other CBA faculty . . . He has made and distributed widely . . . claims that Jim Crockett, former director of the school of accountancy, made four material misrepresentations . . . Faculty are hesitant to say anything in Professor DePree’s presence or to write anything that he might get his hands on for fear of bodily harm and/or that their words might be distorted by him in some future writing.” I got this secret letter in a freedom of information request. The university attorneys refused to give me the signature page. However, in a sworn deposition, Patty Polk Munn testified that she, among others, had signed this letter, too.

Westhues describes a purpose of the impassioned rhetoric in these letters: “The object is to deprive the target of any say in what goes on, to turn the target into such an untouchable that even chatting with him or her in the corridor pollutes respectable colleagues.” (Kenneth Westhues, “*Administrative Mobbing* , p. 311)

The authors of these secret letters who asked for a private “fix” did not believe their positions were sufficiently strong to stand up to public scrutiny. Certainly, they did not want me to have any input. In an academic environment where public debate is affirmed, not once would Dr. Crockett or his fellow mobbers consider an open forum.

Administrators did nothing to stop the mobbing and it continues today. Some people might claim that I am dredging up ancient history. However, the truth is that the secret mobbing has never stopped. In the past year Director Rod Posey secretly consulted Dr. Crockett for his opinion of my teaching rigor to use in an annual evaluation. As you might expect, Dr. Crockett determined that my examinations were “not rigorous.” Information relating to this “review” was not provided to me by Dr. Posey in an effort to improve any perceived deficiencies in my teaching. The documents were provided to me in response to an open records request.

Common sense would suggest that Dr. Posey provided Dr. Crockett a secret venue in which to carry out his goal of destroying my career. Furthermore, Dr. Crockett eagerly accepted the opportunity.

Secrecy is the hallmark of administrative mismanagement. Kenneth Westhues is again instructive: “The success of an eliminative campaign depends on keeping the full story--what actually happened, who did what when--hidden under veils of

confidentiality, anonymity, secrecy, and impassioned rhetoric.” (*Administrative Mobbing*, p. 309)

Where is the professionalism -- the integrity -- the PRIDE --administrators claim for the College of Business? Where is administrative courage to openly review the conduct of fellow administrators?

The simple truth is I’ve collected the documentation to prove what everybody already knows or strongly suspects from their own experience. Administrators, with the help of their sycophants, have corrupted what should lie at the heart of any University -- the ability to ask questions and obtain answers and to disagree -
- without fear of reprisal.