



Illinois Board of Higher Education

James L. Kaplan, Chairman • Thomas R. Lamont, Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Interested Parties

FROM: Thomas R. Lamont, Executive Director

DATE: May 19, 2005 *TRL*

RE: Final Report and Recommendations of the Board of Higher Education's Committee to Review Priorities, Productivity, and Accountability, Subcommittee A

Attached for your information is the final report and recommendations of Subcommittee A of the Board of Higher Education's Committee to Review Priorities, Productivity, and Accountability (PPA) which was adopted in January. The charge to the subcommittee was two-fold:

- Review the missions and focus statements of each public university to provide a context for: (a) analyzing the appropriateness of institutional and statewide program array; and (b) providing a context for institutions to determine how best to allocate and redirect funds to high priority activities.
- Examine the nature and scope of faculty work at public universities in light of institutional mission and focus, for the purpose of understanding and defining academic productivity.

Following the organizational meeting of the full PPA committee (5/10/04), Subcommittee A met three times to review materials and develop recommendations (5/25/04; 9/20/04; 11/2/04).

Please contact me if you have any questions regarding this report.

Attachment

**THE COMMITTEE TO REVIEW PRIORITIES, PRODUCTIVITY, AND
ACCOUNTABILITY: REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF
SUBCOMMITTEE A
April 27, 2005**

Background

The Illinois Board of Higher Education established the Committee to Review Priorities, Productivity and Accountability in Illinois Higher Education at its April 13, 2004 meeting. The premise underlying establishment of the committee is that Illinois' system of higher education "must have a clear sense of its priorities, ensure the efficient and productive use of existing resources in addressing these priorities, and demonstrate public accountability regarding its successes and failures in addressing these priorities before seeking additional financial assistance from the taxpayer and student." The first phase of the committee's work has been limited to public universities.

At its first organizational meeting in May 2004, the committee made the decision to create two subcommittees (A and B) to focus on separate aspects of the five point charge to the committee adopted by the Board. Subcommittee A was charged to examine the following components of the committee's charge:

- Review the missions and focus statements of each public university to provide a context for: (a) analyzing the appropriateness of institutional and statewide program array; and (b) providing a context for institutions to determine how best to allocate and redirect funds to high priority activities.
- Examine the nature and scope of faculty work at public universities in light of institutional mission and focus, for the purpose of understanding and defining academic productivity.

Following an organizational meeting of the full committee (5/10/04), Subcommittee A met three times to review materials and develop recommendations (5/25/04; 9/20/04; 11/2/04).

Core Values

Subcommittee A established the following core values to guide its deliberations:

- Subcommittee members view education as being charged with conservation of the most highly prized beliefs and intellectual skills in the cultural heritage. The members believe that education should stimulate in students a compelling urge to explore the unknown and to exercise to a fuller degree the vast possibilities of the mind. In this exercise truth-claims are neither final nor absolute, nor values inflexible but rather are always subject to modification, correction and refinement. This is the process of securing preservation and transmission of culture. The quest for knowledge and its advancement is eternal.
- Subcommittee members appreciate the budgetary constraints that must be taken into account in making plans for the immediate future. However, this situation must be handled with care. Any budgetary action must be taken in the context of the set of values

of higher education and how the proposed action might impinge upon these values. It is imperative that utmost effort be made to retain our excellence and maintain quality; retain our best faculty; provide excellent structural facilities that serve the university's academic mission; and attract students from around the world to participate in this intellectual exercise. Investment in education is investment in our future.

- Subcommittee members are cognizant of those private and proprietary schools that are in business to make a profit. Whereas many private and all proprietary institutions will avoid those services and academic programs that do not earn a profit, it is part of the mission of public institutions to provide such academic programs and student services. Thus public institutions will offer courses in such areas as philosophy, liberal arts and sciences, and the humanities, whether they are profitable or not.

Findings and Recommendations

Mission and Focus

Subcommittee members reviewed public university mission and focus statements, as well as information regarding degrees and enrollments over the past five years by program and campus. It was determined that institutional program arrays are generally consistent with each institution's mission and focus.

Subcommittee members concluded that mission changes should originate with the institution, subject to board approval of such changes. Current board policy requires that any proposed program that effects mission change requires Board approval. Committee members noted that institutional mission may be affected by the changing nature of the demographics of student enrollment, especially in cases where the number of part-time and/or non-traditional students increases dramatically.

Subcommittee members stressed the importance of distinguishing the respective natures of for-profit and not-for-profit institutions, recognizing the fundamental strengths of each sector. One key distinction is that not-for-profit institutions may be asked to support programs that promote the public good but do not generate profit, whereas proprietary institutions may select only programs that are profitable.

Faculty Work

The subcommittee discussed the nature of faculty work in the context of institutional mission and focus, with particular emphasis paid to the impact of distributed learning/online education. The latter adds even greater complexity to the diverse range of responsibilities that comprise the work of university faculty. Subcommittee members consider it vital to recognize that faculty work entails such diverse activities as class preparation, evaluating student assignments, advising students, remaining current on recent advances in disciplinary knowledge, maintaining a research agenda, and fulfilling committee responsibilities. Subcommittee members stressed the need for institutions to do the following: (1) clarify the relative emphasis placed on research, teaching and service in evaluating faculty work; (2) work with individual faculty to clarify the understanding of that individual's primary responsibilities, especially as regards the balance between teaching and research; and (3) align its reward structure with the faculty member's identified responsibilities.

Online/Proprietary Education

Subcommittee members discussed the nature and quality of online education, stressing the importance of recognizing and promoting programs of good quality. The subcommittee reviewed IBHE criteria for approval of online programs. It was noted that online education is a labor intensive activity for faculty. Subcommittee members emphasized the importance of using technology to enhance the educational process, including the traditional classroom.

The subcommittee recognized the importance of distinguishing on-line education, per se, from other educational delivery systems. The impact of online education on all forms of education is significant and has dramatically altered the character of higher education, changing the form of delivery and, most importantly, the role of the instructor in facilitating student learning. It will be important to monitor the potential impact of online instruction on enrollment at traditional colleges and universities.

Recent accusations of improper handling of student services have prompted congressional calls to investigate the practices of proprietary institutions. Board staff is working to strengthen approval and oversight abilities in this sector, although staffing limitations make this a daunting task.

Recommendations

Subcommittee members recommend that the Illinois Board of Higher Education undertake the following actions:

1. Strengthen staff in the proprietary sector. Develop and implement a strategy for addressing program assessment in this area.
2. Review current policies and procedures for approving and reviewing programs in the proprietary sector, paying particular attention to online programs, to determine whether these policies and procedures can be strengthened.
3. Establish a web-based consumer protection site providing such information as: (1) general requirements for attending college; (2) the nature of accreditation; (3) types of post-secondary institutions; (4) tips on how to identify diploma mills; and (5) online/distributed learning. Such a site would provide links to other sites with useful consumer information, including the federal web site that creates an online list of accredited colleges.
4. In collaboration with public institutions, review and clarify the function of university focus statements. These were originally developed in collaboration with the IBHE as guidelines for development over a 3-5 year period. That time has passed and there is need to reconsider the focus statements and their role in the context of *The Illinois Commitment*. Establish a procedure and timetable for regularly reviewing these focus statements.
5. Develop a strategy for monitoring statewide workforce needs and encouraging program development in high need areas.

6. In consultation with chief academic officers of public universities, determine which institutions have in place a post-tenure review system and explore the feasibility of implementing such a system in institutions where one is not currently in place.