

# University and AACSB Diversity\*

Interim Dean **Alvin Williams** and President **Martha Saunders**  
Exercise Power to Punish Legitimate Speech

**Chauncey M. DePree, Jr.**, DBA  
Professor  
School of Accountancy  
College of Business  
University of Southern Mississippi  
[m.depre@usm.edu](mailto:m.depre@usm.edu) or [marcdepre@gmail.com](mailto:marcdepre@gmail.com)  
601-297-3404

Key words: Critical Case Study, Organizational and Employee Silence, Diversity of Ideas, and Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB).

\*An earlier version of this paper was accepted by and presented at the 2010 Annual Meeting of the American Accounting Association.

## **PART 1**

### **Introduction**

How do we credibly inform each other about important behavior of our leaders, administrators, and colleagues? Organizations, including universities, announce good news through their public relations departments. Good news, if accurate and complete, is welcome by all. Maintaining a favorable public image, however, does not include volunteering unfavorable information. Furthermore, unless organizations are perfect, accurate information that signals failings or misconduct is essential for correcting problems. Accurate information about failings or misconduct, however, may not be easy to come by. Morrison and Milliken (2000) offer that “most employees know the truth about certain issues and problems within the organization yet dare not speak that truth to superiors.” (References are included at the end of the last Part in this series.) Is that true

for all organizations, even universities? What are the consequences? Are there implications for your safety? For the economy? For your employment? For your retirement account?

### **Diversity**

Diversity commonly refers to tolerance of different races and genders of elected officials, employees, customers, clients, patients, colleagues, faculty, students, etc. For example, “Diversity in Academe,” in the September 24, 2010 special issue of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, editors and reporters devoted the entire discussion of diversity to race and gender in higher education. Diversity, nevertheless, has a broader meaning than implied by popular culture. It includes tolerance of different ideas—arguably the most important feature of diversity without which all other notions of diversity depend for actualization.