

Editorial

How do we measure administrators' performance?

How about comparing administrators' own words with their actions?

On September 10, 2014, [Southern Miss Now](#)—a USM public relations publication—crowed “When presented a choice between bigger or better, USM will choose better - every time. Our long-term plan is to grow enrollment with more academically qualified students, supported by a highly qualified and student-centered faculty,” USM President Rodney Bennett said.

Not only has enrollment dropped on Bennett's watch, if his vice president for finance and administration is to be believed, Bennett is eagerly admitting students who are not ready to begin college level academic work. Take a look at the recent article in The Hattiesburg American, [Enrollment decline leads to budget cuts at USM](#), HA, July 4, 2015

“Enrollment decreased by 151 students in fall 2012. It went down by 797 students in fall 2013 and 457 students in fall 2014.”

Vinzant (Douglas Vinzant, vice president for finance and administration) said the university is working to increase enrollment again.

"We have struggled with retention and we have struggled with recruitment and we are addressing those in a number of ways," he said. "If you fail to address those things, you're going to have to balance revenue and expense."

Vinzant said there are multiple factors that play into increasing enrollment.

In terms of retention, the university must help students who are struggling in their courses so they can complete them and move on in their program of study. There is also help that must be given to the students who are not sufficiently prepared to be successful, he said.

Then, there are the students who aren't ready for college.

"Students who have come to us wanting a college education but haven't taken the courses necessary to enroll," Vinzant said. "It's not only the subject matter they need preparation in, it's how to study at the college level."