

31st & Pearl

Does AACSB Grade on the Curve?

Given the way things are going in the CoB these days, one has to hope that officials at the AACSB grade on the curve. All indications are that they do, especially considering the CoB's treatment after February of 2007. Although the CoB was handed what is being called a "6th Year Review" or "AACSB Probation," things could have been much worse. There were some who thought the CoB's case called for rescinding the CoB's accreditation status outright.

It's difficult to know now if the spring 2008 visit will go any better than that of '07. So few have seen the report, which was due on 15-Oct-07, that there is hardly anything being said about it. It seems that the CoB's administration waited until summer of 2007 to get started working on the problems that AACSB pointed out back in Feb-07, and even then only the CoB's management team and the College Advisory Committee appeared to have been involved. The faculty passed two key documents -- a new Mission Statement and a new set of P&T policies, both drafted in secret over the summer of 2007 -- at its 31-Aug-07 convocation with almost zero discussion about either one. Neither of these, particularly the latter, is stellar.

Despite all of the problems that exist, I, for one, still maintain that the CoB will be awarded a clean bill health this time around. Even so, when the 2012 Peer Review Teams arrives in Hattiesburg to do this all over again, it will have been the third time in six years that the AACSB has had to visit USM's College of Business to check on the quality of its faculty and programs. Three times in six years -- that comes to every other year over a six year period of time. Why would an organization that has had to sink so many resources into policing a single institution not recognize the problems as systemic? That is clearly a question only the AACSB can answer at this point. If I am correct in my assessment of the outcome of this round, one thing is certain -- that many other institutions will have gone to school on just how little effort needs to go into getting a successful outcome from the AACSB.