

We continue a series recounting what a number of readers have characterized as misconduct and stupidity of past and current University of Southern Mississippi faculty and administrators. The facts underlying these conclusions have been fully documented. When one reader suggested this series, he opined “before someone comes to Southern Miss as a student or puts a career on the line as faculty, “Ethics, Power and Academic Corruption” should be required reading.” The third installment follows. (See, the [first](#) and [second](#) installment here.)

Is Accreditation a Reliable Authority on Academic Quality?

Judith S. Eaton, President of the Council of Higher Education Accreditation, in “An Overview of U.S. Accreditation” (2006), claims that accreditation signals “a reliable authority on academic quality.” The AACSB is a member of CHEA. The AACSB is also explicit that it is a reliable authority on academic quality: “When a school is AACSB-accredited, it sends a message to students, parents, guidance counselors, employers, faculty/staff, and other schools that it is one of the best business schools in the world. AACSB accreditation differentiates your business and accounting programs from those at other institutions in terms of quality, rigor, and relevance.” (<http://www.aacsb.edu/accreditation/promotion/>. Last accessed June 2011.)

Does accreditation signal a reliable authority on academic quality? Part 1 of this research reports whether AACSB’s imprimatur of academic quality is reliable. Part 2 answers the question usually discussed among insiders only: Does the AACSB affirm plagiarizing other members’ (business colleges’) documents submitted in support of accreditation? And, are we witnessing new academic standards for faculty and students?

Research Method

Observations reported hereinafter were guided by scientific norms advanced by Argyris, Putnam and Smith (1985), and Cooper and Morgan (2008). They include a testable hypothesis, explicit inference, sufficient evidence, and alternative perspectives. Since an explicit form of inference structures the testable hypothesis and organizes alternative perspectives and evidence, they are presented next in Hypothesis and Explicit Inference. Sections that follow include College and University: Evidence and Alternative Perspectives; AACSB: Evidence and Alternative Perspectives; Discussion; and Limitations, Conclusions, and Recommendations.