

**IL Funding Commission
Technical Workgroup Meeting
2/27/2024
Public Comment
Jennifer A. Delaney**

Thank you for the ability to offer public comment today. I am Jennifer Delaney, now a professor of higher education finance at the University of California, Berkeley.

Having come to the end of the funding commission meetings, I would like to thank everyone for the time and effort that was expended throughout this process. However, I am concerned by the formula that will be put forward on March 1, 2024.

While I appreciate the strong commitment of this group to a funding model based on equity, it is not clear to me that the model as proposed will produce a more equitable higher education system.

Importantly, it is not clear that the formula will yield more affordable higher education options for students and families. Fundamentally, it seems to me impossible to end up with a more equitable system if it is not more affordable.

I continue to believe that the underlying conceptual framework for the funding formula is flawed. Importantly, the approach ignores stability of state funding for higher education. There is nothing in the formula that will make state appropriations for higher education more predictable than the status quo. I also believe that this formula for institutional appropriations is setting up a “zero-sum game” not only with the K-12 funding formula but also with state funding for MAP grants.

With its strong focus on undergraduate enrollment, the formula overlooks profoundly important elements in the ways in which education functions at the postsecondary level. These important synergies are inherent to quality education such as the importance of peer effects, the overlapping nature of graduate education with undergraduate instruction, and the ways in which research enhances undergraduate teaching and learning. Other essential elements of university missions such as public service, research, the arts, and the preservation of knowledge are not well-served by the formula as presented. I am worried that the funding formula is upending the social contract between the state and higher education institutions in a manner that will undermine the full scope of institutional missions.

I am profoundly concerned by the number of incredibly important issues upon which this group was not able reach consensus. These are not minor issues that are unresolved, but rather point to fundamental weaknesses within the formula. I think it is profoundly important that the full funding commission, the legislature, and the public know that consensus was not reached on these issues. I hope that the path forward will allow for time and space to develop a less complicated formula that will fulfill the important aspirations and values held by this commission, especially those related to equity.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer public comment today.