

Symbolism - from the past to the future

One of the many bombs former Interim Dean Alvin Williams left current Dean Lance Nail was the continuing problem of Bill Gunther and his entitlement mindset. One example: Gunther was moved into what is the graduate director's office in the College of Business when he was canned by Shelby Thames. When Harold Doty arrived as dean, he let the utter nonsense continue because he was not able to run-off Gunther after repeatedly saying he would do so. Gunther is an economics professor and can be housed like all the other ones, right? Williams actually moved Gunther out of the office he never earned or deserved, but into another prime office vacated by Tony Henthorne when he departed for the glitz of UNLV. Henthorne got the office created (two offices into one large office) under Williams, his longtime friend, mentor, and protector. This large office was/is for the chair of tourism management. Gunther is not that and never has been. Williams told the faculty it was a transition office for one year. He would let the next dean deal with that. That year is about up and no plans have been announced by Nail for the physical rearrangement of the newly reorganized college come July 1st. Since Gunther is an economist, and the economists have individually and collectively been a thorn in Nail's side, it is unlikely Nail likes Gunther. Moreover, at a grossly inflated salary, Gunther teaches only 2 classes a semester and publishes nothing in journals or books, which is contrary to the announced goals for the College of Business under Nail. Even if Nail likes Gunther, the signal that keeping him in the office he is currently in would be too costly for Nail. There are too many positive uses for that space; perpetuating a farce is not one Nail should pursue for it. Gunther is an iconic joke; rewarding him for continuous under-performance is not a symbol Dean Nail, the College of Business, or Southern Miss can afford.