If Mack Brown were on the tenure track

The big questions in Austin right now are what grade do we give Mack Brown for his performance as head coach of the University of Texas football team, and who gets him his grade?

Sports writers are giving C+, D's and F's for performance. Let me propose that it would be much better if decisions about coaches, expenditures, admissions and academic standards were made with a wider range of voices, perspectives and values.

The silo did not offer tenure to Mack Brown. Right now the problem is that UT has a bigger problem since the long-term performance as head coach of the University of Texas football team is a failure.

We complain about decision-making in areas that we care about, but we often overlook, but appeal safeguards in place in case the process is flawed.

We claim to know the standards, but we often overlook the bottom line of correspondence and constituency is the bottom line. Mentoring, advising, award-winning teaching, university, professional, and community service won't get assistant professors tenure if they have not gotten an A in research now and for the foreseeable future.

These are hard standards. We have seen them used. The assistant professors who researched novels with a brilliant linguist in Germanic Studies, the other a government professor.

Imagine a similar process and standards applied to Mack Brown. We would discount academic matters like six-year graduation rates and the heavy use of tutors. We would discount as outreach service his fundraising and recruiting skills and Longhorn Network appearances.

The top line would be productivity on game days. The bottom line would be productivity on game days.

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