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Benedict's critics should do their homework



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Guest
Columnist

The Success Equals Effort Policy is designed to produce competent graduates in four years. The policy works in conjunction with other Benedict College policies, including a mandatory attendance policy and a Satisfactory Academic Progress policy that places a student on probation if his grade-point average goes below 2.0, and suspension if these conditions persist for more than one semester.

The fact is that in the most extreme case under the SEE Policy, a freshman who does 100 percent effort and supposedly learns nothing could not advance to the junior year. The math is left to the critics as Exercise No. 1. Yes, the SEE Policy rewards freshman and sophomore students for completing assignments and active participation in the learning process. Freshmen entering under the open enrollment policy are enrolled in a study skills and/or extended mathematics and English courses that meet five days per week.

An invitation is extended to open minds to explore the attendance and effort policies of higher education systems of India (where high-tech and other outsourcing income is expected to reach \$25 billion by 2005), which arguably produce some of the top scientists and engineers in the world. You'll find places such as the University of Delhi-DDUC that not only award "marks" for attendance and doing assignments, they also pay students cash for 90 percent or better attendance. Perhaps there is something to this theory that there is a direct correlation between coming to class, putting forth effort and obtaining knowledge. Travel, either literally or via the Web, to places outside of South Carolina is left to the critics as Exercise No. 2.

One critic asks, why not just keep them there for five years? Rather than testing innovative approaches and support systems, let's financially burden students from households with an average income under \$25,000 with an additional financial burden of 25 percent - some \$20,000. They certainly deserve to have to pay extra for exiting a public school system that's ranked at the bottom of the 50 states on SAT scores.

Miles To Go: South Carolina, published by Southern Education Foundation, states: "The lack of adequate college preparatory courses... in low-achieving schools are consigning low-income and minority-group students to an unequal and inferior education in South Carolina. The pipeline into higher educational opportunity is too narrow. South Carolina can and must do better."

At what point should the \$8,000-per-class differential in low versus high African-American student enrollment in South Carolina public school districts be addressed? Would the critics then suggest that the state transform its consigning practices to dollars to pay for the additional year or years? Judging the total educational system, not a select piece of policy publicized out of context, is left to the critics as Exercise No. 3.

Statements regarding accreditation are worthy of attention. Are the critics aware that a 100-point or any such grading system is not required for accreditation? Perhaps exploration of the grade-less student assessment system at fully accredited Alverno College in Milwaukee would be of interest. Be forewarned that there are no A's, B's, C's, D's or F's at Alverno College, but rather officials evaluate and award degrees based on an abilities-based curriculum. Is the SEE Policy really over the top? Mind travel to Wisconsin is left to the critics as Exercise No. 4.

Until the data are available to conduct intelligent analysis of the SEE Policy, critics should do the math, think, read and perhaps travel, and wait on the results.

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