

*Editorial*

## Will USM disappear or merge in the next 10 to 15 years?

Here's some food for thought from [The Chronicle of Higher Education](#):

Last month Clayton M. Christensen, a Harvard Business School professor and champion of disruptive innovation, suggested in a New York Times essay he wrote with Michael B. Horn that the “bottom 25 percent of every tier” of colleges will disappear or merge in the next 10 to 15 years... Moody's Investors Service reports that net-tuition revenue—that's the cash colleges have left after giving out financial aid to students—is essentially flat or declining at three-fourths of public colleges and three-fifths of private colleges. What's more, a survey of more than 400 small private and regional public universities by The Chronicle this fall found that nearly half had missed their goals for either enrollment or net-tuition revenue. The question is whether institutions will quicken their pace of change to lower their costs and better serve the changing educational needs of students and the global economy.

If this doesn't sound like USM, you've missed many news reports from Mississippi's IHL, USM, and usmnews.net. The following are among the survival traits USM does not have:

The only way some colleges will survive is to form deeper academic alliances with other institutions, across town or across the country. By closely aligning with other institutions, colleges can share courses, either physically or virtually. They can also pare back entire academic departments, putting most of their resources toward making a few degree programs distinctive while leaving the rest to their partners. In some cases, the combined brand might be stronger than any of its individual institutions.

The leadership at the IHL and USM don't have a clue how to cope except to spend more on unnecessary administration and infrastructure—buildings and bureaucrats, and millions more on moribund athletic programs. When they try to cover the costs by raising tuition and fees, they are surprised when enrollment falls further eroding the primary source of financial support.