

Is Accreditation Meaningful in Higher Education?

Too often, accreditation amounts to a fraud on the public. It is frequently understood as a fraud by insiders, faculty and administrators. I believe I established it was a fraud at the University of Southern Mississippi. More about that later.

Students and parents will learn hard and very expensive lessons by giving any weight to decisions based on a college or university representation of its accreditation. Yesterday's [*Chronicle of Higher Education*](#) is instructive:

July 11, 2013

2 For-Profit Universities Get Good News From Accreditors

By Eric Kelderman and Goldie Blumenstyk

Two of the nation's biggest for-profit-college companies, the Apollo Group and Bridgepoint Education, reported good news from their accreditors on Wednesday. Bridgepoint announced that its Ashford University had received initial accreditation from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, one of the nation's six regional accrediting bodies.

And Apollo reported that its University of Phoenix had escaped being placed on probation by its regional accreditor, the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, which renewed the 287,500-student university's accreditation for 10 more years while placing it "on notice." Notice is a status less serious than probation.

For-profit schools are notoriously very expensive and are...well, let's let a CHE commentator, an insider, describe the absurdity of accreditation:

Sadly, I spent a few years (both as a faculty member and an administrator) working in the for-profit sector. It was during that time that our school received accreditation from the Middle State Association and I am sorry to say that I was a part of that process. We put on a good show, enough to earn accreditation, and once the accreditation was earned, we went back to our sop...a_ in classes. The priority was get 'em in and get 'em out. No rigor. No standards. While we offered "academic" degrees, we were little more than a pathetic excuse for a vo-tech school. I went on to adjunct at several other for-profits hoping that things would be different. They were not. The goal...make a buck. Period.

Accreditation is not only not informative of what colleges and universities are doing or worth, accreditation does just the opposite. Accreditation promotes misconduct. And it's an expensive sop administrators offer to the uninformed as something productive.

And you can find the fraud right here in “River City,” AKA, Hattiesburg, MS. Explore the misconduct, past and present, of University of Southern Mississippi administrators in [***Ethics, Power, and Academic Corruption, Parts 1 and 2***](#) available at Amazon.

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