

RESOLUTION

OPPOSING DIFFERENTIAL TUITION BASED UPON ACADEMIC MAJORS AS DEFINED BY FLORIDA'S BLUE RIBBON TASK FORCE ON STATE HIGHER EDUCATION REFORM

DRAFT

Whereas, the Task Force was not “collaborative” and did not employ the “energetic involvement of the students, faculty and administrators” in order to solve the complex issues facing higher education; and[1]

Whereas, only one of the seven members of the task force was an educator within the state university system and only two of the members of the Blue Ribbon Task Force were affiliated with a state university; and

Whereas, the Blue Ribbon task force recommends that “There should be no resident student tuition increases applied in high-skill, high-wage, high-demand (market driven) bachelor degrees, as identified by the Legislature,” and recommends a “Differentiated tuition structure to support high-skill, high wage (market determined demand) degree programs, as identified by the Legislature,” which gives state political parties the power to define both “market demand” and appropriate degree programs without a thorough understanding of the university system or the state economy; and[2]

Knowing that “erecting tuition-based barriers would undermine much of the breadth and flexibility [and benefits of a full-fledged liberal arts core] that have traditionally defined the American undergraduate experience, and which arguably helps develop the agility of thought that is such a vital ingredient of American innovation”; and [3]

Knowing that charging higher tuition rates for non-STEM majors will effectively cut funding for those programs as student enrollment numbers decline; and

Knowing that higher tuition rates for non-stem programs will encourage students who do not want a degree in STEM to transfer from the State University System of Florida institutions; and

Knowing that lower tuition rates for STEM majors, coupled with the loss of students university-wide, will undermine the student experience because of reduced funds to support these high-cost programs; and therefore,

Resolved, the Faculty Senate registers its dissatisfaction with the recommendations of Governor Rick Scott’s Blue Ribbon Report on Higher Education and strongly suggests that the governor convene an inclusive, collaborative task force including Faculty and Administrative representatives from each university in the State University System in order for Florida’s 12 institutions to “continue their long-standing contributions of knowledge creation and knowledge transfer” in a changing and modern world.[4]

[1] Blue Ribbon Report, pp. 4.

[2] Blue Ribbon Report, pp. 22

[3] John Villasenor, “In Defense of Equal Tuition for All Majors,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education* - <http://chronicle.com/article/In-Defense-of-Equal-Tuition/136475/>

[4] Blue Ribbon Report, pp. 3.