

## **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 5: Academic Suspension Policy**

The University of Southern Mississippi has a liberal student academic suspension policy by industry standards. A student may be placed on Academic Probation if the student's cumulative GPA falls below the minimum required by the University or college; this requirement varies with credit hours earned. Once on Academic Probation, the student must earn a minimum semester GPA of 2.0. If the subsequent semester's GPA is insufficient to elevate the cumulative GPA above the required minimum, the student is placed on Academic Probation Continued. This status is maintained unless and until (1) the cumulative GPA rises above the required minimum or (2) the student earns a semester GPA below 2.0. At that point, the student is placed on Academic Suspension and is not allowed to enroll in USM classes for a semester. Alternatively, any student who earns a 0.0 semester GPA is suspended from the University.

All suspended students are allowed to appeal their suspensions through channels established by their colleges. In the CoB, the process begins with the CoB Academic Suspension Committee, which consists of four faculty members. Suspended students meet with the committee, which considers the student's situation, including medical, familial, and psychological issues. The committee votes to

reinstate the student or not, based on evidence provided by the student and the student's academic record.

It is reported that the CoB committee has a history of routinely reinstating 1<sup>st</sup> time suspendees with a stern warning about future performance. The committee, however, is reported to regularly deny secondary, tertiary, or subsequent suspension appeals. If a suspension appeal is denied by the faculty committee, the student may then appeal to the dean of the college. During Doty's tenure as dean, he was too busy to involve himself in the affairs of undergraduate students, so he instituted the position of Undergraduate Programs Director and promptly filled it with Associate Professor of Accounting Gwendolyn Pate. Doty vested Pate with the authority to act for him in curriculum matters regarding undergraduates. As such, students no longer appealed to the dean; they appealed to the UPD.

As Doty's tenure wore on, it is reported that Pate, now a Doty sycophant, routinely overturned the faculty committee's denials without regard for the student's GPA or standing, allowing students with incredibly poor academic records to avoid the semester-sit-out rule (which, by the way, increases in duration with each subsequent visit to the suspended list). Pate's activity was undertaken with the blessing of Harold Doty and with the idea that the CoB's Student Credit Hours were more important than the integrity of the academic environment or the integrity and authority of the faculty committee that upheld the suspensions and denied the appeals.

That's right - Harold Doty and his pawn Pate began making a habit of simply disregarding the workings of a faculty committee and publicly stripping the committee of its authority, transferring that authority to Pate, an administrator. As usual, Doty favored giving administrators, not faculty, the power to make decisions.

The result was that a number of students who should have been placed on Academic Suspension (and thus required to take the requisite semester off to consider their situations instead of continuing the downward GPA spiral) were allowed to continue harming their GPAs. It is reported that some of those students would have required more than two consecutive semesters of a 4.0 semester GPA just to remove themselves from Academic Probation. To break the rules for these students was a bad idea.

Doty's policies stripped faculty of authority AND potentially harmed students' academic futures. That's an acceptable "two-for-one" in the world of Harold Doty.