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The Chronicle of Higher Education reported an article on [May 15, 2013](#) entitled “Avoiding a Failed Search” by Diane M. Fennig.

Ms. Fennig began her article by noting “Even in a buyer’s market, administrative searches fail more often than you would think.” She then offered “a few tips to keep it from happening to you.”

I offered the following comment. It was taken down. I put it back up. It was taken down, again. And I put it back up, again. This went on for several iterations. I wonder who requested it be taken down? They might better respond to my comment in public rather than sneaking around behind the scenes to deny my speech. But that is, after all, the *modus operandi* of people who will not tolerate others speaking truth and offering criticism.

At our school—University of Southern Mississippi, like others--the selection of university president is done in secret and made by trustees, in our case, the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning. We learn who is selected when s/he is announced as the “preferred candidate.” On that day, s/he is paraded on campus in the morning, and the IHL affirms her/him that afternoon. That’s called transparency at our school. Here’s the problem. The IHL has hired several university “leaders” at Southern Miss over the past decade or so only to be “fired” under clouds of scandals.

Let’s look at the recent selection. IHL Commissioner Hank Bounds is reported by several news organization as saying that “The fact of the matter is he [Rodney Bennett] was the very most qualified person for the job.”

Let’s think about that: “The fact of the matter is he [Mr. Bennett] was the very most qualified person for the job.”

Assume Mr. Bounds is telling us the truth. That Mr. Bennett is the “very most qualified person for the job.” Dr. Bennett is the best applicant in the pool of applicants the IHL had to choose from.

If this is really true, and it’s hard to tell because Mr. Bounds et al are so used to spouting PR nonsense and operating in secrecy, USM is in need of real change.

Here’s why: After many requests and delays, we finally got Mr. Bennett’s CV. That’s right. I wonder if the IHL asked for a copy during the recent interview process?

Here’s Mr. Bennett’s research as reported in his current CV.

Research for Publication: Barham, J.D., & Bennett, R.D. (2005) Understanding the Use

of Value Statements in Student Affairs Practice, Data collection in progress.

That's it. Nothing more reported in his current CV and nothing was found in an internet search. Note his one and only research project has not been published. It is merely "Research for Publication." The authors are still, since 2005, in the "data collection in progress" phase of their research.

Mr. Bennett's record with regard to courses taught is sparse, too. It includes, however, a doctoral level course. Mr. Bennett's discipline—Educational Administration—seems to warrant a faculty member without any peer-reviewed published research to teach a doctoral level course. Furthermore, he was a tenured Associate Professor without any peer reviewed, published research. His service and experience lack important university functions. See, usmnews.net for details and Mr. Bennett's CV.

The IHL spends a small fortune employing search firms to help it identify "leadership."

IHL and USM delays providing Mr. Bennett's CV now make sense.

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