

AAUP Response to the Indiana Efficiency Commission Report on Higher Education Executive Summary

The Indiana Conference of the American Association of University Professors has long called upon policymakers in higher education to focus their concerns on four goals: quality, affordability, accessibility, and accountability. With the publication of the recent *Report of the Subcommittee on Higher Education* to the Indiana Government Efficiency Commission, AAUP finds much to like, but much still to be done. This report highlights our assessment of the subcommittee's recommendations as they impact the four major goals we continue to pursue. Recommendations are provided in each of these areas.

Quality Recommendations

Statewide

1. Continue the work of the State Transfer and Articulation Committee (STAC) to ensure faculty participation in and support for transferability;
2. Monitor the use of part time faculty at all campuses to ensure students access to all the benefits of higher education;

Community Colleges

1. Increase substantially the number of full-time faculty, especially in general education;
2. Establish a tenure process for its core faculty to ensure academic freedom, which is the lifeblood of an academic community;
3. Offer a majority of the full-time and part-time faculty at the Community Colleges who are not tenured or tenure-eligible the possibility of multi-year contracts with meaningful guarantees of academic freedom;
4. Establish campus-based institutions for shared governance comparable to those at Vincennes and other Indiana universities;
5. Increase to competitive levels the pay for full-time and part-time faculty.

Accessibility Recommendations

1. We support the overall goal of tiering the educational structure to permit greater efficiency. To this end, methods must be found to promote greater reliance on the flagship institutions for graduate education. This recommendation comes with important caveats:
 - a. Ways must be found to make the transition in a manner which is revenue neutral with regard to state support for the flagship schools.
 - b. Any increase in tuition must be matched by a commitment to increasing the level of assistance to low income students. Otherwise, the transition is likely to deter those who can most benefit from graduate education and who may contribute to the economic development of the regions from which they are recruited.

2. Ball State, Indiana State, and Southern Indiana University should increase their share of undergraduate education as well as those graduate programs to which each is most suited. Again, we must guard against excessive tuition increases, capping or limiting increases to ensure that these institutions do not reflexively respond to increases envisioned for the flagship institutions.
3. The relationship between the flagship institutions and their regional campuses must be re-examined with an eye toward providing greater local autonomy and flexibility in the creation of missions and programs designed to meet local needs.

Affordability Recommendations

1. Indiana must maintain a commitment to Higher Education as a public good by providing sufficient resources for individuals to develop their individual potential as economic producers and citizens.
2. In an era of rising costs, it is more necessary than ever for Indiana to maintain its commitment to funding grants and scholarships for low income citizens who can most benefit from higher education.
3. The Commission for Higher Education should initiate a study of the costs of higher education in the state to determine key costs drivers as well as means for bringing these under control and to ascertain ways for pooling expenditures for cost savings.
4. The state should explore ways to restrain university appetites for capital projects by rewarding mature institutions that forego building with increased funding for operating budgets.

Accountability Recommendations

1. We fully support the Subcommittee recommendations for strengthening the Indiana Commission for Higher Education
2. We support merit screening as part of the process for gubernatorial appointment and evaluation of university trustees.
3. We renew our call for adding a non-voting faculty member to all university governing boards.
4. The Commission for Higher Education should initiate a study of the costs of higher education in the state to determine key costs drivers as well as means for bringing these under control.
5. We support independent audits of all universities on a ten year basis to ensure that spending matches an institution's mission and goals.