



State's economy hinges on higher education

Posted: Wednesday, March 28, 2018

“The Senate budget approved last week returns \$2.3 million in equity funding to bring WKU in line with the level of funding other Kentucky universities receive,” Aaron Mudd explained in last Sunday’s Daily News. “While the Senate’s proposal does restore some cuts, it keeps a 6.25 percent cut originally proposed by Bevin that would be felt across most of the state’s departments and public universities.”

While higher education could be doing a better job of responding to the needs of society, the inescapable reality is that economic viability in the commonwealth in the future will be a lot more dependent on our colleges and universities than it has been in the past.

Although employment considerations are not the only factors that should be taken into account, as the cost of attending college has increased exponentially over the last few decades, the importance of securing employment upon graduation – commensurate with the investment – has grown more acute.

It is entirely possible to be enlightened yet still living under an overpass.

Again, I understand the mission of higher education entails much more than vocational training; its purpose also encompasses the development of a more informed citizenry. A recent study by researchers in Australia found that “university education has a dramatically positive effect on the development of non-cognitive skills like conscientiousness, extraversion and agreeableness, in addition to the expected intellectual benefits.”

Given the track record of our elected representatives in Washington, D.C., as well as the decision-making on display at many of our corporations, it seems obvious these are precisely the characteristics that seem to be in short supply these days.

As I have mentioned previously, and will probably reiterate in the future, higher education has simply got to pay more attention to aligning what we have to offer with what society needs.

Aaron W. Hughey
Bowling Green

www.bgdailynews.com