

The Perfect Hire for the CoB

In any organization, hiring is a difficult process. Those making decisions want to achieve certain goals. Sometimes, organizations like colleges and universities (and their subordinate units) want to increase their productivity, raise their profile, or achieve recognition in some manner (quality of education, etc.).

At USM's CoB, the Number One factor in hiring during the early days of the Ty Black Era was quality – hire people who would move the CoB forward. During this time, the quality of one's vita outweighed considerations such as pedigree or friendliness. If you could publish, you were a great candidate for USM.

From the midway point of Black's tenure as dean through the first year or two of the Harold Doty Era, pedigree and collegiality became equal with vita quality in terms of weight in the hiring process. If an individual came from a respectable school, could become part of the team, and could do a good job, then they would be a good hire for USM.

In the recent portion of the Doty Era, however, the hiring process has been captured by those who seek loyalty and support – since Doty can win neither, he must buy them and/or hire them. While reading Dr. Franklin Mixon's grievance appeal document (regarding the "Six Onerous Factors" that distinguish his Spring 2007 teaching schedule from others'), this author determined to uncover the factors that make an individual a "good hire" for the Doty Regime. They are

1. Potential for Financial Difficulty. If an individual truly depends on his or her job at USM to survive, then he or she is less liable to oppose the administrative structure in the CoB. This manifests itself in several ways, all of which make a candidate attractive to the Doty Toadies:
 - a. Individuals who are married. A married person has responsibilities to another person. As such, deciding to fight the administration is a more complicated decision. This effect is magnified if USM can hire a married couple at the same time.
 - b. Individuals who are divorced. Divorced individuals often have financial constraints that can serve to tie them to a job, making dissent less likely.
 - c. Individuals with children. Children add a much greater financial responsibility than even a marriage does. More specifically, divorced individuals with children are especially vulnerable. They need their jobs and job stability, and they'll keep quiet to keep their jobs.
2. Prior Job Failure. CoB administrators have begun to habitually hire individuals who have failed to achieve tenure at another institution. While this is related to financial difficulties, several case studies suggest that individuals who have

“busted tenure” elsewhere are just happy to have a job and will not oppose an administrator for fear of being labeled a “pariah.”

3. USM as an Ultimate Job. Manifested as
 - a. Individuals whose pedigrees and/or training dictate that USM really should be above their reach without significant academic productivity. Take, for instance, individuals with Tier IV terminal degrees, online terminal degrees, or with a severe social/language situation (i.e., those who cannot teach well because of antisocial behavior or inability to speak English well). If USM is the best job these individuals could ever get, would they take a chance on taking a stand on principles? Probably not.
 - b. Those who have bachelors or masters degrees from USM. These individuals view Hattiesburg as home, and many of them are from the geographic area, in fact. Moving to USM would mean moving back close to family and friends, and to speak out would risk a storybook existence.
4. Those with existing or past family ties to USM. These individuals understand the game and don't want to embarrass their predecessors or extant family members at USM.

If you break it down, there is a profile for the perfect USM CoB hire under Doty: An individual with family (spousal and/or children) responsibilities, a weak pedigree, poor prior job performance, and at least one pre-terminal degree from USM.

Who does Doty NOT want? Single individuals with no children, decent pedigrees, decent publication records (especially those with a terminal degree in a very lucrative job market) need not apply. If one considers the hires made under Doty, how do the hires stack up against these criteria?

As an addendum, think of how Doty's supporters mentor new hires from Day One. New hires are encouraged to purchase expensive homes in expensive neighborhoods (Canebrake, Woodstone, Timberton, and others) – after all, they're making real money. New hires are encouraged to plug into the Hattiesburg social scene, and that requires a stay-at-home mom, an expensive sport utility, and (if not already present) a child or two. Maybe even private school education. If the Doty Toadies can get the new folks financial tied to their jobs at USM, then the new hires are under control, and the status quo can be maintained.

New hires should heed the words printed months ago at usmpride. Live frugally. Keep your mobility. Maintain control over your own life. Understand that if you do these things, you'll be a threat to the Dotys, the Babins, the Carters, the Bushardts, and the Niroomands of the world.

It's all about control.