

Oops, passing everybody may have unintended consequences

Who's going to test the baccalaureate graduates? Except future employers?

Let's consider long term consequences of our recent article, **Guess how USM faculty will assure their school's funding?**

A short review: Associate Press, April 17, 2013, reported that "[College funding set for full \[IHL\] board vote.](#)"

Trustee Aubrey Patterson said he liked the system [the new formula meant to more fairly distribute state aid among the schools] because it was "performance driven" *paying universities for moving students through classes and achieving other goals...* (Emphasis added.)

And we asked, do you think faculty will figure out what they are expected to do? To assure state funding for their state university, USM, and by extension funding for their courses? And we answered, Nobody will have to tell faculty that Ds and Fs risk essential state funding, their courses and their jobs. Hey, it's easy. Pass students and graduate them. This kind of short-term mentality will solve the funding conundrum at USM. Our article predicted:

Prepare for a race to the bottom among Mississippi state supported "educational" institutions. As if they needed motivation to sink lower in the pecking order of quality universities in America.

And when USM wins that race to the bottom, what's waiting for its graduates?

Well, consider this: A movement that USM may ignore or miss altogether. While administrators and faculty focus on securing its share of state money by "moving students through classes and achieving other goals [like graduation]," they will miss what is occurring in the larger environment.

Consider an article in the April 22, 2013 issue of *Chronicle of Higher Education*: [Colleges Face a Reality Check From Powerful New Tools in Applicants' Hands.](#)

Applying ... financial metrics [like earnings of graduates] to higher education is often framed as trying to [measure the "return on investment," or ROI, of a college degree.](#) Measuring a degree as you would a stock investment makes many academics cringe...

But [supplying prospective students and their parents with information](#) to balance what is now a very emotional decision is about more than just ROI... College Reality Check ([collegerealitycheck.com](#)), designed to help parents

and students easily sort through the many factors they need to consider when choosing a college...

So in the long run, college officials who don't like being judged on such measures might best focus on improving their numbers...

Try collegerealitycheck.com. Select USM in comparison with other schools. What do you find?

USM is already well on its way to winning that race to the bottom?

While "college officials don't like being judged on such measures," USM "college officials" will be subject to the new reality they have helped create with its wasteful habits and mismanagement, which have translated to ever-increasing tuition and fees for students. Students and parents will more carefully review relevant and reliable information, and not just the public relations blather for which USM is well known.

The bottom line? USM will have to be more diligent than most schools improving the quality of education, not just passing and graduating student for a short-term gain of increasing state funding.

Will USM be successful improving its state funding **and** improving the quality of education? Current leadership at the IHL and USM barely pays lip service to quality education.