DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 202 314 HE 013 822

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TITLE How Do We Get All of Postsecondary Education Together, and How Do We Get It to Work?
INSTITUTION Education Commission of the States, Denver, Colo. Inservice Education Program.; State Higher Education Executive Officers Association.
SPONS AGENCY Kellogg Foundation, Battle Creek, Mich.
REPORT NO IEP-034
PUB DATE Sep 75
NOTE 17p.; Paper presented at a Seminar for State Leaders in Postsecondary Education (Monroe, LA, September 1975). Not available in paper copy due to marginal legibility of original document.

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Accountability; Budgeting; *Educational Assessment; *Government Role; Higher Education; Institutional Evaluation; Management Systems; *Postsecondary Education; Private Colleges; Program Evaluation; State Agencies; State Colleges; State Government; *Statewide Planning; Student Financial Aid

ABSTRACT

The functions and structure of postsecondary education at the state level, and goals and problems confronting statewide agencies are considered. Among the state-level functions are the following: short-range and long-range planning, establishing statewide management and information systems, review and approval of programs/centers of all state colleges and private colleges receiving substantial state aid, budgeting for the system and state agency budget review, and administering student financial aid programs. The types of State-level postsecondary agencies in the United States are identified. A long list of problems and issues are presented, including the following: adapting to a wide spectrum of interests and values of new student bodies, financial problems, improving opportunities for all students, providing continuing education programs, providing a statewide program of vocational education, collective bargaining issues, articulation between four-year and two-year institutions, and declining enrollments. Suggestions for state agency staff include the following: determine who is involved in an activity or issue; get together the involved parties; avoid sensational news coverage; and inform legislators or trustees of having an opposing view. (SW)

Inservice Education Program (IEP)

Paper Presented at a Seminar for State Leaders in Postsecondary Education

HOW DO WE GET ALL OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION TOGETHER, AND HOW DO WE GET IT TO WORK?

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Monroe, Louisiana
September 1975

IEP Paper No. 034

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The IEP Program has been supported primarily by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation with additional funds from the Education Commission of the States, the Frost Foundation and the State Higher Education Executive Officers

"How Do We Get All Of Postsecondary Education Together,

and How Do We Get It To Work?"

Arkansas--Louisiana--Mississippi
Drive-in Conference

Monroe, Louisiana
Sept. 15, 1975

The title of this statement is taken as nearly verbatim as possible from a comment made by Dr. Cook in our first discussion of this conference. The question he asked was a critically important one. Planning for, or coordinating the planning for, all of the postsecondary education in any state is a complex task. It gets more complex if there are multiple agencies involved, no clear lines of responsibility, reluctance on the part of some institutions or agencies to participate or there is fear that any involvement in a cooperative enterprise will lead to consolidation and loss of autonomy or identity.

Every state is making an effort to coordinate planning in higher or post-secondary education. The event of the 1202 commissions and the attendant availability of $26,000 in federal funds brought in most of the holdouts. With a few exceptions, this situation has come about in the last 10-15 years and primarily for the following reasons:

(1) To provide governors and legislators with an objective analysis of competing requests and with objective recommendations.

(2) To improve opportunity for the states' citizens in higher or post-secondary education.

(3) To secure a maximum return on the states' investment.

These are necessary and worthwhile objectives and deserve support from all concerned. They rarely get it.

In the time available to me, I would like to review how postsecondary education is structured, what statewide agencies are hoping to accomplish, the problems that get in their way and what might be done about it. I could then hope, in the discussion period that follows, that we could discuss the explicit problems faced in your states and see if there is any assistance for you in the experiences of others.

Functions

There are certain functions which must be performed by a statewide agency for higher education if the citizens of the states are to be appropriately served. In 1971, Glenny, et al[1] indicated that certain powers must be invested in a central agency or ". . . public higher education (would be) ingested into the executive branch of state government." The five powers enumerated were:

(1) to engage in continuous planning, both long-range and short-range;

(2) to acquire information from all postsecondary institutions and agencies through the establishment of statewide management and data systems;

(3) to review and approve new and existing degree programs, new campuses, extension centers, departments and centers of all public institutions, and, where substantial state aid is given, of all private institutions;

(4) to review and make recommendations on any and all facets of both operating and capital budgets and, when requested by state authorities, present a consolidated budget for the whole system; and

[1]Glenny, Berdahl, Palola & Paltridge. Coordinating Higher Education For the 70's. The Center For Research and Development in Higher Education, University of California, Berkeley, 1971; p. 7.

(5) to administer directly or have under its coordinative powers all state scholarship and grant programs to students, grant programs to nonpublic institutions, and all state-administered federal grant and aid programs.

When this was written, there were no 1202 commissions but they were clearly being anticipated. The reference in number 2 to "all postsecondary institutions and agencies" is indicative of that fact.

The individuals who examine the record made two observations about the agencies that were established to carry out these activities.

(1) In October 1973, an ECS task force[2] recognized that states are not alike and that they must develop their own type of organization to "get the job done". Of two dozen final conclusions, the first was:

"The task force does not believe that there is a single formula or approach for planning, program review or budget review at the state level, nor does it believe that there is a single approach in terms of statewide coordinating or governing structure for implementing these responsibilities. In view of the uniqueness of the individual states, and because there may be no single "best" approach, the responsibility rests with each state to develop appropriate forms for its statewide planning and/or governing and evaluative structures."

(2) Two years later in 1975, an alliterative trio of authors[3] noted that the states did not settle all of the problems of relationships:

[2]The Task Force on Coordination, Governance & Structure of Postsecondary Education. Coordination or Chaos? Report no. 43, Education Commission of the States, Denver, Colorado. October 1973; p. 95.

[3]McGuinness, McKinney, Millard. The Changing Map of Postsecondary Education. Report no. 66, Education Commission of the States, Denver, Colorado. April, 1975; p.xii.

"Some of the early expectations that the commissions would lead to overcoming intersegmental rivalry and problems of turfdom within the postsecondary education community, including a closer reproachment between other segments of postsecondary education and state vocational education agencies, have not as yet been fully realized although progress in this direction has taken place."

At the moment, in the 50 states and the District of Columbia, we have five states with secretaries of education, none of which are constitutional. Seven states have single boards for all public education. 31 have coordinating agencies for some or all of postsecondary education. 22 have governing boards for some or all of postsecondary education. 48 have 1202 commissions. The total of governing and coordinating agencies add up to 53 because Pennsylvania and Oklahoma reported both.[4]

Problems

Before we identify problems that are of concern to each of us in our own assignments, let's look at what our researchers have to say.

Glenny and his contemporaries,[5] four years ago, laid out a list of problems that would be facing statewide planning agencies in the 70's and were not far off the mark. Twelve problems were listed:

(1) increasing the amount of diversity in education programs and types of institutions;

(2) caring for and adapting to the wide spectrum of interests and values of the new student bodies;

[4]Berve, N.M. Survey of the Structure of State Coordinating or Governing Boards and Public Institutional and Multicampus Governing Boards of Postsecondary as of January 1, 1975. Vol. 4, No. 10. Education Commission of the States, Denver, Colorado. 1975.

[5]Op. cit.; p. 27.

(3) developing new educational means and experiences appropriate for the society of the future;

(4) cultivating the external degree, education on the job, internship experience, and public service activity in meeting new needs;

(5) improving the quality of undergraduate education;

(6) providing for ease of transfer between institutions and programs and encouraging the in-and-out lifetime student in pursuit of his goals;

(7) establishing, maintaining, and discontinuing graduate and professional programs to meet manpower and personal needs without oversupplying or undersupplying the market;

(8) funding research and public service activity and directing it toward fundamental social problems and basic theoretical concepts;

(9) determining the need for and type of physical facilities required for the in-and-out student, the external degree, and the work-study concept as well as the more traditional collegiate experiencies;

(10) making optimal use of new media and technologies for instruction;

(11) terminating unproductive, obsolete, or unnecessary duplicative programs; and

(12) setting the financial obligations of the student as against the state and determining the part that grants, scholarships, and loans must play in any changed financial arrangement.

"These problems and many others beset the states already, for example, the size of campus student bodies, the line relationships of chancellors and

presidents in multicampus subsystems, the control of vocational-technical funds for postsecondary purposes. The number and severity of problems are likely to increase rather than decrease, and will be more difficult to deal with politically rather than less so. Planning, of necessity, must be far more intense and more comprehensive than it has been in the past."

Four years later, we could add performing as, or working with, a 1202 commission, the development of defenses against efforts to enact restrictive legislation, coping with executive budget adjustments, funding new methods for institutional cooperation with the state, or with other states.

Last June, J.G. Paltridge[6] elicited the concerns, issues, and problems confronting the members and executives of the four types of statewide boards. Forty respondents offered 154 comments that were combined and edited into 34 discrete problem areas. These constitute a long list but are worthy of full consideration:

(1) General problems of budgeting for an institution or for a system of institutions under conditions of level or decreasing appropriations and inflated costs, and changing educational needs. Included are pro and con considerations of various types of formula budgeting.

(2) Problem of defining and separating the roles and functions of two or more boards in the same state, particularly as these relate to the function of long-term higher educational planning. Included is the search for methods of coordinating work of one board or commission with that of another.

[6]Paltridge, J.G. A Study of the Problems....Issues....Concerns of Statewide Boards for Coordination, Planning and Governance of Higher Education. Conducted for the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, Washington, DC. The Center for Research & Development in Higher Education, The University of California, Berkeley, June 1975; pp. 8-12.

(3) Problems related to formulation of a long-range state plan for postsecondary education, and getting public institutional and legislative acceptance of the plan.

(4) General problems related to getting maximum appropriations through a state legislature, including problems brought on by fiscal crises in the whole of the state government.

(5) Organization (or reorganization) of the board or commission and/or of its staff functions.

(6) Reviews and evaluations of institutional instructional programs and determinations of future funding levels for them.

(7) Finding methods for providing equal opportunities to all students and to improve the services of institutions to students (particularly those who are economically and educationally disadvantaged, to employers, and to those who value the traditional liberal arts experience.

(8) Provision of continuing education programs within a state public system, or within the total (public, private, proprietary, etc.) facilities of the state.

(9) Planning, coordinating, or organizing a statewide program of vocational education, so as to provide needed and desired services, avoid unnecessary duplication and satisfy regional differences.

(10) Faculty salary levels and issues related to tenure, work-loads, measurement of productivity, and reductions in total faculty.

(11) Problems related to collective bargaining. Union-faculty-administrative relations and role of the governing or coordinating board in this matter.

(12) Developing credibility, acceptance, status, appropriate authority for a new, or reorganized commission, or one that has been under attack by the state legislature, by the institutions, or by the public.

(13) Concerns related to increased role of state legislatures in higher education decision making.

(14) Pressures from coordinating board for tighter regulation of institutions. Perceived loss of authority and autonomy to the "super-board".

(15) Issues related to provision of state aid to private institutions under problems of church-state relations, institutional rivalries, scarce resources or other restraints.

(16) Issues related to the provision of health education programs to meet the needs of the state. Including problems related to expanding facilities or establishing new medical schools, coordinating existing schools, etc.

(17) Articulation between four-year and two-year institutions, as well as easier transfer among four-year institutions.

(18) Determination of what information (for management, program development, etc.) should be requested and gathered, who should collect it, and in what manner so that it will be comparable between institutions and between states.

(19) Perception of undue political influence on higher education decisions such as appointments to boards, favoring of one institution or system over others.

(20) Problems related to declining enrollments, or anticipation of possible/probable decline of enrollments.

(21) Determination of operational policies related to student fees and tuitions, and setting amounts.

(22) Issues related to the formulation of a state student-aid program, including policy on eligibility.

(23) Concerns about the relevance of educational skills (output) to job opportunities.

(24) Maintenance of quality in academic standards under pressures of escalating costs, shrinking fiscal support, or broadening student access.

(25) Out-of-state institutions offering extended programs, short-courses etc. in competition with state institutions, as well as other forms of intra-state competition (of a destructive sort) between institutions.

(26) Problems associated with inter-collegiate athletics.

(27) Decreased public concern for higher education and support of it, including lowering of the priority of higher education in the political climate of the state and nation. Concerns of higher education's "public image".

(28) Concerns related to equal opportunity in employment practices.

(29) Performance evaluation of students' knowledge and skills acquired in collegiate experience, including the problem of grading, and problems of certification.

(30) Policy determination of whether, in a period of financial stress, to close down some institutions or campuses in a state system, reduce programs, or give maximum possible support to others.

(31) Problems related to attempts of two-year public institutions to become four-year degree-granting colleges.

(32) Problems related to establishing inter-state cooperation (exchanges of students and credits) in certain graduate and professional programs.

(33) Development of new delivery systems of higher education.

(34) Issues of state relationships with the federal government on development of national policies related to higher education.

These are extensive lists of problems, to say the least. One might expect that they were sufficiently important to command the immediate attention of statewide agency personnel. It is interesting that Paltridge[7] did not find this to be the case. Rather than giving highest priority to these concerns, ". . . nearly all statewide boards, in each of the categories and types identified, devote a considerable amount of their time and attention to concerns over their role in the state higher educational "system", to organizational methods of acquiring strength, and to their political stature vis-a-vis the state legislatures. Yet these are not the concerns for which these boards were formed."

These may not be the concerns for which these boards were formed but they are concerns nevertheless--real concerns, concerns that must be dealt with if the agency is to survive or have any degree of influence. There is little point in an agency allowing itself, by default, to be terminated or so hamstrung that it has no valid function. Surely statewide agencies in higher education must carry out the responsibilities assigned them and

[7]Op. cit; p. 5.

search for solutions to the problems attendant to those responsibilities, but they must also, particularly in their formative years, be alert for the end runs or ambushes that could "do them in".

Getting it all together

It is apparent that the maximum returns that can be realized by a state when its higher education and postsecondary institutions and agencies, its legislative and executive branches are all planning and working together will not just automatically occur. Someone has to take the lead. If responsibility is too fragmented, the situation will not be corrected unless someone initiates action. If there are "holdouts" who are not cooperating, they will never become involved until someone makes it desirable for them to do so. (You may have to "make them an offer they can't refuse"!) If the governor and the members of the legislature are not aware of the benefits that can be obtained for the state through effective coordination of effort, someone has to make the effort to see that they are informed. My comment goes to the statewide coordinating agencies; that someone is you.

Governors and member of the legislature have many agendas. Their primary responsibility is not higher or postsecondary education. Yours is. They took action when they established a structure for the system. It may be the wrong structure but you are expected to make it work and it won't be changed until you have demonstrated that you have accomplished everything possible under the present arrangement. These are difficult days around most state capitals. Attention and support tend to go to those who are clearly going the extra mile and who are exhibiting success rather than presenting problems.

What would I have state agencies do, besides working 20 hour days? As I work with men and women in the various states and interpret what they are doing in terms of my own experience and understanding, I keep coming back to a list of fairly simple mandates. I share them with you not in the sense that they are a complete list, or presented in any order of priority. My hope is that they may interest you as you review your present situation and also that they may serve as the basis for a revised list, drawn from our discussion at this meeting.

(1) Identify the players. In a democratic society, there are few "one man shows", in government, almost none. For each activity or issue, find out who's involved, who's interested and who has what part of the final responsibility.

(2) Get the involved parties together. Those reluctant to participate will do so if:

a) you make the matter public and

b) you issue an invitation to participate that is tied to the public interest.

Just suppose, for a moment that the issue was identified publicly as related to "the need to plan together in order to obtain maximum opportunity for the state's citizens and to obtain a maximum return on the state's investment."

Secondly, just suppose that the governor or the media applauded the activity and urged full participation. Under those circumstances, wouldn't it be difficult to not be there when everyone gathered around the table?

(3) Stay off the front pages. Visibility is one thing, sensationalism another. Stories rarely make the front page unless they sell

newspapers. Let the world know the value of the good things you're proposing but be very chary of attacking the motives of institutions, agencies or individuals or of questioning their judgment. If one of your state institutions wishes to add another law school (or medical school, or Ph.D. in philosophy, or whatever) all you have to do is say "they're out of their skulls" and you'll be on the front page. If you say, "The commission's list of priorities does not include this item at the moment.", or "We have not assigned a high priorty to it.", you have made your point without indignation or rancor and you haven't made an intractable and permanent enemy of those who proposed the matter in the first place.

(4) No surprises. Nothing upsets members of the legislature or trustees, or presidents more than finding out in the newspapers that you are against something they have been interested in for some time. If you are opposed, let them know why, before you make any public statement.

Every institution for which you are making a budget recommendation should know, ahead of time, what recommendation you are making, the criteria you used in developing your judgment, which items do not have high priorities and be certain that they have been involved during the whole process.

(5) Round out your expertise by supplementing staff capability.

One of the easiest ways to discount the work of a statewide agency is to protest that its staff doesn't have the necessary expertise. Because you can never staff to do everything, invite the institutions and constituent boards to provide the assistance you need--stating

publicly that you are confident they share with you the desire for an excellent product.

(6) Invite others to assist in

-- defining problems

-- developing a rationale for studying the problem

-- agreeing on strategies intended to alleviate the problem

-- evaluating outcomes and disseminating the results

Unless the other involved or responsible agencies are brought in early, they tend to oppose everything which follows.

(7) Have more information than anyone else--and gladly share it. This runs to both ends of the spectrum, from an informative base to answering any question within 24 hours. If you have information, and it is valid, you will become valuable to those who need information for decision-making purposes.

(8) Stay on the razor's edge. Every state-wide agency stands between the state's institutions on one hand and the governor and the legislature on the other. If you become a captured spokesman for the institutions, you lose your credibility with the political forces; providing support for measures that do not warrant your support but which someone in power favors, loses you the institutions. Balancing acts are not easy, but who ever said that the role of a statewide coordinator was suppose to be easy!

(9) Have recommendations for organizational change developed against as broad a base as possible. If you are powerless (and I am not one who sees a need for great power in central agencies) you can, in no way, ask for additional clout. This has to come as a recommendation from someone else, after study.

(10) Dare a little. If your state is short on what it is providing, don't fail to make recommendations to correct the shortcoming. If boards are afraid to ask for what they need (which can happen in today's restrictive climate), encourage them. If there are reasons not to support something being proposed, don't support it. If someone is questioning what you are doing, go see him.

These thoughts have been presented, as I said at the outset, for purposes of discussion. I would ask you now where your problems are different than those identified and what procedures you have found helpful in dealing with them.

Warren G. Hill

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September 12, 1975