

“Without Proper Citation”

A Report on the Doty Administration’s Actions in the Days after the AACSB Plagiarism Allegations

Although a number of scandals over the past several months have shaken the foundation of Harold Doty’s administration of USM’s College of Business, none have provided as much intrigue as the scandal regarding the allegations that the CoB copied, “without proper citation,” AACSB definitions (for “participating and supporting faculty”) from another institution. After breaking the story in November of 2006, USMNEWS.NET has obtained a batch of official documents that show what appears to be an attempted cover-up, one that fails to heed the ageless political advice that the cover-up is often worse than the incident in question. However, in this case both the alleged incident and the apparent cover-up are particularly egregious. This report recounts, using official documents, the details of both.

From Bad Intentions

On 10 November 2006 a document entitled “Guidelines for Participating and Supporting Faculty” was circulated, on behalf of AACSB Accreditation Committee Chairman George Carter, to CoB faculty. This document was to become part of the CoB’s official dossier for AACSB Re-accreditation in the spring of 2007.¹ After an investigation by reporters at USMNEWS.NET revealed that the document was substantially copied from AACSB documents from The Harmon College of Business at Central Missouri State University, USMNEWS.NET broke the plagiarism allegations story on its news ticker as well as on its main page. At about that time the editor of USMNEWS.NET reported the allegation to Julianne Iannarelli at the AACSB’s national headquarters (via e-mail).

That the CoB administration would resort to such an act is not unfathomable. By November of 2006, USMNEWS.NET had already published a number of reports indicating that the CoB’s AACSB Re-affirmation efforts were not going well. The news had also broken that the CoB had contracted with former SAIS Director James Crockett to write the separate Accounting accreditation reports, a job Crockett had done a decade earlier. This time, however, the selection of Crockett came only weeks after the news had broken that Crockett may have over-billed USM and MS taxpayers at least as much as \$800, if not more, on conference trips that were closely tied to Crockett-family vacations and other outings.

Other reports at USMNEWS.NET showed that Doty and Associate Dean Farhang Niroomand had attended official AACSB conferences, but appeared to have avoided any significant participation therein. In one report, Niroomand’s own **Employee Travel Voucher** showed that he spent one of only a few days at the 2006 AACSB Meetings in Paris visiting the Louvre with various associates instead of attending “important” accreditation-related sessions. Other Mississippi Open Records Act-produced documents, along with public statements made by Doty, show that the CoB has spent at least \$100,000 on AACSB-related activities during the current re-accreditation cycle.

¹ On 8 December 2006, the CoB voted in favor of adopting the document contained in Carter’s e-mail. As such, that document was to be included with other materials that were meant to show how the CoB has improved since its previous AACSB accreditation in the mid to late 1990s. It is worth noting, however, that there were almost 10 votes *against* the document’s adoption at the 8-Dec-06 CoB faculty meeting.

Thus, the pressure to hold on to AACSB accreditation was weighing heavily on the Doty administration. Doty is even reported to have told close advisors that his career hinged on a successful February of 2007 AACSB Peer Review visit.

How heavy was the pressure? So much that, at the end of the CoB's fall semester faculty meeting, Doty "warned" CoB faculty that a covert plot to "sabotage" the college's re-accreditation efforts was afoot. In doing so, Doty appeared visibly shaken, perhaps showing the strain of a shaky AACSB re-affirmation effort on a first-time dean.

A Rush to Cover Up?

After reporting the alleged plagiarism to AACSB headquarters, USMNEWS.NET editor Marc DePree filed a MORA request of all documentation and exhibits regarding AACSB's notification of the CoB of the plagiarism allegations, as well as the CoB's response to plagiarism allegations (to AACSB officials). On 14 February 2007, USM legal counsel Lee Gore responded to that MORA request from DePree with the following letter:



The University of
Southern Mississippi

University Counsel

118 College Drive #10051
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
Tel: 601.261.2195
Fax: 601.261.2724
www.usm.edu

February 14, 2007

Rebecca Kathryn Jude, Esquire
Jude & Jude, PLLC
P. O. Box 17468
Hattiesburg, MS 39404-7468

Re: Dr. Marc DePree's Public Records Request of January 31, 2007

Dear Ms. Jude:

Enclosed please find the following responsive documents to the above referenced public records request:

1. An e-mail string sent to me on February 13, 2007 at 4:48 p.m. The second e-mail in that string is dated January 2, 2007 at 9:21 a.m. and is from Dean Harold Doty to Julianne Iannarelli (2 pages);
2. An e-mail string sent to me on February 13, 2007 at 4:52 p.m. The second e-mail in that string is dated January 30, 2007 at 3:29 p.m. and is from Dean Harold Doty to Ted Cummings (3 pages);
3. A one page statement captioned Elaboration of Participating/Supporting Faculty Definitions from the College of Business Administration;
4. A one page document captioned Elaboration of Participating/Supporting Faculty Definitions from the School of Professional Accountancy.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Lee P. Gore in black ink.

Lee P. Gore
University Counsel

LPG/mw

Enclosures

cc: Dr. Shelby F. Thames, President (w/ enclosures)
Dr. D. Jay Grimes, Provost (w/ enclosures)
Dean Harold Doty (w/ enclosures)

As the letter inserted above shows, a number of e-mail communications between USM's College of Business and various AACSB officials occurred in the days and weeks after USMNEWS.NET broke the plagiarism story. The first of these communications came from USM accounting professor Charles Jordan. That communication was directed to Joan Mansfield, Acting Dean of The Harmon College of Business at Central Missouri State University (CMSU; University of Central Missouri).

Charles Jordan Gets the Ball Rolling

Jordan's e-mail to Mansfield was sent on 19 November 2006, more than one week after the CoB e-mail (on behalf of George Carter) containing the "Guidelines for Supporting . . ." document – the document at the center of this current plagiarism scandal -- was circulated to all CoB faculty by the



Carter



Jordan



Mansfield

CoB Dean's Office. Jordan's e-mail to Mansfield is inserted below:

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CHARLES JORDAN TO JOAN MANSFIELD; SUBJECT: AACSB; DATE: 11/19/2006 4:51 PM
>>>"Charles Jordan" <charlesejordan@hotmail.com> 11/19/2006 4:51 PM
>>>
Joan,

My name is Charles Jordan; I'm an accounting professor at the university
of Southern Mississippi. This past spring, Barry Babin and I visited
CMSU as part of our peer visitation process for re-affirmation of AACSB
accreditation. We met with Jack Elfrink and several other senior
faculty of the HCBBA. The visit was beneficial as we shared ideas and
definitions concerning AACSB accreditation.

After my visit, Jack emailed me a copy of CMSU's draft for definitions
of participating and supporting faculty. I shared these definitions
with our accounting faculty, accreditation team, director, and dean. We
very much like these definitions and have tweaked them a bit to fit our
needs at USM, but they are largely the definitions Jack provided me. I
have attached a copy of the definitions we wish to use. We are putting
the finishing touches on our college of business and accounting
fifth-year maintenance reports, and our dean would like to get
permission from you to use these definitions in our reports without
proper citation. Not knowing that Jack had left CMSU, I emailed him
asking for permission. He received the email at WIU, and said he was
flattered that we would use the definitions and that he believed you
would have no problem with us using them. As the dean of the HCBBA at
CMSU, we of course would very much like your permission to use these
definitions. Please let me know if this is acceptable. Thanks for your
help.

Sincerely,
Charles

PS I apologize if you received two of these messages as I found a second
email address for you after I had already sent the first message.

Stay up-to-date with your friends through the windows Live Spaces
Friends list.

Joan Mansfield
Dean, Harmon College of Business Adm
ward Edwards 1620
University of Central Missouri
Warrensburg, MO 64093

Phone: 660-543-4560
Fax: 660-543-8350
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In the e-mail, Jordan tells Mansfield that Jack Elfrink, a senior business faculty member at CMSU (and former Dean), e-mailed to Jordan CMSU’s “definition of participating and supporting faculty” (during or after the spring of 2006). Jordan also tells Mansfield that he (Jordan) shared the document with USM’s accounting faculty, accreditation team (Carter, David Duhon, etc.), director (Roderick Posey and/or Stan Lewis), and Doty. Jordan states that these individuals liked the definitions so much that the CoB used them (after minor revisions) in its own AACSB report.



Duhon

Elfrink

Lewis

Posey

Jordan also writes that CoB Dean Harold Doty wanted Mansfield’s permission to use the CMSU definitions “without proper citation.” In other words, Jordan was seeking permission *ex post*, on behalf of Doty, from Mansfield to use the CMSU AACSB definitions without providing proper source attribution for the CoB’s Peer Review Team. Thus, Jordan appears to have been seeking permission to “pull the wool over the eyes” of the CoB’s visit team.

Jordan’s e-mail also informs Mansfield that he had contacted Elfrink (at Elfrink’s new job as Accounting Chair at Western Illinois University) and had received Elfrink’s permission to use the definitions.² Upon closing his e-mail to Mansfield, Jordan states that the CoB will await Mansfield’s response. That response, sent to Jordan on 20 November 2007, is inserted below:

From: "Joan Neal-Mansfield" <neal@cmsu1.cmsu.edu>
To: "Charles Jordan" <charlesjordan@hotmail.com>
Subject: Re: Participating/Supporting Faculty
Date: Mon, 20 Nov 2007 08:54:00 -0600

Charles,
That's great that you want to use our definitions! That would be fine with us. Yes, Jack left us this summer; he retired from Central and went to Western Illinois, thus the need for an interim dean. Our next reaffirmation visit is Fall 09 so we are just starting to get our list of peer and aspirant institutions ready. If you need an approval letter that is more formal than email, just let me know.....

² By the time Jordan contacted Elfrink to ask for permission to use the CMSU definitions “without proper citation,” Elfrink had taken an administrative post in the business school at Western Illinois University. Thus, although he did so anyway, Elfrink was not in a position to grant USM’s Jordan permission to use CMSU’s participating/supporting faculty definitions.

Thus, with the e-mail inserted above, Mansfield had given permission for the CoB to use CMSU's definitions "without proper citation."

Jordan and Doty Spread the "Good News"

At this point in the chronology, Jordan informed Doty and Carter that the CoB had the blessing of both Elfrink and Mansfield to use CMSU's definitions. In the e-mail below, dated 1 December 2006, Jordan informs Doty and Carter that Mansfield had given permission to the CoB to use the CMSU definitions:

From: Charles Jordan [mailto:charlesejordan@hotmail.com]
Sent: Friday, December 01, 2006 2:41 PM
To: harold.doty@usm.edu; george.cargen@usm.edu
Subject: FW: Re: Participating/supporting faculty

George & Harold,

Attached is my correspondence with Joan Neal-Mansfield, dean of the HCBA at CMSU, regarding permission to use the CMSU definitions in our reports. As you can see, I clearly asked permission to use the adapted definitions in our maintenance reports without proper citation, and Joan granted us permission. I sent her a reply thanking her and telling her a formal letter was not necessary since her email response would suffice.

Charles

Later, on 30 January 2007, just before the AACSB Peer Review Team visited the CoB, Doty sent all of the information produced by Jordan's permission expedition to Ted Cummings, the CoB's Peer Team Leader, and Dean of the School of Business at the University of Houston at Clear Lake:

From: Harold Doty [mailto:Harold.Doty@usm.edu]
Sent: Tuesday, January 30, 2007 3:29 PM
To: 'cummings@uhcl.edu'
Subject: FW: Re: Participating/supporting faculty

Ted, Below are copies of the email exchange that document our formal written request to use the materials CMSU. The underlining was added by me.

Charles,
That's great that you want to use our definitions! That would be fine with us. Yes, Jack left us this summer, he retired from Central and went to Western Illinois, thus the need for an interim dean. Our next reaffirmation visit is Fall 09 so we are just starting to get our list of peer and aspirant institutions ready. If you need an approval letter that is more formal than email, just let me know.
>>>"Charles Jordan" <charlesejordan@hotmail.com> 11/19/2006 4:51 PM
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Joan,

My name is Charles Jordan; I'm an accounting professor at the University of Southern Mississippi. This past spring, Barry Babin and I visited CMSU as part of our peer visitation process for re-affirmation of AACSB accreditation. We met with Jack Elfrink and several other senior faculty of the HCBA. The visit was beneficial as we shared ideas and definitions concerning AACSB accreditation.

After my visit, Jack emailed me a copy of CMSU's draft for definitions of participating and supporting faculty. I shared these definitions with our accounting faculty, accreditation team, director, and dean. We very much like these definitions and have tweaked them a bit to fit our needs at USM, but they are largely the definitions Jack provided me. I have attached a copy of the definitions we wish to use. We are putting the finishing touches on our college of business and accounting five-year maintenance reports, and our dean would like to get permission from you to use these definitions in our reports without

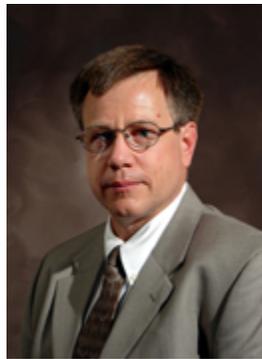
proper citation. Not knowing that Jack had left CMSU, I emailed him asking for permission. He received the email at WIU, and said he was flattered that we would use the definitions and that he believed you would have no problem with us using them. As the dean of the HCBA at CMSU, we of course would very much like your permission to use these definitions. Please let me know if this is acceptable. Thanks for your help.

D. Harold Doty
Dean, College of Business
University of Southern Mississippi
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Notice that, at the beginning of his 30 January 2007 e-mail to Cummings, Doty does not explicitly associate himself with the phrase “without proper citation.” He (Doty) simply tells Cummings that



Cummings



Doty

the CoB sought permission, through Jordan, to use the CMSU definitions.

Did Karen Tarnoff's Comments Scare Doty?

In “Just How Nervous are the CoB's Admins and AACSB Leaders about the Plagiarism Allegations? See for Yourself,” posted to USMNEWS.NET on 20 January 2007, details of Karen Tarnoff's Assurance of Learning seminar in the CoB (on 19-Jan-07) are provided. As USMNEWS.NET reported earlier, Tarnoff, from East Tennessee State University, serves as the CoB's official AACSB consultant. In that report, the following dialogue from Tarnoff's AOL seminar appears:

Tarnoff: “. . . One of the things [we tell people is that] the degree of the sophistication of the measures does not nearly, for AOL, have to rise to the level it would for your research to be publishable. It can be simple, and should be simple, and straightforward. Later on you can . . . [think] more about validity and reliability . . . You are not required to set a target level for each performance, although you may and in many cases you all have . . . AACSB does not require that you set those, but it's very helpful to set them so you know that you're moving toward that target . . .”

Osmonbekov: “Have you [at East Tennessee State University] done this . . . ?”

Tarnoff: “Have we done this? Yes because our QEP . . . requires that we do that for the University . . .”

Osmonbekov: “. . . can we just copy yours?”

[audience erupts in laughter]

Tarnoff [jokingly]: “Do you [all] have a Platinum Card?”

After a lengthy question by **Jon Carr**, **Tarnoff** revisited **Osmonbekov**’s question with:

Tarnoff: “. . . Let me come back to this question . . . it’s an important question. We . . . asked in . . . Assessment Training [for them to] . . . tell us what we need to do. . . The problem with that is that your mission is unlike anyone else’s. Your students . . . need to achieve that educational mission, unlike anyone else’s. . . the process that you go through to build rubrics or define learning objectives or to analyze data – the process is very important . . . That dialogue that you have is . . . invaluable because you’re sharing expectations with each other . . . It think there’s a real danger in going out and adopting another school’s metric and definitions because they won’t fit your programs . . .”

After another question from the audience, EFIB Chairman **George Carter** joined in with:

Carter: “I just want to point out that . . . AACSB requires us to actually go visit the campuses of peer and aspirant institutions to learn what they do so we can improve . . . We do, and East Tennessee is one of our peer institutions, so we do . . . see these practices in place and adopt what we think is important, what’s useful . . .”

Tarnoff: “I would just caution you drastically against ‘buying’ somebody else’s . . .”

Carter: “‘Buying’ a document . . . is unwise.”

Tarnoff: “Yes, when the [AACSB] Team comes, if they find out that’s what you’ve done, you’d . . . [have difficulty getting passed] . . . assuredly. That would be a hot-button issue.”

Through the dialogue above, Tarnoff made it very clear to the CoB that copying AACSB definitions and other materials from another university is not an acceptable practice by any AACSB-accredited college or school of business.³

Piecing it all Together

³ In the dialogue above, “Osmonbekov” and “Carr” are Talai Osmonbekov and Jon Carr, assistant professor of marketing and associate professor of management, respectively. See the original report for discussion on Tarnoff’s facetious use of the word “buying.”

The information detailed above shows that USMNEWS.NET's allegation of plagiarism (in November of 2006) regarding the CoB's "participating and supporting faculty" definitions created a stir within the CoB's administration. Led by Dean Harold Doty, administrators appear to have attempted to cover questionable behavior by seeking permission, *ex post*, for their actions. To do so, Doty pushed accounting professor Charles Jordan into the forefront. Jordan sought permission from administrators at two separate universities to use, "without proper citation," the AACSB definitions developed by Central Missouri State University.

Investigative reporting by USMNEWS.NET of Karen Tarnoff's visit to the CoB on 19 January 2007 once again appears to have led to heightened concern within the CoB's administrative ranks. At that point, on 30 January 2007, Doty decided to reveal to the CoB's AACSB Peer Review Team leader, Ted Cummings, all of Jordan's documentation showing that the CoB had adopted CMSU's "participating and supporting faculty" definitions *without proper citation*.

The Pundits Speak Out

As many USMNEWS.NET readers now know, various pundits began chiming in on events surrounding the plagiarism allegations shortly after the news began to surface. One of the more popular columns on administrative plagiarism in the *31st & Pearl* series is entitled "The CoB's 'Jungle Rules' Ethos". This is inserted below:

31st & Pearl

The CoB's "Jungle Rules" Ethos

At the beginning of his job interview presentation in September of 2005, CoB Dean Harold Doty told faculty and administrators at the University of South Florida that, when it came to asking questions during a presentation, he favors "jungle rules." Unfortunately, for those in the CoB, many of whom were digging out from under the devastation of Hurricane Katrina at the time Doty made this remark, "jungle rules" pretty much describes the CoB's ethos, in all things academic, since Doty's arrival in the summer of 2003. Because of that, the CoB now faces a second plagiarism scandal, and one that comes on the heels of another that played a role in what is being described as a "probation" ruling coming to the CoB from the AACSB.

The human cost of this ethos is mounting. Accounting professor Charles Jordan will long be linked to the phrase "without proper citation." There is nothing about that phrase that any academic would, nor should, want to be associated with, in the CoB or elsewhere. Given the half-life of CoB stories, this one will be around for quite some time. As for Laurie Babin's participation in the alleged plagiarism of the CoB's Academic Integrity Policy, the stories will live on as well. However, in this case the stories will more than likely be perpetuated by Babin's students -- past, present, and future -- given her past crusades against similar behavior within their ranks.

One of the main rules of lifeguard safety is to avoid becoming a casualty from the distress of another. Lifeguards are taught methods to avoid becoming a drowning victim at the hands of the person or persons they seek to rescue. Sadly, many in the CoB are falling victim to the flailing arms of Doty and other CoB administrators who are drowning in an angry sea of controversy and misguided actions. The "jungle rules" ethos that pervades the CoB is doing as much harm to those attempting to support its creators as it is to anyone else.

31st & Pearl is a series housed at usmpride.com that features commentary on aspects of life in the CoB from a variety of columnists.

The 'Jungle Rules' columnist makes the point that the phrase "without proper citation" will long be linked to accounting Professor Charles Jordan as a result of his (Jordan's) participation in the *participating and supporting faculty definitions* copying scandal in the CoB. The column above also makes mention of the latest copying scandal to shake the CoB -- one involving CoB marketing professor Laurie Babin and Syracuse University.

As USMNEWS.NET editor Marc DePree wrote in a Feb-2007 letter to USM President Shelby Thames, the actions of the CoB's current administration, especially those regarding the plagiarism allegations, continue to make fools out of the University and its administration. However, Thames and other high ranking USM officials (e.g., Provost Jay Grimes) continue to remain silent on these and other ethics-related problems coming out of the CoB. In doing so, it's difficult to draw any conclusion other than the one that says USM sanctions copying the work of others *without proper citation* so long as permission was granted at some point in the process by the work's original author. As this new "doctrine" makes its way into CoB classrooms over the semesters to come -- and word is now circulating that this may already be occurring -- you may want to stay tuned into USMNEWS.NET for additional reports.