



Board Report
06-09-16

Alan Marble

Budget and Legislative Priorities – As the Legislative session ended we were pleased to learn that the General Assembly passed and the Governor signed HB3 which will increase overall higher education funding by 4%. However, due to “equity adjustments” the increase for MSSU will be 3.66% even though we hit all five of our performance funding targets. The “equity adjustment formula” was created before my time here but it is an adjustment not only for relative enrollment growth, but it is weighted in favor of Graduate, Professional, and Technical programs (as illustrated on the attached spreadsheet).

The difficulty in the “university” equity adjustment model is that dollars are taken from the appropriation other schools honestly earned via performance funding. But, that is not the case for community colleges as they received extra funding to spread around for equity (see spreadsheet). So, the only community colleges to receive less than 4% were those failing to meet all five performance standards. However, we are still delighted to receive a significant increase this year.

Additionally, we had a new decision item included in HB3 for \$2 million to facilitate the changes required to accommodate the UMKC Dental School extension on our campus. We will need to make sure this item remains in our core budget in upcoming years to ensure we recoup our renovation costs, maintenance, upkeep, etc.

Also, HB18 includes \$9.3 million for the “planning, design, renovation, and construction” of an addition for Reynolds Hall. However, as of this writing the Governor has not signed this bill but we have every confidence he will in the near future. Assuming HB18 is signed into law, the total capital budget earmarked for the renovation and expansion of Reynolds Hall will exceed \$17 million. And, as we all know this prominent facility will be a bee hive of activity over the next several years as we gear up in the STEM fields in general and pre-med in particular.

Tuition

Earlier this year the Board of Governors determined not to raise tuition for next fall if the Governor’s 6% increase became a reality. However, one of the stipulations from the General Assembly on the 4% increase was that tuition would not increase. I certainly recommend we comply with this “suggestion” and leave tuition at its current level for next fall. But, I think we need to keep the tuition issue at the front of our minds because our tuition is \$20 per credit hour below Missouri Western (our sister institution) and that means we have many fewer dollars to spend for the benefit of our students. So, we should still be thinking about a “catch up” tuition increase at some point in the future if we hope to be able to continue to provide the first class education our students deserve.

Great Game of Education – The Culture Committee of the Great Game of Education continues to gain momentum and have a huge kickoff event planned for next fall. They are developing a “fun and engaging” program to introduce the scoreboard, metrics, minigames, organizational units, and reporting cycles. The enthusiasm of this group has been refreshing and they are very serious about trying to improve the long term financial stability of the organization.

Additionally, we have asked Alex Vernon to take the lead in our ongoing CQI process that evolved from the Program Prioritization work of a few years ago. We believe that great progress has been made but areas that can be improved continue to emerge and need to be regularly addressed. Plus, we envision items identified for extra attention will feed nicely into the Great Game approach to organizational improvement.

CBHE Mission Review – Brian Fogle, Chair of The Coordinating Board for Higher Education (CBHE) and Leroy Wade, Interim Commissioner of the Missouri Department of Higher Education (MDHE), led a meeting of college and university presidents in Jefferson City on April 22 to discuss the process for examining, defining, and refining missions. This is the CBHE and MDHE combined first step in complying with Speaker Richardson’s directive to have recommendations in place regarding “program offerings” by the end of the year.

Many issues were addressed and a sub-committee was formed, but little of substance was accomplished. However, I am hopeful that a better distinction can be drawn between “mission” and “program offerings” because we will certainly slip schedule if we try to delve into every detail of each mission (community colleges are included).

My hope is that we can get back to the crux of the issue... certain universities tend to claim ownership of certain programs and block others from offering those programs (even if the need is apparent). Typically, the arguments for limiting new program offerings at other institutions revolve around “duplication of service,” accusations of “poor quality,” and/or “mission creep.” But, I suspect the truth has more to do with turf issues and threats to the established programs. So, this will be an interesting process to engage in and watch play out.