

Praying to the Porcelain Gods

"Restroom closed." "Use Bathroom on 2nd Floor."

Such statements were hanging in the doorways of the restrooms in Greene Hall during the week of January 15, 2007. Why, you ask? Another brilliant stroke by Duane Harold Doty.

AACSB is coming soon. Amidst the chaotic conclusion to the ill-fated HVAC project – which, by the way was only 5 months (an entire semester) behind the schedule that Doty and others sold to CoB faculty at the outset – Doty decided to undertake a few more "facelift" items, including the old stand-by: more classroom technology. Doty even ordered replacement toilets and urinals for the Greene Hall bathrooms. What was wrong with the old ones, you ask? To this point, our answer is "nothing," unless you count age and looking a little old-fashioned. In fact, the replacement of all porcelain fixtures in Greene Hall could serve as a direct reflection of the Doty administration's management style.

There was really nothing wrong with the old fixtures. They were not stylish (probably installed in the 1960's), but they were functional. Replacing old with new isn't really about function for Doty, it's about changing everything – leaving no stone unturned. Creating new positions and programs, changing names of programs, reorganizing the BAC professorship system, killing the BAC scholar system, painting the exterior of the building, taking classroom space for interview suites, replacing the HVAC, and now changing toilets are all part of Doty's mission to erase any possible remnant of the CoB that was and to replace it with the CoB that will be. The usmpride.com op-ed piece "Black to Fade" addressed this situation, but what we're seeing now is a continuation.

Oddly enough, Doty's "no stone unturned" mission reveals his true nature in an apropos manner. It is widely known that Doty and USM President Shelby Thames do not coexist well, mostly because, in science terms, like particles repel each other. It is telling, then, that when Thames was promoted to the presidency at USM, one of his slogans was "no stone unturned" – Thames vowed to shake USM to its core, and he succeeded. As Thames has used the past five years in an attempt to remake all vestiges of the 30-year Aubrey Lucas administration, so has Doty destroyed the Greene, Black, and Gunther legacies. Fortunately for Doty, the administrative structure that served Greene, Black, and Gunther was more than willing to assist Doty in his destruction.

Gone are the days of hiring based on research record or teaching ability. These are the days of the "captured" candidate. Gone is any hope of a college-wide progress in research. These are the days of a provincial favor-trading system extraordinaire. Gone are the days when true teaching was valued.

These are the days of grade inflation, secret degrees, and independent studies to get the most students into and out of the business school's rolls. Gone, gone, gone.

Doty the dean was unqualified for the post when Thames hired him, and he's apparently unqualified for any of the numerous dean positions for which he's applied in the past three years. North Florida, South Florida, Florida Atlantic, Texas Christian, Texas-El Paso, and others have marked Doty's file "Not Worthy." Now, Doty's banking on his ability to get USM through AACSB reaffirmation as his ticket out of Hattiesburg.

With an accreditation document appears to have been copied from AACSB materials housed at Central Missouri State University, a bumbling accreditation team led(?) by Carter and Duhon, a warmed-over AACSB report writer in Crockett, a fresh coat of paint on the Greene Hall bathroom entrance floors, and a new set of commodes in the Greene Hall bathrooms, Doty appears to be offering up a prayer that he will be able to parlay AACSB reaffirmation into another job and get the hell out of Hattiesburg. One might say that he's offering up a prayer to the porcelain gods (traditional maxim notwithstanding).

Here's hoping that, in this case, prayers are answered swiftly.