CALL FOR PAPERS

Volatility in State Spending for Higher Education

Proposals Due: December 1, 2017

Conference Dates: June 4-5, 2018, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

You are invited to submit a proposal for an academic research conference and for potential inclusion in an edited volume on the topic of volatility in state spending for higher education. Most discussions of higher education finance focus on the levels of funding (i.e., how much will the state appropriate this year?). While these discussions about levels of funding are undoubtedly important, too little attention is paid to the consequences of volatility in funding. Predictability matters – to institutions, students, families, and states. In addition, the risks of operating in an uncertain financial environment lead to behaviors that are not always in the best interests of states, institutions, or students. As such, this research conference has been developed to encourage new, original scholarship on volatility in state support for higher education.

The conference is organized around the following research questions:

1. What are the consequences of volatility in state support for stakeholder groups, such as students (enrollment, completion, etc.) and institutions (planning, staffing, expenditure patterns, etc.)?
2. What are identifiable markers of changes in the intensity of volatility in state spending for higher education? For instance, what is the role of the business cycle in relation to state spending for higher education? What are identifiable patterns in state spending for higher education? To what degree does volatility in spending for higher education vary across states? Which state characteristics are associated with more or less volatility? What mechanisms can be used to quantify the risk inherent in a volatile system?
3. How much have changes in volatility intensities impacted funding levels? For instance, has there been an overall decline in spending levels following more or less volatile periods?
4. What are the patterns and consequences of volatility in non-institutionally-focused state spending for higher education? How does volatility in state funding for higher education institutions relate to state funding for student aid or capital projects?
5. What mechanisms are available for addressing volatility and how effective are these mechanisms? For instance, is there a relationship between performance funding, funding formulas, state financial aid programs, state “free” college programs (or other state higher education finance policies) and volatility?

Because this conference is intended to bring together scholars and those working in higher education policy, we ask that each paper include policy implications.

State Higher Education Finance Data Availability:
For those wanting to make use of quantitative data on state support of higher education, the State Higher Education Executive Officers will assist researchers in accessing and utilizing their State Higher Education Finance (SHEF) data, including gaining access to older data.
You can learn more about the SHEF data here: http://www.sheeo.org/projects/shef-%E2%80%94-state-higher-education-finance

If you have questions about the SHEF data or need access to earlier years than are available on the website, please contact Sophia Laderman at SLaderman@sheeo.org

Conference Organizer:
Jennifer A. Delaney, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Conference Planning Committee:
William R. Doyle, Vanderbilt University
David Tandberg, State Higher Education Executive Officers
Andy Carlson, State Higher Education Executive Officers

To submit a proposal, please send the following materials as one email attachment to delaneyj@illinois.edu by December 1, 2017:

1. One page proposal abstract
2. One page author(s) biography

The abstract should include the following elements:
- Purpose of the study
- Research question(s)
- Research method(s)
- Expected contributions to knowledge
- Policy significance
- Relevance to one or more of the guiding questions for the conference

Conference Logistics:
The conference will be held at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign on June 4-5, 2018. The costs of travel, lodging, and meals during the conference will be covered for one author of each paper selected for the conference. All papers presented at the conference will be considered for inclusion in an edited volume on volatility in state spending for higher education.

Timeline:
December 1, 2017 Proposals due.
December 15, 2017 Notification about selection for inclusion in the conference.
May 11, 2018 Authors submit completed drafts to assigned discussants and the conference organizers.
June 4-5, 2018 Conference held at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Authors receive feedback on their papers from discussants and policy respondents.
August 1, 2018 Authors invited to submit their work to the edited volume should submit revised manuscripts to the conference organizers/volume editor for publication in an edited volume.
Winter 2019 or later Edited volume released.

Please direct any questions to Jennifer Delaney at delaneyj@illinois.edu.

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