



*Commission on Colleges
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
1866 Southern Lane
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THE IMPACT OF BUDGET REDUCTIONS ON HIGHER EDUCATION

- A Position Statement -

Recently, state legislatures across the country have made significant and often sudden reductions in financial support for colleges and universities. These cuts have come despite public recognition that higher education is one of the critical strengths of the United States as it competes in a global economy. The cuts in public funding have had a detrimental effect on the ability of many of our institutions in carrying out their missions and meeting the challenges of providing well-educated graduates to our region.

Sometimes a reduction in funding leads institutions to undertake comprehensive and intensive examinations of their programs and operations, and efficiencies result; however, oftentimes vital programs and services suffer. In a number of states the cuts have come without warning, making it impossible for institutions to plan effectively. In many cases, the disparity between available resources and educational demands has become so significant that the institutional capacity to respond has been severely impaired and the academic integrity and quality of many programs have been and are being threatened.

The Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools reaffirms its belief that administrators, trustees, and legislators share in the responsibility for ensuring that institutions of higher education have the ability to achieve their stated purposes. When rapid declines in resources diminish any institution's ability to fulfill its mission, all parties should understand the necessity of either replacing these resources or redefining the institution's educational programs and services. Administrators, trustees and legislators have a joint responsibility for providing, safeguarding and managing the resources of institutions under their charge. Without such understanding and commitment, our institutions of higher learning and their programs are placed in jeopardy.

Endorsed: Executive Council, March 2002