

## *Editorial*

### **Doty's Accusing Someone of Plagiarism?**

That Harold Doty is accusing [anyone of plagiarism](#) is peculiar, to say the least. While Dean of USM's College of Business, Doty's adamant advocacy of copying “without proper citation” appears to, in effect, legitimize plagiarism. What in the h-e-double-l is Doty up to, now? Take a look at some of the details of what I'm talking about. The following is an excerpt from [“Plagiarism is Now Ethically Acceptable.”](#)

Although colleagues kept Directors of Accountancy Posey and Lewis, Business College **Dean Doty**, Provost Grimes, President Thames, and the AACSB informed of their activities, neither USM administrators nor AACSB reciprocated. At this point, colleagues made a commitment to learn what was happening. So, they acquired information about what the AACSB was doing with the “complaints” through open records requests.

University administrators and lawyers refused to comply with a routine and lawful freedom of information request. An attorney volunteered to obtain release of secret communications between USM administrators and AACSB. Although the AACSB invoked confidentiality of its accreditation processes, once information from the AACSB was received at USM, it became public information subject to the Mississippi Open Records Law. The secret communications are among the documents supporting this study and are available upon request. [Documents are provided in “Plagiarism is Now Ethically Acceptable.”]

In communications between USM administrators and the AACSB, a secret email from Accounting Professor Charles Jordan to HCBA [Harmon College of Business Administration, Central Missouri State University] Dean Joan Mansfield was discovered. It postdated, but was in response to colleagues' reports of, copying documents without attribution to USM's COB and University administrators. In it, Professor Jordan asked HCBA Dean for permission to use their “Guidelines” he had already copied “without proper citation”:

We very much like [your] definitions [“Guidelines”] and have tweaked them a bit to fit our needs ... our dean would like to get permission from you to use these definitions in our reports without proper citation...<sup>1</sup>

(Emphasis was included in the original email.)

The response from Harmon Dean Mansfield was, “That's great that you want to use our definitions! That would be fine with us...” With this approval, Dean Doty wrote a secret

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<sup>1</sup> Compare “without proper citation” to “without citation.” Use of the former seems to imply an admission not to act according to standards or conventions, i.e., an admission of plagiarism. On the other hand, “without citation” does not include “proper” and does not, therefore, seem to invoke an admission not to act in accordance with standards or conventions. It would also seem easier to leave out the word, “proper,” but a conscious act is required to include it.

email to the AACSB:

To make a long story short, we have both oral and written permission to use the documents in question without formal citation to the original school.

Some colleagues were astonished; some laughed; some had expected the petty corruption; but all colleagues agreed that if a student accused of plagiarism offered the same excuse to a faculty member—"I got both oral and written permission from my friend to copy his paper without proper citation"—the instruction would probably subject him/her to the school's disciplinary process. The colleagues' main concern now, however, became whether the AACSB would persuade **Dean Doty** and President Thames to follow USM's rules and AACSB standards and advice.

### **The Academic Integrity Policy**

In another secret communication with the AACSB, **Dean Doty** characterized copying Syracuse's Academic Integrity Policy as "benchmarking." He wrote Dean Ted Cummings, University of Houston, Clear Water, who was Chairman of the AACSB Peer Visitation Team:

As with other matters, we have permission to use the documents. Maybe you should ask [colleague from Syracuse] if he is okay with USM benchmarking Whitman School on Academic Integrity – there [sic] policy is very good and well tested. We started with their document and edited it for our purposes. We did not reinvent the wheel!

Colleagues were unanimous that benchmarking has about as much to do with copying of someone else's writing without attribution as the EEOC has to do with investigating plagiarism. Absurd in both instances. (See a definition of benchmarking.)

**Dean Doty** and Marketing Professor Laurie Babin seemed to use Syracuse's Academic Integrity Policy as boilerplate. For example, USM's "College of Business" was substituted for the Whitman School's name, while the wording and substance of the work were retained. As noted above, by comparison, the Whitman School chose to give credit for the ideas and work of the creative sources of its Academic Integrity Policy. This indicated that Syracuse University did not consider the Academic Integrity Policy was boilerplate. Rather, Syracuse's extensive list of sources indicated that proper citation was appropriate.

Here's the punch line: Just about the only part of Syracuse's Academic Integrity Policy **not** copied without proper citation by **Dean Doty** and his colleagues was Syracuse's extensive list of citations giving credit to both internal and external sources .