2-4-2009

Tuition Freeze Talking Points

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Tuition freeze talking points ~ 2/4/09

• We have not really seen any details on the Governor's proposal--just the tuition freeze idea floated out to media. We don't know what kind of "pain" her 2010 budget suggests for universities, so we don't know what to anticipate in terms of our state appropriation--a major ingredient (1/3) of our operating budget.

• This is the start of a long process to determine budgets and tuition for next year.

• We're all very concerned about affordability and are already dealing with the impact the economic downturn is having on student families. It's something we're already addressing daily. WMU, for instance, has kept its tuition and fees in the lower third of all of Michigan's universities and boosted need-based financial aid funds by $3.5 million for this year. We're working to ID additional funding for emergency aid purposes.

• Affordability is something we work at year-round through cost cutting measures and lean staffing. Affordability/access is also about reaching out and tailoring aid and support to groups that need special assistance. We're reaching out to groups like veterans and foster care students to ensure they have access to higher ed.

• Affordability also can be achieved by helping student move quickly to graduation--something we've been focusing on for the past two years. The less time to degree--the less a degree costs.