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Regional

College decisions require careful consideration

In the last few months a couple of developments regarding higher education have paved a little path toward a union among the general public, but which can still impact the decisions students and their families make about where to go to college.

The first development is the rule that the Obama Administration is due to drop its plan of turning college graduates into customers for higher education. This rule, which was announced in August 2013, was supposed to rank colleges and universities based on factors such as the percentage of students receiving Pell Grants, labor market outcomes and loan repayment rates. The purpose was to make decisions about where to go to school while holding institutions accountable for their results. The basic idea was to have Congress or some portion of federal student aid converted to a rating system.

The plan was abandoned for multiple reasons: first, the rule was tied to a number of comprehensive rules that would also be dropped; second, the rule was fraught with controversy because it did not have enough time to be written and tested; and third, the rule did not have enough time to be tested and therefore it was too soon to make any decisions about it.

The other development is the recognition that the vast majority of the American public lacks an understanding of higher education. The question is whether we are getting any better at fulfills its promise.

The complete colloquium schedule can be found at www.chicagotribune.com/events. For more information, call 312-222-5168 or visit www.bravehearts.org.

By pushing the date back to the start of the new year, Patton believes the process of planning the show will be much better. "We have people from three states in addition to Illinois and Missouri," he said. "We have people from different time zones who are working on the show and they have been working hard on it."