

Independent Universities' Report to *Coordinated Plan Steering Committee* – 12/11/2014

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Access (Related to Affordability and Ability)

Issues:

- Student costs
- High school preparation for college
- College-level remediation/development
- Distance/geography

Challenges:

- State grant system
 - Access Missouri Grant Range in 2008-09: \$3,300-\$4,600
 - Access Missouri Grant Range in 2014-15: \$1,500 flat
- Cost of remedial/developmental programs
- Culture of acceptability of remediation/developmental programs
- Cost of distance learning

Successes:

- Work-learn programs
- New payment options/plans – pay as you go and apply for additional grants
- Early College Start (dual-credit) programs
- Special internal need-based grants and scholarships (with St. Louis City Schools, Nelly, Joyner-Kersey, First-generation, etc.)
- Extension sites
- Partnerships/agreements with local businesses and organizations

Opportunities:

- Initiatives to improve state allocations to funding college students – e.g., Keep Me In College
- Augmentation of work-learn
- Restructuring of distance-learning cost structure and promotion of distance-learning programs
- Campus workforce education opportunities regarding the benefits of developmental learning in the first two years of college

Affordability

Issues:

- Students'/families' ability to pay
- Diminished State grant monies
- Public perception of college cost vs. value
- Residual student loan obligations
- Fixed market and funding pool

Challenges:

- Controlling ever-rising costs for the universities
- Overstaffing by universities at staff and administrative levels
- Escalating student/parent/regulator demands
- Colleges generating sufficient income to keep pace with costs as market shrinks

- Making a case for the economic value of as college education vis-à-vis willingness to make the investment
- Educating students/families about funding options and strategies: Must precede the college years
- Competition from other states for Missouri's college students

Successes:

- Smaller tuition increases/learning to do same work with less
- Provision of additional scholarship opportunities (e.g., SLU's five-pronged scholarship program)
- Work and learn programs for most full-time residential students
- Increasing the number of 2+2 articulation agreements with junior colleges
- Posting information on the economic value of education and career placement rates
- Provision of counseling about funding one's education and managing student loans

Opportunities:

- Rethinking how universities are best run: Broader employee responsibilities; flexible grant program
- Initiatives to improve state allocations to funding college students
- Augmentation of work-learn programs
- Initiating major campaigns to increase endowed and renewable student scholarships based on need and need plus talent

Quality and Completion

Issues:

- Conflict of completion goals with quality objectives
- Confusing higher education with job training – affects shelf-life of a college education

Challenges:

- Maintaining high quality while boosting the speed and ratio of degree completion
- Exhaustion of education funding reserves
- Tracking completion: DOE-define graduation rate is not valid.
- Too many students still drop out in the first two years of college
- College-major inflation

Successes:

- 2+2 programs
- Reverse transfer programs
- Formal, well-articulated junior college to four-year joint programs
- Various first-year-experience programs
- Screening assessments connected with developmental classes and appropriate placement
- Peer-tutoring programs

Opportunities:

- Completion rewards
- Streamlining major curricula/specialization reduction
- Augmentation of peer-tutoring programs
- Creation of Second-year success program
- Enhancement of financial aid options and financial aid education.