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PART 6

What USM and AACSB Say

University of Southern Mississippi's Faculty Handbook promises diversity of thought, academic freedom of inquiry and speech, protection from retaliation, and the decentralization of shared governance:

“2.12 ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND SHARED GOVERNANCE

Academic freedom and shared governance are long-established and living principles at the University of Southern Mississippi. The University cherishes the free exchange of ideas, diversity of thought, joint decision making, and individuals' assumption of responsibility. Academic freedom is fundamental to the central values and purposes of a university, which in turn protects freedom of inquiry and speech. Faculty and students must be able to study, learn, speak, teach, research, and publish, without fear of intimidation or reprisal, free from political interference, in an environment of tolerance for and engagement with divergent opinions. Each faculty member is entitled to freedom from institutional censorship or disciplinary action in discussing his or her subject in the classroom, and when speaking or writing outside the classroom as an individual. It is understood, however, that with academic freedom there must be concomitant responsibility for statements, speeches, and actions.”

This research report structures USM's diversity standard in the following hypothesis²: **If** USM puts into practice its diversity standard, **then** its administrators and

² A form of inference for testing this instance of social reality is:

R → O

~O

Therefore, ~R,

where R is an institution's representation of mission, goal, principle, policy, procedure, code of ethics, or rule, and O is observation of a leader's or institution's behavior that reflects on its representation. (“R → O” is read as **If R, then O**. Tilde, “~”, indicates negation.) The form of inference structures valid reasoning—if the premises are true, *i.e.*, well-justified, so too is the conclusion. Validity is a step toward sound reasoning. If facts support the premises as well-justified, the conclusion is also well-justified. (Jeffrey) Valid reasoning is then sound. Sound reasoning is the gold standard of research. Note that a structure that accommodates an affirmative observation (O) of behavior is not offered. The purpose of tests of social reality is not to prove that institutional leaders are fulfilling their promises or representations. Rather, they are expected to function as promised. (DePree 2009) Note that if the reasoning and evidence provide a sound conclusion, the general hypothesis of institutional principles (rules) is refuted as any

faculty “cherish the free exchange of ideas, diversity of thought, joint decision making, and individuals’ assumption of responsibility” ... and ... “protects freedom of inquiry and speech. Faculty and students must be able to study, learn, speak, teach, research, and publish, without fear of intimidation or reprisal, free from political interference, in an environment of tolerance for and engagement with divergent opinions.”

AACSB’s standards promise similar commitments to diversity of ideas:

“SECTION 1. ELIGIBILITY PROCEDURES FOR AACSB INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION. Characteristics of institutions that offer business degree programs bear on the quality of those programs and on the educational value created for their students...An institution must demonstrate these characteristics before it enters the initial accreditation review process and to maintain its accredited status...

E. Consistent with its mission and its cultural context, the institution must demonstrate diversity in its business programs.

INTERPRETATION: AACSB reaffirms its commitment to the concept that diversity in people and ideas enhances the educational experience in every management education program...At a minimum, the school must show that within this context its business programs include diverse viewpoints among participants and prepare graduates for careers in the global context. Furthermore, the school must show how it participates in the changing environment surrounding diversity within its area of influence and service. Accredited programs must demonstrate commitment and actions in support of diversity in the educational experience.” (AACSB July 1, 2009)

The AACSB’s diversity standard is structured in the following hypothesis: **If** the AACSB puts into practice its diversity standard, **then** its accredited members “must show that within this (education) context its business programs include diverse viewpoints

general statement would be refuted. Note that this does not prove that the entire institution does not follow its principles, but like a showing of a negative finding in science, the general theory is in need of revision or further testing.

among participants [and]...[a]ccredited programs must demonstrate commitment and actions in support of diversity in the educational experience.” (See, DePree 2008.)