
ILLINOIS COMMISSION ON EQUITABLE PUBLIC UNIVERSITY FUNDING

Adequacy Workgroup Meeting #3 - August 4, 2022 (9am-12pm CT)
Meeting Notes

MEETING OBJECTIVES

1. Recap research and considerations for PS adequacy
2. Review "strawman" components of adequacy
3. Discuss considerations for including student-centered components of adequacy

Welcome & Agenda Overview

Executive Director Ginger Ostro opened the meeting with general announcements regarding Open Meetings Act, that the meeting will be recorded and instructions for any members of the public who would like to participate in Public Comment. Martha Snyder provided an overview of the agenda.

Action: Approval of minutes from June 2022 and July 2022 Workgroup Meetings

Commissioner Freeman made a motion to approve the minutes from both the June 2022 and July 2022 workgroup meetings. Commissioner Weffer seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Team Building Activity

Chief of Staff Ja'Neane Minor facilitated a Team Building/Ice Breaker activity called "Five Things" for the group. Workgroup members were asked to pick any word and another workgroup member. The assigned workgroup member would have to share five words associated with higher education that have to do with the assigned word. For example, the five words/things associated with "Community" in higher education are: sororities, community college, faculty, students and learning.

Workgroup Overview

Martha Snyder provided an overview of the Adequacy Workgroup to level set. It was noted that the Resource Workgroup is working in parallel and that there will be a total of three Workgroups over the time of the Commission's work.

The Adequacy, Resources and Technical Workgroups (workgroups) for the Illinois Commission on Equitable University Finance (Commission) will inform the analytical, data and technical modeling of the Commission's work. The workgroups are composed of a subset of Commission members or other assigned representatives. The workgroups, supported by IBHE and HCM, will expand the capacity of the Commission's work between full Commission meetings, providing opportunities to dig deeper around concepts and considerations advanced by the Commission.

The adequacy workgroup will focus on evaluating and understanding various issues and concepts of adequacy in postsecondary finance. The workgroup will support the Commission's work in identifying the components that comprise an adequate and equitable finance structure for universities in context of the legislative charge and definitional concepts developed by the Commission.

The outcome of this review will be to analyze the components of adequacy and institutional "adequacy profiles" that help inform the cost of achieving adequacy for each institution.

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Directed by the Commission, this effort may include evaluating various components of adequacy such as:

- Student-Centered Adequacy Components
- Program/degree type components
- Cost-based components
- Mission-Centered Components.

Representatives were selected by the co-chairs with ~10 members for each workgroup. Membership will reflect groups and organizations on the Commission with regional, mission and other attributes represented.

- Adequacy: Conceptual, Policy and Analytical skills
- Resource: Conceptual, Analytical skills
- Technical Modeling: Policy, Data Analytics and Modeling skills

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The Commission's definition of "adequate funding" was shared as a reminder: The amount of funding necessary to equitably support all students to enroll and complete a degree without placing undue financial burden on students/families and for each university to carry out its mission. The cost of adequacy will vary across institutions based on the different needs of students being served, different degree types offered and the different mission components across institutions. Achieving adequacy requires directing new state investments to institutions with the greatest gap after accounting for other revenue sources.

Conceptual "Strawman" of Adequacy Components

Martha Snyder reflected on the prior two meetings, surrounded in reading and research and what we know about postsecondary adequacy and what we can learn from other states, sectors or countries.

A summary of research implications for adequacy was provided:

- Funding levels (total and state appropriations) affect key outcomes,
- "Base" funding matters, on average,
- Some investments are more effective than others, and
- Costs to achieve an outcome vary for different groups of students:
 - Academically less prepared,
 - Lower income,
 - First generation,
 - adults/students not previously successful; and
 - these factors can be compounding/concentrated and, therefore, linked to race/ethnicity.

Additional considerations for funding adequacy include:

- Existing methodologies are not based on cost of producing outcomes (Illinois, other states),
- Need to determine minimum level of funding to serve students,
- Students of color over-represented at under-resourced institutions,

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- Input-adjusted measures should be used constructively to inform student-centered adequacy:
 - Often used in context of accountability or performance funding,
 - Can be used differently to improve policy discussions.

To help frame the discussion, Commissioner Freeman asked whether maintaining the institution was taken into account (administratively, from a compliance standpoint). Does base funding include all the cost to have an institution “exist.” Nate Johnson clarified that “base” was used to mean the unrestricted funding level amount per student. Commissioner Martire shared that it’s important to think of how we take the conversation and turn it into an equation. How do we “keep the lights on” and operate a university? How are enrollment and equity-based adjustments added into that base number? Different buckets can be defined to what the various costs are. After the base number, enrollment-driven adjustments would need to be identified and defined. Commissioner Freeman shared that the categories may need to be base, enrollment, equity and mission (broken out separately from base funding).

Martha Snyder shared a potential conceptual model for developing the adequacy definition (“strawman”). Components include Instruction, Student and Academic Services (with subcategories); Research & Public Service Mission; and Operations and Maintenance with descriptions for each component to land at adequate funding to serve students.

Commissioner Green reminded the workgroup that the article/research she presented at the previous meeting did outline a formula in the form of a mathematical equation.

Commissioner Weffer shared that the conceptual model draft seemed very forward-facing. The model works to move the conversation forward, but that the affordability issue needs to be addressed and remembered. How do we grapple with this and adjust on the outreach, recruitment and enrollment?

Mike Abrahamson shared the same concern as Commissioner Weffer. Bucket #3 includes financial aid which seems promising; financial aid is a huge factor. If financial aid can be incorporated to help with prices, and keep costs lower overtime for students.

Commissioner Martire shared that new dollars being added is where flexibility can happen on the university-side to put the funding towards where it’s important. Distribution of new money will really matter and the group needs to be cognizant of this through the process of creating a formula. What does it take to actually accomplish the goals? A politically-viable approach is important.

Is it better to start with constraints and come up with a definition of adequacy that fits within what is possible/likely? Commissioner Martire is in favor of identifying what the actual cost of meeting the needs of students happens to be and then coming up with way(s) of funding that cost based on the political reality. Commissioner Freeman shared that another value of knowing the “real value” is that it needs to factor into the formula but also that the institutions need to know for allocation decisions to know how to predict investments to serve the students.

Breaking down Student-Centered Adequacy Components *Student-Centered Access Components*

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Description: costs to support outreach, recruitment and enrollment of students, adjusted for demographics.

Rationale: outreach, recruitment and enrollment activities have costs for all students and will be higher to achieve more equitable access for underserved populations.

Discussion: Does this component seem appropriate for assessing adequacy? What do we know about effective strategies for supporting outreach, recruitment and enrollment? How does this differ for underserved populations?

Commissioner Freeman shared that activities listed (outreach, enrollment, recruitment) have costs to students (CRM, counselors, advisors in general, postage for mailings, infrastructure of advising, orientation, tours, etc.). Costs for underserved populations are not always thought of (transportation, translations, assistance for completion of forms, support for application process and financial aid process) and require a lot more human capital (increased personnel costs). Commissioner Green shared that outreach to more diverse populations should include content in marketing that is bi-lingual, ensuring that faculty demographics are relatable and advertising in appropriate locations to reach diverse populations (fairs at community organizations, not just local high schools).

Infrastructure for transfer programs is needed, as well as available childcare. The twelve public universities do coordinate activities to help students stay in the state and the state covers the cost of the common application. Capital development funds constrains the ability to grow because without more space, more students cannot be housed/taught. In some programs, students have to be turned away because the institution is at capacity and unable to grow enrollment. Current expenditures need to be identified to land on an "average cost" per student for these outreach, recruitment and enrollment activities.

Commissioner Green shared that the outmigration of students is driven by cost (cheaper to go to college in Indiana and Wisconsin than in Illinois). Indiana may be giving a higher state appropriation level to institutions.

What level is appropriate for the state to address (what commitment and distribution priority)?

Break

The workgroup took a fifteen minute break before reconvening.

Breaking down Student-Centered Adequacy Components (continued)

Student-Centered Pathways: Academic Supports

Description: costs to provide high-impact academic supports for students retention and completion, adjusted for demographics.

Rationale: academic supports enhance retention and completion with investment needed to ameliorate historical disadvantages and inequities.

Discussion: Does this component seem appropriate for assessing adequacy? What do we know about high-impact academic practices, their costs and the varying level of support needed across different student groups?

Commissioner Weffer shared that there are things known that work for students. For example, universal across campuses: first-year experience type of class. The question is whether the resources are available to hold this course. Encouraging a teamwork framework

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in STEM and engineering tends to benefit women and underrepresented populations in these major areas. COVID has impacted K12 education which then impacts postsecondary education. There are many students who don't know how to "student" (enrollment, coming to class, etc.).

Commissioner Green reminded the workgroup members of the Equity Workgroup Recommendations and what/how to move the needle forward for african americans. Completion of FAFSA is an issue with a number of student population groups. A sense of belonging is important for students and mental health across the board is an issue that the pandemic has exacerbated. In addition, access to technology is a barrier – access to WiFi is a luxury for many. Commissioner Freeman shared that access to computer labs is not a viable solution, but that a statewide investment in devices for students would be something to look into. Summer Bridge is successful in helping students get through gateway courses (specifically math). Commissioner Green shared that Summer Bridge is incredibly important, but that there are not options for nontraditional students (financing is a barrier because many students need to work in the summer to cover the cost of education).

Ayesha Safdar agreed with many of the practices already mentioned. In addition, access to for-credit pathways is important. Commissioner Freeman shared that she believed that remedial courses are no longer "legal" in Illinois.

Concrete academic supports are important but without the core of tenure and tenure-track faculty within each institution (doing the research, writing, performance) it creates a difficult position.

Student-Centered Pathways: Non-Academic Supports

Description: costs to provide high-impact supports for student retention and completion, adjusted for demographics.

Rationale: non-academic supports that enhance retention and completion with investment needed to ameliorate historical disadvantages and inequities.

Discussion: Does this component seem appropriate for assessing adequacy? What do we know about high-impact supports, their costs and the varying level of support needed across different student groups?

Mike Abrahamson shared that all the access elements are important, but that we need to directly talk about access in terms of institutional financial aid. When thinking about where funding needs to go, we might be talking about thousands of additional dollars per student to get to the institutional goals. Institutional support (financial aid) includes institutional aid to lower the net price to students, but also emergency aid. Mainly, Mike Abrahamson was thinking about aid being built into the financial aid package up front.

Sarah Labadie also spoke about emergency aid as a critical support to allow students to persist. How do we intervene in certain situations that could stop students from continuing their education? Are there other situations (past due fees) that stop students from re-enrolling? Commissioner Green raised the difference between financial aid packaging and financial aid counseling. Many first generation students do not understand what is included in an aid package.

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Commissioner Green also elaborated regarding childcare. Childcare has typically been offered during the work day, but working adult students who work and attend courses in the evening do not always have access to childcare in the evening.

Executive Director Ginger Ostro raised early engagement in career opportunities including internships and connection with workforce individuals. Commissioner Freeman shared that this has an equity component during school but also post-graduation.

Sarah Labadie shared that resource centers and identity groups are helpful to retention and persistence, a cost that to run these areas is typically funded through student fees.

Commissioner Martire suggested pulling what is being spent currently to then adjust accordingly moving forward (at least as a way to start the process).

Core Program Costs

Description: costs related to different disciplines and programs and priorities.

Rationale: costs across programs and disciplines vary; certain degree areas that are in demand could also be a factor in developing this component of adequacy.

Discussion: Does this component seem appropriate for assessing adequacy? To what extent should these differences in program/discipline be reflected? What are considerations for assessing or understanding current differences in costs across institutions? Are there similar considerations for degree levels that generate different costs?

Commissioner Freeman shared that there are rich sources of data at the national level across programs/disciplines. This type of data shouldn't be hard to find. Connecting to equity is very important. Costs are not only important, but the value of a program is also important, to the state, institution or student.

Commissioner Weffer cautioned that data is not always neutral based on who collected the data and where it was found. Financial flexibility is needed in order to retain faculty. The best "performers" are leaving because better packages are offered at other institutions in other areas.

Commissioner Green agreed that faculty retention is an issue for universities. The state has funded a teacher diversity pipeline initiative. If recruitment of students is an issue to take seriously, then recruiting faculty who look like them also needs to be of importance. In turn, retention of faculty needs to be of importance as well.

Commissioner Freeman shared that institutions have "squeezed out" all the money that they can. If there were savings to be had, they were done.

Public Comment

There were no members of the public that requested to make public comment.

Discussion: Analytical Considerations for Student-Centered Adequacy

As we look at the Institution, Student and Academic Services Components of the potential model, are there any areas that have not been brought forward? Areas that should be added?

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Commissioner Martire shared that when looking at average expenses in a category, that we may need to look outside Illinois at other institutions that may be adequately funded.

Commissioner Freeman shared that benefits reporting makes it hard to compare and we need to be careful when looking at data from other states.

Prep for Meeting #4

Looking ahead, the next meeting is August 25, 2022. The focus of the meeting will be to compile what has been discussed to date in preparation for a report out to the September Commission meeting. Given some of the conversation, Martha Snyder took some time to share what work is happening in the Resource Workgroup.

Next Steps and Adjournment

The fourth meeting was scheduled for August 25, 2022 (9am-12pm CT).

Workgroup Members in attendance

Mike Abrahamson, designee for Lisa Castillo-Richmond
Ayesha Safdar, designee for Robin Steans
Ralph Martire
Simón Weffer
Cheryl Green
Lisa Freeman
Sarah Labadie, designee for Cherita Ellens
Respicio Vazquez

Support Team Members in attendance

Ginger Ostro
Ja'Neane Minor
Jaimee Ray
Jerry Lazzara
Martha Snyder
Jimmy Clarke
Nate Johnson
Katie Lynne Morton