University of Southern Mississippi – A Tribal Moral Community

PART 11

Dr. K.E. "Skip" Hughes II, Director School of Accountancy

The Hypocrite

Dr. Hughes claims to be a researcher. Research strives for knowledge. Why does he act contrary to the principles of reason, evidence, and truth as a USM administrator? You can't do justice to that question without asking why USM is an institution of low academic quality.

Hughes was looking after the sacrosanct USM tribal morality. USM tribal morality advances doctrines of corruption above the principles of reason, truth, or evidence. Its administrators like Doty, Williams, Hughes, and Saunders, and faculty like Cannon, Posey, and Jordan practice tribal morality.

What is the extent of Hughes's willingness to advance corrupt behavior? How far would Hughes go to maintain his status as a member in good standing of USM tribal morality?

At a minimum Hughes willingly participates in plagiarism. Consider the following letter to the editor of the Student Printz 02.09.2010:

"In an email to College of Business Dean Lance Nail and School of Accountancy Director Skip Hughes, I offered to participate in seminars they have set for the 'Month of Ethics Awareness.'

I was pleased to see the College of Business PR announcement: 'College of Business Devotes Month to Ethics Awareness.'

Dean Nail has it right when he said in a public relations announcement, 'We hope that our students realize that we are committed to producing graduates who keep ethical behavior in the forefront of their thoughts and actions.'

'Keep[ing] ethical behavior in the forefront of thoughts and actions' is an excellent idea. In addition to inviting speakers from other parts of the country to discuss ethical issues from their perspectives which the Dean and Director had already done, I proposed we have a panel discussion in which we discuss ethics issues that arose from behavior right here at USM. Let's make ethics real for our students.

I offered several projects that have been peer reviewed and presented at national meetings which are relevant to our month long devotion to ethics. "Without Proper Citation" and "Daily Practice" are learning and educational opportunities drawn from our own experiences at USM. 'Without Proper Citation' is a case study complete with documentation that explores plagiarism, what it means and why it is considered unethical. We all have a pretty good idea what happens to students when they are accused of plagiarism, but what happens to faculty when they copy and publish 'without proper citation?' I'm confident students would find the topic very interesting. It is a difficult and relevant issue for students and faculty and I would take on the challenge of offering my research for review, criticism, and further development. I'm confident the discussion would be stimulating and engaging.

Also for their consideration, I offered 'Daily Practice,' which explores the issue of conflicts of interest. Students will experience conflicts of interest in their careers and will benefit from seeing how easy it is to slip into unethical practices even with the best intentions at a university like ours. Apropos Dean Nail's comment: 'In so many instances otherwise good people engaged in unethical conduct that seemed so inconsequential at the time but resulted in terrible outcomes' is precisely on the mark. 'Daily Practice,' like 'Without Proper Citation,' is a relevant case study of ethical lapses at USM.

I did not hear from Dean Nail and Director Hughes about my offer. I would like to remind them of the courtesy of a response but more importantly remind them of the principles USM publishes to its students and faculty: 'The University cherishes the free exchange of ideas, diversity of thought, joint decision making, and individuals' assumption of responsibility.' (The Faculty Handbook, 2.12) What makes 'Without Proper Citation' of continuing relevance is that the Academic Integrity Policy was and still is published by the College of Business on its website without proper citation from its source, Syracuse University.

Chauncey M. DePree, Jr., DBA"

Syracuse provided the following citations for the sources of ideas and words in its Academic Integrity Policy. Syracuse's citations are the only section USM did not copy when it copied, "without proper citation," Syracuse University's Academic Integrity Policy. (See USM's plagiarized version at http://www.usm.edu/business/academic-integrity-policy).

Syracuse University's citations for its Academic Integrity Policy:

Portions of this policy are adapted from the following sources, with permission: Council of Writing Program Administrators. *"Defining and Avoiding Plagiarism: WPA Statement on Best Policies." Council of Writing Program Administrators, January 2003. <http://www.wpacouncil.org/positions/index.html>. Howard, Rebecca Moore. "A Plagiarism Pentimento." Journal of Teaching Writing*

(Summer 1993). 233-245. Portions of this policy are based on the academic integrity policies of Boston College, Cornell University, Duke University, Georgetown University, the University of Maryland, and former policies of Syracuse University's School of Architecture, College of Arts and Sciences, L.C. Smith College of Engineering and Computer Science, School of Education, College of Human Services and Health Professions, School of Information Studies, Whitman School of Management, and College of Visual and Performing Arts. (Syracuse University, Academic Integrity Office, December 19, 2007.
http://provost.syr.edu/provost/units/academicprograms/academicintegrit/)

This act of plagiarism was not USM's only one. "Without proper citation" was a term coined by Charles Jordan when he was caught copying another school's AACSB documents.

How far would Director Hughes go to continue to be a member of the USM Tribe and sacrifice ethics, integrity, and honesty? "When the sacred kicks in, [Skip Hughes'] rational capacity gets detoured: '[He] use[s] [his] reasoning not to find the truth but to find ways to defend what [he] hold[s] as sacred.'"

The result? An irrational Skip Hughes, Ph.D., Hypocrite.

USM's new website still has not cited the source of its Academic Integrity Policy, Syracuse University or corrected that it offers a plagiarized Academic Integrity Policy as its own. Director Hughes is fully aware of this. Rather than act with integrity, he covers for the USM Tribe's corruption.

Dr. Hughes,
Good schools and administrators and faculty of integrity, don't hide from, run from, or ignore accusations of plagiarism. For a recent example of how a good school handles an accusation of plagiarism, see,
http://blog.mlive.com/news_impact/print.html?entry=/2011/04/msu_professor_plagiarized_and.html