
ILLINOIS COMMISSION ON EQUITABLE PUBLIC UNIVERSITY FUNDING

Draft Final Report Feedback

Instructions

1. Complete the following two sections accordingly:
 - a. The General Comments section addresses issues that may apply to more than one section of the report or to issues not currently covered in the report.
 - b. The Specific Comments section should include comments directed at a particular section or wording of the report. These might be suggested line edits or new language, for example.
2. In the specific comments section, indicate any page numbers and/or sections related to the comment.
3. In both sections, describe in a few words the topic your comment addresses in the "Topic of Comment" field.
4. Record your comment/feedback in the "Comment" field.
5. If additional comment space is needed, right click in any row and select "insert" > "insert rows" to add an additional row(s). Additional rows can be added at the bottom of the table or in between rows.
6. Save your document and email to **Katie Lynne at katie_lynne_morton@hcmstrategists.com**. **All final comments are due by 5pm CT on February 20, 2024.**

General Comments

Topic of Comment	Comment
Definitions, Clarity and/or dated language	<p>The terms "reasonable and affordable" or "undue financial burden" are used throughout the report. These terms are highly subjective and should be accompanied with a definition or perspective from the Commission or IBHE.</p> <p>The term "low-income student" is not accurate. The students are not low-income. They are students from low-income households or low-income families. This is the more current "inclusive" language. Using APA Style – when referring to "low-income participants" or "high-income participants," classify whether reported incomes consider household size or provide information about the relation between household incomes and federal poverty guidelines.</p> <p>It is important to note that SES (Socioeconomic status) terms such as "low-income" and "poor" have historically served as implicit descriptors for racial and/or ethnic minority people. Implicit biases around economic and occupational status can result in deficit-based language that blames individuals for their occupational, educational, or economic situation rather than recognizing a broader societal context that influences individual circumstances.</p>

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<p>Clarity and consistency</p>	<p>Page 18, The end of the first full paragraph: The Commission disagreement is shared. Throughout, I feel like it sometimes is not clear when something is a decision confirmed by all Commissioners; when something has a minority of Commissioners disagreeing; and when something is truly unsettled. In this case, I think it is very unclear in the language if a majority supports headcount with a few Commissioners believing that FTE would be better or if this is still up for discussion.</p> <p>See also: Page 41 - Other Resources > Second paragraph</p>
<p>Philosophical Disagreement: High Cost Programs Mission Adjustments Allocation Formula</p>	<p>I am struggling with the high-cost program and mission adjustments. I know those programs are more costly, but most of them exist in our more well-resourced institutions and the factor is gigantic.</p> <p>For mission, I again feel like it's just funneling money toward the more well-resourced institutions but disguising it as student centered. For instance, do we have data about racial and socioeconomic equity in student research opportunities? What about high-cost programs? Do these adjustments get to equity?</p> <p>Page 42-43 - The final paragraph on 42, which continues on 43, is all about different possible cost factors to apply for medical schools, but it offers no data or equity-centered information as to why any choice might be best. Everything is solely based on program costs without equity.</p> <p>Allocation formula: This is a major issue that requires more discussion. I take major issue with the theory (threat?) that if inflation goes up and we do not account for it in the formula, the institutions closest to adequacy are going to have to adjust tuition to cover the cost. Institutions furthest from adequacy are not doing that now--they are making do. But instead of fighting to get them to adequacy, we're again going to send funding to institutions with small gaps (and the endowments and fundraising capacity to fill them) instead of the historically underfunded institutions. This is the opposite of the charge of this Commission.</p> <p>I am not 100% sure I understand the Dollar Gap vs. Percentage Gap; perhaps there should be more added to the explanation.</p> <p>Page 41 - The first full paragraph notes that Schools of Medicine don't submit equity plans. I think that should be a precondition for any institution (or sub-institution) seeking funding under the formula.</p>

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Ease of reading	<p>Many of the tables use abbreviated language and that is okay for folks who are entrenched in the work. However, this report is going to the full general assembly and the public. We should refrain from using abbreviations and acronyms whenever possible.</p> <p>Example - Tables 4 & 5 – We use “undergrad” “grad” and “graduates” – We should use Undergraduates and Graduate Students.</p>
Ease of reading	<p>The report overall could use more bullets, bolding/italics/underline, something to highlight the main points of some very long paragraphs of text.</p>

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Specific Comments

Page Number, Paragraph, Section, etc.	Topic of Comment	Comment
Page 2, Introduction, 1 st paragraph, 1 st sentence	Clarity and Definitions	The mention of “adequate, equitable, and stable” first appears with no definition or explanation. I see that it is defined later in the report, we should point the reader to that section or at the very least say that we will define these terms later in the report.
Page 2, Introduction, 1 st paragraph, 4 th sentence	Clarity/Ease of Reading	Let’s not make the reader do the math in their head. When we provide the total increased budget of \$1.4 billion, we should state how much of an increase this is to the current budget.
Page 2, Introduction, 2 nd paragraph, next to last sentence	Context/Ease of Reading	We should add context on how our allocation percentages fare against the averages in other states especially those that are out performing IL or states that we studied as a part of this work over the last two years...or even an aggregate average.

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Page 4, Understanding the need for more equitable Illinois	Consistency and prioritization	I think we should lead with race, ethnicity, income, and then geography, as the first two are a critical charge of the Commission (as noted on page 8, #1)
Page 11, Illinois University Funding Context, 1 st full paragraph on page 11, last sentence.		<p>The first full paragraph ends with "Across-the-board funding does not invest Illinois' higher education resources strategically to advance current state priorities or to reflect the current needs of the system." I think language like this obfuscates that this formula and work is supposed to be student- and equity-centered.</p> <p>Suggested rewrite: Across-the-board funding does not address historical disinvestment and inequities, center the needs of students, advance our goal of a thriving and equitable Illinois, nor invest Illinois' higher education resources strategically to advance current state priorities or to reflect the current needs of the system.</p>
Page 12, Overall Framework, 1 st paragraph	Equity Centered or People First Centered Language	In "I", we're talking about doing things irrespective of race, ethnicity, income, or other innate characteristic. First, income status is not innate (which means "inborn or natural" according to the dictionary). Second, if this is equity-driven, I don't think anything in this should be "irrespective" of race, ethnicity, or income, at least.
Page 13, Goals: Adequacy, Equity, Stability & Affordability – Adequate Funding		While I understand the context of this section, I think that it is important to note that the charge of the commission was to ensure equitable funding while considering mission; NOT weighting them equally. This paragraph reads as if they are considered equal.
Page 15, Affordability – How the Formula Supports Affordability	Not sure if this should go under general or specific	"As universities enroll more Illinois residents, especially low-income students..., the formula will lower the institutions' share of revenue expected to be generated from tuition and fees." This example highlights a theme throughout that emphasizes incentivizing institutions to enroll more students of color and other marginalized/underrepresented populations and not enough emphasis on supporting

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		institutions that already enroll high percentages of these students.
Pages 20 & 21, Tables 2 and 3	Clarity, Ease of Reading	I think Tables 2 & 3 are confusing because they're not labeled clearly and at first glance, they seem to be the same thing but with different populations highlighted, maybe #3 should have "Retention" in the title
Pages 75-76, Appendix, Table E-5		<p>The list in Appendix E on p. 75-76 re: the program supports.</p> <p>I know this is about how adjustment costs were calculated, and we looked at a number of programs that supported persistence for the Commission's target student populations and the associated costs to determine the equity adjustment costs.</p> <p>However, this may be problematic because a lot of people do not actually understand the difference between in-house/institutional programs vs. 3rd party programs (like Bottom Line, One Million Degrees), and federal grant programs (TRIO, HIS/PBI/AANAPISI). Mixing them up as examples can cause confusion as they are all different because all the programs listed are external, not internal to the college/university and the costs they would incur (or already do) to run their own holistic support programs of which there are many.</p> <p>In table E-3 it includes Talent Search and Upward Bound (which are also part of TRIO), and the problem here is that TRIO programs are federally funded, meaning that it shouldn't be included in ANY calculation here b/c you can't create a TRIO SSS/Talent Search/Upward Bound program by yourself, you ONLY have that if you apply and receive a FEDERAL GRANT (it's Congressional legislation), which then PAYS for it so no institution pays for any TRIO anything out of their budget, it is by its definition/origin a federal grant program. So, I do not understand why we would combine those with external</p>

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		private programs. From my understanding (and I could be wrong) it is not really part of an actual budget b/c they are funded completely by the federal government but housed on campuses who apply for grants.