

Council of Faculty Senate Presidents

Statement on the Value Higher Education

Approved February 13, 2008

Recently the Kansas Board of Regents has undertaken several initiatives to improve higher education in the State. These initiatives include the revision of the Regents' mission statement, the development of five strategic questions and pursuit of measures for assessing them, and implementing an enhanced performance agreement process. Given the importance of these initiatives, the Council of Faculty Senate Presidents (COFSP) appreciates the opportunity to share its views with the Board of Regents and has approved the following statement.

1. COFSP supports the Regents' commitment to higher education in the State of Kansas and endorses its effort to develop goals and accountability measures for achieving them. In particular, COFSP shares the Regents' goals of improving the transition from K-12 to higher education, making higher education more broadly accessible, improving the persistence of students in higher education, serving the needs of the State, and ensuring that graduates have basic knowledge and skill-related competencies. Accordingly, COFSP stands ready to assist the Regents in the identification of appropriate short and long-term objectives for achieving these goals and the development of appropriate measures of progress and accountability.
2. While the development of goals and measures is both necessary and desirable, it also raises several concerns of particular interest to the universities represented by COFSP. Most fundamentally, the members of COFSP uniformly hold that the ultimate goal of higher education is to enhance the personal growth and development of each individual student. Thus, in addition to providing a venue for the acquisition of basic competencies and career-specific skills, education is about fostering moral and ethical thinking, increasing awareness and appreciation of the world around us, and developing lifelong habits of learning.
3. COFSP believes that the Regents appreciate the importance of this more broadly based view of the goals of higher education. Our concern is that this perspective may be lost in the context of establishing goals and objectives, because these broad values are less readily articulated and measured. Inevitably, deciding to use particular measures of accountability for system goals will result in the allocation of resources to focus on improving those measures. It follows, then, that the selection of goals and measures must be carefully considered and must encompass the full range of values reflected in a higher education.

COFSP looks forward to working with the Regents and staff to develop objectives and measures of accountability that will promote the full range of educational values and improve the quality of higher education in the State.