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Does the NYT Editorial Board understand higher education?

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Quad 136

Higher Education?

Does the NYT Editorial Board Understand Higher Education?



In a recent editorial, the Editorial Board of *The New York Times* **writes about changes in higher education**. This particular editorial focuses on two concerns: the increase in the number of adjunct faculty and the increase in the number of administrators. They concluded their editorial by saying, "... the new college campus, rife with adjuncts and administrators, does not seem geared to fulfill what is, after all, the major mission of universities: educating students."

An economist friend of mine likes to say, "You can't beat a model with no model." In other words, you can't criticize the results of an economic model, or an educational model,

without offering an alternative that you believe would perform better.

Of course it would be great if higher education would offer more tenure-track fulltime jobs, but that would raise costs and tuition significantly, which would lead *NYT* editors to decry the high cost of education and/or the burden of student loans.

It also would be nice to lower cost by eliminating administrators. But, unless these troublesome administrators are truly doing nothing, fewer administrators would mean fewer services for disabled students or less support for academically unprepared students or less assistance for student struggling with health issues, etc. At which point *NYT* editors would bemoan the lack of access for non-traditional and minority students.

Higher education faces real challenges as it struggles to keep tuition down while providing an excellent education experience to an increasingly diverse student population. It serves no one to pretend that the solutions are easy. The presumably well-educated editors at *The New York Times* should know better.

By [Michael Hemesath](#) | April 7th, 2014 | Categories: [Economics](#), [Higher Education](#) | [0 Comments](#)

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Michael Hemesath is the 13th president of Saint John's University. A 1981 SJU graduate, Hemesath is the first layperson appointed to a full presidential term at SJU. You can find him on Twitter [at] [PrezHemesath](#).