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A UNIVERSITY'S GOT TO KNOW ITS LIMITATIONS

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The current Louisiana state budget crisis forces the higher education establishment to re-think its priorities and to ratchet down its vision as to what higher education in the state cannot be. For sure, it cannot be constructed around the image of such prestigious and rich-in-resources universities as Harvard, Chicago, Cal Tech, Johns Hopkins, Duke, and Stanford. What it can be depends critically on the limited resources available in Louisiana and *how well those resources are put to work.*

In the following we recommend 28 steps that can help re-align public university budgets to the harsh reality of a serious shortfall in state tax revenues. Three are revenue-enhancing remedies; the rest are cost-cutting. They are based on 30 years experience on the faculty of one of Louisiana's public universities. No faculty positions and no academic programs would be cut. No hikes in tuition are suggested. Even so, there are no simple remedies, no way to avoid a "big hurt."

- Put to work unpaid retired faculty to mentor and advise students and to teach courses that cannot be handled by the active faculty.
- Require all active nine-month faculty to teach at least two courses per term unless they replace dollar for dollar their instructional costs from outside funds such as contracts and grants. Additionally, and with no exceptions, require all faculty to teach at least one undergraduate course per academic year.
- Call for all department heads to teach at least one course per term.
- Reduce by 10 percent the pay of any faculty member earning more than \$100,000 per year subject to the limit that he/she is not reduced below the relevant Southern average for that position.
- Charge university presidents rent for any housing that is provided by the university and withhold any stipend for other housing owned or rented by presidents.
- Demand that athletics to be self-sustaining without any state funding by 2013.

- **Reduce all commencement exercises to one a year – spring – and allow students the option of having their diploma dated as of the completion of their program of studies and receiving it by mail.**
- **Privatize campus bookstores and all student housing, terminating all university personnel employed in those areas.**
- **Eliminate all campus police forces and turn the policing function, including enforcement of parking regulations, over to local police departments.**
- **Require all faculty with 40 years of service or more to take retirement, but allow them to continue teaching if they so desire.**
- **Eliminate all costly services to professor emeriti -- office space, telephone, stationary, travel, secretarial assistance, computer -- allowing them to retain and use the honorary title.**
- **Eliminate all work-study jobs for students.**
- **Deny tuition refunds to students who drop a course more than two weeks after the first day of classes.**
- **Privatize all building and grounds functions, including campus janitorial services.**
- **Privatize all remote campus parking.**
- **Eliminate student health services, including counseling services. Let students find those services through their own personal physician, public health clinics, or other health care providers.**
- **Provide no fees and reimburse no expenses of invited speakers, including commencement speakers.**
- **Approve no new course offerings without fully matching reductions in spending (PAYGO) in nonacademic areas.**
- **Offer and accept for credit highly specialized courses such as Sanskrit for English doctoral degree students that not available on campus through distance learning arrangements with other public universities in Louisiana where those courses are available.**
- **Eliminate puff courses such as social dancing, bowling, and racquetball that students use to inflate their grade point average.**
- **Cut out courses that orient freshmen students to the university campus who for years were able to do this on their own.**

- **Raise parking permit fees and parking fines for students, faculty, staff, with higher fees and fines for personally designated parking.**
- **Abolish cash bonuses for faculty publications in elite journals.**
- **Hold fast to the requirement that an undergraduate course is offered only if 10 or more students are enrolled.**
- **Establish a master teaching track for qualified undergraduate faculty who would teach at least three courses per term and assign substantial term papers but would not have to maintain a research and publication record.**
- **Demand that every state university operate on the semester system to reduce the additional costs of operating on the quarter system, such as three instead of two pre-registration advising weeks, mid-term attendance reports, final exams, and end-of-term reports.**
- **Continue to promote faculty as indicated by their performance, but maintain them at their current pay until the budget crisis is over.**
- **Require all scholarship students including those getting TOPS to reimburse the State in full for the cost of any courses taken with a failing grade.**

Higher education is becoming like public elementary and secondary education. More and more resources are ploughed into public universities yet many students graduate without critical thinking skills, competencies in writing including grammar and spelling, and any background in handling ethical issues. Further, in some cases, degree programs are glaringly deficient because students are encouraged to substitute courses from outside their major for the reason that the required course in their major is not available.

Does it matter to anyone that greater emphasis on undergraduate completion rates too often means that courses are dumbed down to allow marginal students to graduate? That with all the hype surrounding the BCS championship and March Madness universities increasingly are becoming part of the sports entertainment complex?

In the words of the immortal Dirty Harry Callahan, a university's "got to know its limitations."

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