

State of Arkansas

77th General Assembly

Regular Session, 1989

S.R.

14

By: Senators Miles, Walters, Harriman, Bookout and Russ

SENATE RESOLUTION

URGING THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE STATE BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION (1) TO CONSIDER MORE RECENT ENROLLMENT DATA IN THE 1991-93 FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PUBLIC COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES, AND (2) TO CAREFULLY REVIEW THE CURRENT FORMULA AND POLICIES TO DETERMINE THE LEVEL OF EQUITY AND FAIRNESS WITH REGARD TO WORKLOAD VERSUS RECOMMENDED FUNDING AMONG THE VARIOUS INSTITUTIONS.

WHEREAS, in developing funding recommendations for the institutions of higher education for the 1989-91 biennium, the Arkansas Department of Higher Education and the State Board of Higher Education, after consultation with representatives of the public colleges and universities, used the "three-year rolling average" method of determining enrollment; and

WHEREAS, this system was based on the average of the number of full-time equivalent students enrolled at each institution in 1985-86, 1986-87, and an estimate of the number enrolled in 1987-88; and

WHEREAS, a portion of this data will be almost four years old by the time the biennium begins and nearly six years out of date by the end of the biennium; and

WHEREAS, there were no provisions for consideration of 1988-89 enrollments; and

WHEREAS, at least 16 of the 20 public institutions of higher education already have enrollments greater than that on which their funding for the next two years was recommended; and

WHEREAS, this approach has the effect of increasing per-student cost to the State at those institutions which have declining enrollments and lowering funding per-student at growing institutions; and

WHEREAS, state funding of education, as a general rule, should "follow the student"; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly has determined that public school funding is to be based on current year enrollments; and

WHEREAS, there are apparent inequities in the higher education funding formula wherein the cost to the State per full-time equivalent student varies by almost as much as \$2,000 between institutions,

NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE SEVENTY-SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

That in preparing funding recommendations for the 1991-93 biennium, the Arkansas Department of Higher Education and the State Board of Higher Education, in consultation with the institutions of higher education, are requested to review and revise the method by which enrollment levels are determined for the purpose of developing funding recommendations. The most current available actual enrollment data should be considered, and provisions should be made for institutions experiencing significant enrollment increases during the biennium.

Further, The Department and the Board should ensure greater equity and fairness with regard to workload and the various funding factors and policies involved in the formula.

When presenting the State Board of Higher Education's funding recommendations to the Legislative Council in the fall of 1990, the Director of the Department of Higher Education is requested to report on the extent to which these concerns have been addressed. This should include an analysis comparing total operating cost to the State, per full-time equivalent student, for each of the public institutions of higher education.