

Don't Worry, Be Happy

The surviving cast from the Doty deanship plague is hoping to be happy under new Dean Lance Nail. That would be a nice change. So would having rules that are uniformly enforced; fair treatment in scheduling, advising and evaluations; and, a positive, non-hostile work environment. It makes sense that if – if – you want productive faculty members, they cannot hate to come through doors in the morning and cannot wait to escape back through them in the afternoons.

Some psychologists say that happiness is better defined as the degree of difference between how you want to be treated and how you are treated. That differential has been far too great in the last several years in the CoB. Note it is not how you *expect* to be treated and how you are treated, because that, for too many in the CoB, is not a big difference. Over the sliding years of deanship decay since the Tyrone Black days (not that those years were a model, but by comparison they seem superior), some surviving faculty members have been subject to arbitrary, abusive, and punitive measures. How many faculty is not known, but any is too many. Dean Nail needs to understand that aspect of the CoB he is about to lead. He should not take the Gunther approach of “I am not an archaeologist”: the past is over, I was not here, it is not my fault, and it is totally irrelevant. The past *does* matter to understand certain people, processes and practices. This was one of many of Gunther's mistakes as dean. The Doty approach was to also ignore the past, but to do so because – in his mind only – he was clearly smarter than everyone else in the CoB. Quite obviously that too was proven untrue. He was also offensive in his approach to most people in the CoB, which, quite naturally, created much widespread unhappiness. His conduct also drove away many productive faculty members that Dean Nail will wish were still here.

Is there a secret design for Dean Nail to succeed in the CoB? Not in the sense of which moves to make, in what order, or in what time frame; there is if he keeps the overall happiness factor in mind. No one can make everyone happy. Some people – apparently - do not want to be happy. Nail does not need to pander, needlessly placate, or over-promise. He needs to make changes that make sense (perhaps departmental reorganizations), in a proper time (when he has talked to people and has a good idea of what makes sense for the CoB now), and for proper reasons (such as removing George Carter as Chair of EFIB to start with at least a semi-clean slate of administrators). Moves such as these will produce a much narrower gap between how CoB faculty members want to be treated and how they are treated. It will also start the many new faculty members in a correct manner.

We wish Dr. Nail much success and happiness in the CoB.