

University of Southern Mississippi – A Tribal Moral Community

PART 8

In this series, we will review the peculiar behavior of faculty at USM -- peculiar because their behavior is inconsistent with their extensive education and training. We shall show how science-trained colleagues totally ignored their long years of education and research in favor of irrational behavior. (See, previous Parts for background information in this series.)

A framework to understand our colleagues' irrational behavior is "Tribal Morality" which was recently discussed in several widely published articles. For readers' convenience, we'll apply "Tribal Morality" from the perspective contained in a *Chronicle of Higher Education* report entitled, "De-Tribalizing Academe" by Peter Wood.

"De-Tribalizing" faculty behavior continues with Gordon C. Cannon. His behavior, like others in this series, is selected because he was subject to sworn depositions or, like "Skip" Hughes, insisted on recording conversations. In other words, we report evidence based on their words.

Part 9: Gordon C. Cannon, Ombudsman, University of Southern Mississippi

President Martha Saunders assigned Ombudsman Gordon C. Cannon with recommending whether to terminate Professor DePree's tenure and employment at USM. At his deposition on April 16, 2010 Cannon was asked:

[T]hey [Deans Doty and Williams] specifically said the continued employment of [DePree] would jeopardize their accreditation?

Cannon: If they did not have -- if they were neither academically nor professionally qualified. I believe that is correct.

Question: Did you review anything to determine the accuracy of that statement?

Cannon: No.

Cannon had in his possession independent documentation that provided sufficient independent evidence that Doty and William's claims were false. Gordon Cannon was compliant in Doty and Williams fabricating misconduct in efforts to fire DePree. Cannon willingly advanced the corrupt behavior of Doty and Williams allowing them to hide their own misconduct.

What would Gordon C. Cannon, PhD, have done if he were applying the principles of science, *i.e.*, applying a careful description and consideration of facts and evidence to the accusations against Professor DePree? At a minimum he would have professed and

demonstrated through behavior an unequivocal concern for the truth of others' and his representations. So, why didn't he?

A Community of Tribal Morality

Let's assume that Dr. Gordon C. Cannon, USM Ombudsman, understands that the principles of reason, evidence, and truth advance knowledge in areas of his discipline and outside his discipline of Chemistry. It follows that there may be another process underway that helps us understand his irrational behavior. Why did Cannon not determine the accuracy of a statement that was critical to the Doty and William's accusations against Professor DePree?

Consider Gordon C. Cannon's behavior from the perspective of Tribal Morality.

Professor Marc DePree, DBA, had collected independent evidence of corruption by USM administrators and some USM faculty. The response from President Saunders was not to investigate the independent evidence of corruption by USM administrators and some USM faculty, but was to assign Gordon C. Cannon, Ombudsman, to investigate Professor DePree. With the choice of applying scientific principles or the principle of inviolable sacredness of USM, Cannon chose to apply the principle that USM is inviolably sacred and beyond question or investigation. Cannon was not chosen by President Saunders to apply principles of reason and evidence he was trained as a chemist. She accurately measured Cannon as good tribal member.

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

Determining the accuracy of statements that are used to fire a colleague is not what Ombudsman Gordon Cannon does. He was, however, being a good member of the USM tribe. Cannon 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 are themselves, or are the willing instruments of, corrupt administrators and faculty.**

If Deans Doty and Williams told Dr. Cannon the world is flat and that the earth is the center of the universe, would he believe that, too? What is the extent of Cannon's willingness to advance corrupt behavior? How far would Cannon go to maintain his status as a member in good standing of USM tribal morality?

“When the sacred kicks in, [Gordon C. Cannon's] 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 Gordon C. Cannon, Ph.D.

(You may email the editor at marcdepre@gmail.com for a copy of Dr. Cannon's deposition.)