

The Doty Sidestep: How to Bypass Faculty Governance

From July 1, 2003, until April 9, 2007, Duane Harold Doty was the dean of the College of Business and Economic Development/College of Business at the University of Southern Mississippi. A hallmark of the Doty regime was actively seeking to circumvent faculty governance processes when those processes threatened to limit Doty's ability to finalize "check boxes" on his dean's resume. "The Doty Sidestep: How to Bypass Faculty Governance" is a multi-part series highlighting some of Doty's most egregious efforts to put his wants above the mission of USM and the governance processes that protect USM faculty.

The series is a cautionary tale for those who might consider allowing Doty a second chance at managing a business school.

Part 1: The Digital MBA

One of the most ubiquitous issues during Doty's tenure is the infamous Digital MBA (DMBA) program. Doty claimed that former USM President Shelby Thames demanded that an online MBA/executive MBA program be instituted to help capture the demand for such a program that was being soaked up by online MBA programs at Mississippi State University and the University of Phoenix. In faculty meeting after faculty meeting, Doty described the immense pressure Thames was applying and his [Doty's] Herculean efforts to shield the business faculty from Thames' wrath.

Many business faculty questioned the validity of Doty's claims, sine Doty was ostensibly the lone witness to Thames' demands. In Fall 2005, Doty pushed the CoB Graduate Programs Committee to approve a Digital MBA program. The GPC produced a negative vote on Doty's proposition, an act that reportedly infuriated Doty. Doty's response was to push the GPC, then comprised of Elizabeth LaFleur, John Clark, Laurie Babin, and Stephen Bushardt, among others, to RE-VOTE on the issue. At the re-vote, Doty attended and (as an ex-officio member) voted for the DMBA, as did volunteer committee member Barry Babin and ex-officio GC member Francis Daniel. Doty "stacked the deck" in favor of his proposal by breaking with long-standing tradition of ex-officios not voting and by

bringing in Barry Babin as a "ringer." In case you lost count, the re-vote included six (6) votes from the Management and Marketing department - hardly a true representation of the CoB's faculty demographics.

The program was presented for a vote of the entire faculty in a November 2005 CoB faculty meeting. Doty's supporters could provide no answers to substantive questions regarding demand analysis, quality control, teaching load impacts, or faculty pay for extra work. The DMBA passed a vote of the faculty with Doty supporters in full attendance and Associate Professor of Accounting (and professional academic politician) James Henderson holding no fewer than five proxy votes from untenured/timid colleagues, which he cast in favor of the DMBA. Doty, with assistance from Francis Daniel and Stephen Bushardt, arm-twisted and railroaded the DMBA through the USM CoB faculty by lying about Thames' demands, by rigging a committee vote, and by politicking with the CoB's Good Ol' Boys Club to get his way.

Interestingly, Doty's DMBA ran into a snag in 2005, when it was put up for consideration by USM's Information Technology Advisory Committee. The IT Advisory Committee's Resolution is included on the following page. The reader will note that the USM ITAC denied Doty's initial request for funding, leading to a pertinent question: If Shelby Thames demanded an online MBA, and if Harold Doty delivered that program, then would Thames, who was notorious for his micromanaging, have allowed the program to go unfunded?

Of course, the DMBA program was eventually (supposedly) funded through CoB monies and Learning Enhancement Center funds, creating the CoB's version of the "Bridge to Nowhere," a highly-equipped classroom for a program that no students want to be a part of. The room sits idle, unless it is used for a traditional-delivery class which, of course, defeats the purpose of having a high-tech classroom.

In retrospect, the DMBA program was a bad idea, and it remains a bad idea today. However, it provides us with a very clear example of Harold Doty's penchant for doing whatever it takes - including rewriting a college's rule book - to get his way.

Resolution #10: Digital MBA Proposal

(IT Advisory Council November 29, 2005 tabled and January 31, 2006):

Be it resolved, to increase access to higher education in south Mississippi, meet the needs of working professionals primarily in the Hattiesburg and Gulf Coast areas. The goal is to create a capability in the university to deliver video enhanced online education around the globe. This will allow the university to deliver classes to every home in Mississippi with internet connections.

Estimated Program Cost = \$1,000,000 over five years

IT BOD: Recommend Table request of the College of Business Digital MBA Enhanced Classroom Proposal until Dr. Doty presents his justification for this program to the IT Board. It should be the IT Board position that a university wide assessment and plan should be put into place for enhanced classrooms, faculty training, and digital media delivery. **Partially FUNDED.**

IT BOD: Recommend denial of College of Business Digital MBA Enhanced Classroom Proposal. A university-wide assessment and plan should be put into place for enhanced classrooms, faculty training, and digital media delivery.