

12 US colleges seek tie-ups with Indian varsities

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With a law on the anvil to allow operation of foreign education providers in India, a top consortium of research institutions from the US has evinced interest in collaborating with Indian universities.

A delegation of Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC), which represents America's top universities, visited India this week and met HRD Minister Kapil Sibal to discuss areas of collaboration and institutional linkages.

The CIC is a consortium comprising universities of Chicago, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Michigan State University, Minnesota, Northwestern, Ohio State, Pennsylvania State, Purdue and Wisconsin-Madison.

"We have come for discussion on collaboration on research and academic programmes. We are a consortium of research universities and we are together for over 50 years. We do lots of things together and we can collaborate with Indian institutions," Associate Director, Technology Collaboration for CIC, Keren Partlow told PTI.

She said the delegation was on a fact-finding mission to explore the areas of collaboration. This was the first meeting of the CIC delegation with Sibal.

"The minister is open to hear specific ideas like what sort of engagement we would like to have in India. We will prepare a detailed plan in this direction and come again," Partlow, who led the delegation, said.

The CIC is known for quality research and its advanced research laboratories. Through collaboration, the CIC members increase teaching, learning and research opportunities.

These universities conduct funded research of \$6.4 billion every year while the funded research of Ivy League universities and the University of California are pegged at \$3.27 billion and \$4.38 billion respectively.

India is interested in institutional linkages between CIC institutions and universities here. This will help Indian universities take advantage of the high quality research facilities of CIC member institutions, a HRD ministry official said.

The CIC universities enrol nearly three lakh under-graduate and 76,000 post-graduate students every year and deliver doctoral programmes in 147 areas of study. University of Illinois, a member of CIC, had earlier helped India set up IIT Kharagpur and G B Pant University of Agriculture and Technology.

The visit of CIC comes at a time when the government is likely to introduce the Foreign Educational Institution (Regulation of Entry and Operation) Bill, 2010 in Parliament this month. The Cabinet approved the bill which lays down norms for allowing entry and operation of foreign education providers in India.

Nearly 50 foreign institutions, including Boston, Yale and Duke University, have evinced interest in either setting up campuses or collaborate on research and academic programmes.

The CIC delegation also met representatives of Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) and discussed facilitating more research students.

The delegation evinced interest in sending students for pursuing studies in Persian, Arabic, Urdu, Hindi and other Indian languages.

The delegation comprised Wolfgang Schloer from University Illinois, Will Glover from University Michigan, Molly Portz from University of Minnesota, Ken Shapiro and Aseem Ansari from University of Wisconsin-Madison, Terry Webb from Madison Area Technical College and Partlow.

Editorial

The new wealth class: UIC employees burdened by misrepresentation

April 2, 2010



In our March issue, we included a front-page story about the value of the University of Illinois at Chicago to the community, City, and State. The university educates students, provide healthcare for both paying patients and the needy, and graduates the leaders of tomorrow who will be expected to pull the State out of its economic sinkhole — since today's leaders don't seem to have the ability to do so.

For every dollar the State sends to the university, the university generates \$13 for the Illinois economy.

In addition, the university employs thousands of people, who spend money in this community on food, housing, and a variety of other goods.

As we said in our Dec. 4 editorial, State employees, including those working at the university, “deserve a pat on the back for working for smaller salaries while fulfilling the State's mission than they could earn at private institutions doing similar jobs.”

Not everyone agrees with us, however.

R. Eden Martin, president of the Civic Committee of the Commercial Club of Chicago, in a March 10 letter to the editor of the Chicago Tribune argued for cuts in pension benefits for State employees.

Members of the Civic Committee include a large number of CEOs of corporations, bankers, investors, and executives from insurance companies. As UIC political science Professor Stephen Engleman has said, they “hail from finance, insurance, and real estate. Many knowledgeable people think that this sector has contributed significantly to the State's fiscal crisis.” No labor people on this highbrow committee, of course.

Not to be outdone by the Commercial Club, John Tillman, CEO of the Illinois Policy Institute, a right-wing think tank, said that “public employees are the new wealth class” while proposing not just to cut State employees' pensions, but to cut their salaries.

We're sure all those secretaries, hospital workers, janitors, junior faculty, and middle managers at UIC are happy to learn they are part of the new wealth class.

More sensible opinion has been coming out of the mouth of Judy Irwin, executive director of the Illinois Board of Higher Education and a former State legislator. She suggests that those who work at and benefit from UIC and other state-funded educational institutions make contact with their State legislators to tell them to put education on their list of priorities.

Irwin urged at a recent UIC Senate meeting that people tell legislators human-interest stories of how institutions like UIC affect students and patients. “Focus on the fact that we're closing the door on the economic future of the State if they mess with the students by underfunding higher ed,” she said. “We can do this, and we have to do this. We cannot get out of this recession unless we increase the number of degreed residents of the State of Illinois.”

Martin and Tillman may think that the Illinois economy will magically get better if those pesky State employees will just quit expecting pensions and pay, but Irwin makes more sense to us. To learn more about contacting your State legislators, go to www.ilga.gov.

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Public Universities Seek Ways to Coax More Research Money From Lawmakers

By Katherine Mangan

Austin, Tex.

Public research universities need to come up with a national strategy to persuade state and federal lawmakers to step up support for research that will create jobs, improve economies, and encourage innovation, speakers said during a meeting of higher-education leaders here on Thursday.

The meeting, sponsored by the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities, was the first of five regional gatherings scheduled across the country this month.

The initial meeting, held at the system offices of the University of Texas, drew about 50 participants—including chancellors, presidents, provosts, and vice presidents for research—from a dozen states.

At a time of squeezed state budgets, universities must also do a better job of demonstrating that their priorities are in sync with the needs of their states, several speakers noted.

"If the public research universities can come together in some reasonably clear, understandable set of alignments, it truly can be powerful," M. Peter McPherson, president of the association, told the group. "We want to show that we're responsible and that we understand state and national needs."

He said two decades of declining state support has taken its toll on public research universities.

Stephen W.S. McKeever, vice president for research and technology transfer at Oklahoma State University, said lawmakers in his state generally understand the importance of education, but not necessarily of research. "Many of them perceive research as a hobby that our faculty do that they pay for," Mr. McKeever said.

While higher-education officials in other states are struggling to impress on their lawmakers the importance of research, Texas voters approved in November an endowment of nearly a half-billion

dollars to expand research capacities at several universities.

Still, it is going to be a tough year to ask for more money.

"Legislators fund crises or problems or the most immediate things before them," said Michael G. O'Quinn, vice president for government relations for Texas A&M University's flagship campus in College Station.

The challenge, he said, is to demonstrate that failing to adequately support public research universities could create serious problems for a variety of groups, including the many first-generation college students they serve.

"Legislators who are struggling to find ways to fund Medicaid matches and other mandates with limited resources don't see us as broken," he said.

According to the association, state appropriations per student fell from \$6,896 to \$6,538 over the decades from 1987 to 2007. Over the same period, enrollment jumped 43 percent, from 7.1 million to 10.2 million.

Adding to the burdens that public research universities are facing is the increased need to pay part of the cost of federally supported research. The proportion of research costs that public universities have had to cover themselves has climbed from 14.2 percent in 1972 to 24 percent in 2008, according to a new report on public research universities, "Forging a Foundation for the Future: Keeping Public Research Universities Strong", which was prepared for discussion at the regional meeting.

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