The Unfinished Agenda of the Spellings Commission:
A Report Card for the Obama Administration

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What Matters Now: College Access and Success in the Age of Obama
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Spellings Commission recommendations - I

1. “...expand higher education access and success by improving student preparation and persistence, addressing nonacademic barriers and providing significant increases in aid to low-income students.”

2. “…the entire student financial aid system be restructured and new incentives put in place to improve the measurement and management of costs and institutional productivity.”

3. “…change from a system based on reputation to one based on performance. We urge the creation of a robust culture of accountability and transparency throughout higher education.”
4. “…embrace a culture of continuous innovation and quality improvement by developing new pedagogies, curricula, and technologies to improve learning…”

5. “…development of a national strategy for lifelong learning that helps all citizens understand the importance of higher education throughout their lives.”

6. “…increased federal investment in areas critical to our nation’s global competitiveness [STEM] and attract the best and brightest minds from across the nation and around the world…”
What’s happened since 2006?

1. **Expand access**
   1. Increase Pell from $4,731 last year to $5,350 this year and $5,550 next year
   2. Link Pell to CPI +1%
   3. Obama educational attainment goal of 2020
   4. **Grade: C-**

2. **Restructure financial aid**
   1. Simplified FAFSA; institutional aid forecasters
   2. Eliminate FFEL and fold into DL
   3. Focus campus-based aid on completion and inst. need aid
   4. **Grade: B-**
What’s happened since 2006?

2. Management of costs and institutional productivity
   1. The Great Recession
   2. Stimulus funding
   3. Grade: A-

3. Accountability and transparency
   1. State and federal attempts at student record data systems
   2. Many discussions about accreditation and performance assessment
   3. Grade: Incomplete
What’s happened since 2006?

4. **Continuous innovation and quality improvement**
   1. FIPSE – still largely earmarked
   2. Expand sharing of curricula and distance learning opportunities – little evidence
   3. **Grade: D**

5. **Strategy for lifelong learning**
   1. Obama focus on community colleges
   2. **Grade: B**

6. **Global competitiveness**
   1. 2020 goal
   2. Educate to Innovate, Race to the Top
   3. **Grade: Incomplete**