




WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY
Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Research

Memorandum

TO: Academic Affairs Faculty and Staff

FROM: Gary L. Miller 

DATE: November 24, 2008

RE: Annual NASULGC update: The conversation in American higher education

Last week I attended the annual meeting of the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges (NASULGC)¹ in Chicago. NASULGC is the major presidential organization representing American research universities. The organization is an extremely strong voice for research universities particularly in the Congress. The NASULGC agenda reflects the major themes and tensions in the national conversation in American higher education. In the recent past, the organization has assumed a lead role in national discussions about accountability, accreditation, international higher education (particularly in Africa), agriculture, sustainability, and the preparation of STEM teachers. As I did last year, I want to take this opportunity to report on the important themes of the meeting and to reflect briefly on how they articulate with some of the initiatives underway at Wichita State University.

Following is a list of the major workshops and panel presentation topics.

- International education.
- Innovation, competitiveness and economic prosperity.
- Technology and e-learning.
- Science and math teacher preparation.
- The NASULGC campus energy initiative.
- Renewable energy and sustainability.

¹ Later this spring the NASULGC will change its name to: *National Association of Public and Land Grant Universities*.

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- College costs and tuition.
- The new federal administration.

The focus in each case was either on how research universities contribute to solution models for major global challenges or how we can improve our delivery and performance to increase research productivity, teaching effectiveness and community engagement.

The many innovative initiatives and programs at Wichita State University intersect with many of these major conference themes. We are now having community discussions about globalization and international education. Much of our strategic research focus is on translational research very directly related to economic development. We have completed a study of e-learning and are now moving to develop an operating philosophy that supports our mission. The College of Education is very intentionally moving forward with programs to increase the output of science and mathematics teachers. Many of our social science research programs directly address community needs in our region. In short, through our work we are very much a part of the vibrant conversation in American higher education regarding the central 21st century imperatives of the human condition.

As you know, Wichita State is a member of the Urban Serving University (USU) coalition. The USU is a separate non-profit organization established three years ago to advance an ambitious national urban higher education agenda in three strand areas: education, health, and sustaining urban communities. Deans Peter Cohen and Sharon Iorio are active participants in the health and education strands. I am involved with the groups focused on sustaining urban communities. Andy Schlapp, Executive Director for Government Relations at Wichita State, interacts with the government liaison group of the USU. The USU interacts very actively with the NASULGC Commission on the Urban Agenda and, this year, held its annual meeting in conjunction with NASULGC in Chicago. I represented Dr. Beggs at that meeting where we discussed progress in each of the strand areas and further refined our strategy for advancing the USU agenda in Congress. I have emphasized in the past that part of our obligation to this community and to this university is to translate our local models into national and global solutions. In this way, we connect our work with the broader higher education enterprise. As I sat through the meetings in Chicago, I was excited to think back to the extraordinary work being done in Wichita that is directly relevant to this conversation. I very much appreciate your work and your support of our vision as a major contributor to world challenges.

As always, I will be most happy to have discussions with groups of you about these topics and others that are part of the national conversation in higher education.

All the best.

C: Dr. Beggs