

Dear usmnews.net

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Last year Greg Lassen [former VP for Finance at USM] was in the market looking for a job as a university president. His second interview was at Eastern Kentucky University. Fortunately, for Eastern Kentucky, the search was “open”. Take a look at the following link [entitled] [Lassen's Sloppy Scholarship](#).

Here is a quote from the link.

Finally, I was disturbed by the sloppy scholarship in Mr. Lassen's manuscript. At one point, he paraphrases the work of George W. F. Hegel and provides a citation from 1942. Imagine my surprise to see that Herr Hegel was still publishing 111 years after his death! Of course, this is being nit-picky and focusing on a simple error. Surely the 1942 date is a re-print and that fact would be evident by checking the references page. A quick look at the bibliography revealed that not only did Mr. Lassen repeat the mistake, but compounded it by providing an incorrect title for Hegel's book – it is *Elements of a Philosophy of Right*, not simply *The Philosophy of Right* as recorded by Mr. Lassen. He also repeated this mistake on numerous occasions including citing Thomas Hobbes' Leviathan as published several hundred years after the philosopher's death.

As a faculty member at Eastern, I would like to see our university become more academically rigorous. We should demand that our next president display such rigor in his own academic works.

The “manuscript” discussed in the quote was Mr. Lassen's dissertation from his Ph.D. program in political science and international affairs at Southern Miss.

I wonder if the people [USM faculty] who signed off on this dissertation are embarrassed.

Name withheld

Dear Name withheld,

After receiving your note, usmnews.net did a little additional looking. The link you cite appears to be a follow up to a report called “[On The Record with Gregg Lassen](#)”. In a cringe worthy comment, the writer observes,

All of the material contained herein is cited or linked to the original source for those who may wish to dig a bit deeper. And there has been ample faculty interest in Lassen's scholarship. The chatter on campus seems to be whether or

not Lassen's dissertation would have met the requirements for a Master's Thesis at ECU. There is less doubt among the faculty that it fails to stand up to academic rigor typically required of a dissertation. Ouch.

The bad news is that USM had a committee that blessed a dissertation that likely would not have "met the requirements for a Master's Thesis at ECU." Bear in mind, ECU is not Harvard or the University of Chicago. It is a regional school of something over 13,000 students.

The good news is that ECU conducted an open search for its new president. Names were disclosed permitting the faculty and public to conduct their own assessment of each candidate. The faculty was not simply presented with a "preferred candidate" who the IHL claimed was the "best".

With that said, take a look at Dr. Bennett's dissertation. Ask yourself if Dr. Bennett's dissertation *should* have met the requirements for a Master's Thesis at USM. (I use the word "*should*" because, if Lassen's scholarship is the standard at USM, Dr. Bennett's dissertation might have passed muster, too.)