

Adequacy Public Comment to the IL Funding Commission on 9/1/2022

My comment is focused on what I heard missing in the discussion today on the topic of adequacy and raising this up as spaces where it is important for this commission to do more (on the topic of adequacy).

A lot of work has been done and it is so important to ground metrics in the evidence base, but more is needed in this space, particularly at the conceptual level.

I have four basic questions:

1. Why is adequacy an appropriate conceptual frame to apply to higher education?
2. How does the notion of adequacy align with institutional missions?
3. Why is adequacy needed as a frame as opposed to another input-based model like enrollment funding? (Eric Zarnikow's comment about using few metrics)
4. How does the notion of adequacy reflect the unique synergy between research and learning at universities?

Students are core and vital at all universities, but at no university is the institutional mission focused only on students. This reflects the comments from Rep Stewart. It is important to fully follow this line of thought.

The interplay of the uniqueness of universities being sites of both the preservation and generation of knowledge yields improvements in both spaces. This was recognized by Vandvar Bush and in the 1940 Truman Commission that largely shaped higher education as we know it today.

- Teaching and learning function not only found in teaching or student related expenses.

Is adequacy intended to be a baseline or something different? President Kinzy's example of MI metric raises this as an important point.

Could using the notion of adequacy limit the nimbleness of universities?

While Robin is right that other states that do not use adequacy as a frame, there might be good reasons why not. Addressing these questions will help us know that the frame is appropriate for us to use in IL today.

Reshaping higher education funding around a different conceptual model has the potential to alter the nature of universities in IL. It is a space in which to tread carefully. So, it is important to answer these questions about using adequacy as a conceptual frame.