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March 29, 2010

Simpson: UB 2020 in 'serious jeopardy'

11:45 a.m.: BUFFALO -- University at Buffalo President John B. Simpson warned this morning that the university's long-range UB 2020 plan is "in serious jeopardy" if the state Legislature does not adopt a measure to give state universities more flexibility on matters such as tuition.

"Our ability to complete UB 2020 is in serious jeopardy, and with this, the future of Buffalo and Western New York is in jeopardy," Simpson said during a news conference this morning at UB's Center of Excellence in Bioinformatics and Life Sciences. "UB 2020 is about excellence in education, it is about jobs, and it is about our community's well-being."

The changes, proposed by Gov. David A. Paterson, would give SUNY campuses more autonomy to manage tuition and other funding areas. The Assembly cut the proposed changes from its budget resolution last week. The State Senate has kept the reforms in its budget proposal.

Simpson said he has reached out to members of the Western New York delegation to support the initiative as the 2010 state budget [deadline nears Wednesday](#).

"We recognize that New York has a huge deficit, and that money is not available," Simpson said this morning. "Yet the changes we seek are policy, not financial. We are simply asking for the tools to help ourselves."

Simpson [wrote](#) earlier this month in The News' Sunday Viewpoints section that UB's 2020 plan will require both state and university funding -- two areas in which UB is limited.

"UB 2020 is neither a magical plan nor a panacea for all of what ails Western New York," Simpson wrote in The News' Sunday Viewpoints section March 21. "But it is realistic and thoughtful, and it is already producing early gains. But its ultimate success is not assured."

Simpson cautioned in the op-ed that UB 2020 could be hurt by state funding cuts and "outdated policies that hamper our ability to enhance our revenues."

The state has slashed UB's funding by \$40 million since 2008 and another \$16 million in reductions are expected this year, Simpson wrote.

See a portion of Simpson's remarks:



-- [Denise Jewell Gee](#)

 Posted at 10:37 AM | [Permalink](#)

Comments



Speaking of transparency, CityoftheFuture, your transparent arguments on behalf of an Albany union that wants to kill this plan at Buffalo's expense are laughable at best. Why not publish your real name?

What is your answer to the students at UB who have formally voted in support of the new law?

Posted by: chrisobrien | [March 29, 2010 at 02:50 PM](#)



If we had a chance to save Bethlehem Steel thirty years ago by making a bunch of calls to State legislators, would we have done it?

If 20/20 goes down the tubes because we don't make those calls now, shame on us!

All of their offices are listed in the phone book...or online...

Posted by: chrisobrien | [March 29, 2010 at 02:48 PM](#)



Our region needs UB to grow in order to provide the type of jobs we need to thrive. The downtown UB campus cannot be successful if we wait for the State of New York to provide funding. Instead, public-private partnerships that will be possible only with the flexibility that John Simpson is seeking, is the right approach.

If done right, UB can become a major research university that will attract national funding and create private sector jobs.

Posted by: David Rutecki | [March 29, 2010 at 02:35 PM](#)



CityoftheFuture,

How could the situation be any worse than what has happened in recent years, when the state has raised tuition rates by double digits, sometimes in excess of 30%, with only a few weeks' warning? THAT's what causes students to have to drop out. THAT's what makes education unaffordable. And most recently, the state has kept the increased tuition revenue in its own coffers, while simultaneously cutting the allocations to the campuses to the bone. Bad for the parents, bad for the students, bad for the campuses! At least in the proposed policy, tuition increases would be capped in a formula related to the Higher Education Price Index, so that parents and students could plan what their 4 year investment might be. Again, it's what most sensible states do. New York needs to wake up and catch up!

Posted by: trhlch | [March 29, 2010 at 02:21 PM](#)



So maybe UB has some problems fiscally but balancing the budget on the backs of students is a stupid idea. UB 2020 is gonna create jobs huh? I assume most of these will require a degree of some kind? So what happens when a public education is financially unattainable? Simpson is practically begging to be allowed to raise tuition and sell off chunks of the

school to people with dubious interests, this is a transparent action.

Posted by: CityoftheFuture | [March 29, 2010 at 02:03 PM](#)



John Simpson is right! New York State cannot afford to be without this higher education reform. We will never gain any competitive edge until we give our public college and universities, especially our research universities, the flexibility to do business the way that they do in almost every other state in the nation. Whether you do or don't believe in all of the other benefits that will accrue to this region from UB 2020 (and you should, based in all empirical evidence from other states), there is no reason that our universities should be hamstrung with current tuition, budget and business practices that impede their ability to educate and conduct research. Albany, this is a no-brainer. PLEASE make the right decision on this legislation this year!

Posted by: trhlch | [March 29, 2010 at 01:14 PM](#)

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