

North Central Land Grant University Summer Meeting
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Funding Challenges in Academic Programs

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These comments are an accumulation of input gathered from most of the academic deans in the North Central Region. There are six major themes.

1. Higher education is no longer regarded as being of critical importance to the state.
 - 40 years ago, states were almost in a contest to expand higher education
 - Higher education was considered vital to the economic well-being of the state
 - We don't need more universities, but we need the enthusiasm from the 60's and 70's for higher education
 - We cannot wait on the Federal budget for support, since education is the responsibility of the states

2. Tuition rates continue to outpace most other economic indicators.
 - Tuition is used to off-set the declining state allocations
 - States decrease allocations to the universities, yet complain about and want to control tuition rates
 - Course fees are abhorred by administrators and boards of trustees as "hidden tuition"
 - Constraints are placed on colleges regarding enacting differential tuition rates to cover differential costs of instruction

3. Universities lack sufficient resources for improved facilities.
 - Too many out-dated classrooms and no technology available in teaching rooms
 - Too many out-dated teaching labs
 - Decreased or non-existent operating funds to address facility needs
 - Capital funding is almost exclusively earmarked for new buildings and not for renovation
 - Rarely is there capital funding for teaching facilities

4. Enrollment issues are related to funding issues.

- Declining traditional agriculture population
- Strain on enrollments when funding follows enrollment numbers and/or credit hours generated
- Need to recruit differently and/or change degree programs
- Importance of agriculture colleges contributing to the general education mission of the campus, which takes more resources, at least in the short run
- Expense of “nice things” such as judging teams that are expensive on a per credit hour basis, but create loyal alumni
- Critical needs courses and programs contrasted with enrollment minimums—what can we afford?
- Is distance delivery an answer? And at what cost?

5. Professional development needs of faculty are not being met.

- Support of sabbatical leaves
- Re-invigorating, re-tooling faculty for changing programs
- Developing and enhancing pedagogical skills
- Improving teaching and advising

6. Internal funding models create dissonance.

- Sharing resources when one or more “partners” suffers a shortfall; salary increases across all three areas, even if only one receives budget increases to cover salary program
- There is a direct benefit to faculty for generating indirect cost recovery (summer salaries)
- There is little benefit to faculty for teaching and advising more
- Colleges being pushed into using more non-tenure track instructors, eliminating important ties to research and/or extension
- Miniscule funding from the Federal government for higher education programs

Summary:

Back to item one—is higher education regarded as being of critical interest to the state? What needs to be done to change the concept, and how will funding follow?

Have we paid so little attention to funding for teaching that legislators have come to believe it doesn't much matter?