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Faculty retention becoming a serious issue

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In the last few years we have heard a lot of discussion on higher education. The concern is not just about universities but to retain students, to increase graduation rates and to reduce the burden of student debt.

However, with all of the problems that are affecting institutions of higher education we are now witnessing another equally serious one - an increasing number of faculty members leaving their institutions and sometimes their careers in higher education altogether. This is a problem because institutions of higher education have the highest cost of hiring and retaining good faculty while doing less to tangibly engage faculty with their academic institutions.

According to the study by the National Bureau of Economic Research, U.S.-based private, nonprofit educational institutions are paying more than $120 billion to retain and attract qualified faculty. The study found that the cost of hiring and retaining new faculty members has increased by 55% in the past decade, with the cost of hiring tenure-track faculty increasing by 77%.

For the Intelligencer
Goshen Market

The Goshen Market information booth drew a crowd Saturday morning during the season’s first Goshen Market in downtown Edwardsville.

Dr. Aldemaro Romero Jr.
Letters from Academia

Aldemaro Romero Jr., a public-private partnership including the CityArchRiver Foundation and other partners, wishes to elevate our reputation in the long run.

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According to a study by the American Association of University Professors, women in the U.S. earn on average 10 percent less than their male counterparts. Other studies have shown that faculty members are often less recognized than those of their male peers. Thus, institutions that are smart enough to attract and retain good female faculty are faster.

When it comes to recruiting initiatives on the part of some of these organizations, this study generated some revealing information. Based on a review of data on many institutions, it was found that “all else equal, scientists are more likely to move (than not) in a given year if their current place is not a great environment at home not very good.” Given the intense competition on attracting and retaining funding in many institutions of higher education, particularly public ones, that helps to explain the increase in mobility we have been seeing lately. Sometimes the funding issues go beyond the immediate one. Some major federal granting institutions such as the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation, both major sources of external funding for scientists, have been restricting the ability of grant recipients to move money and equipment, making it difficult for scientists to move to work in the institutions that provide better start-up funds for their research careers. Also, being in more supportive institutions increases the chances to win bigger grants because of the infrastructure already in place, along with the institution’s reputation.

Universities, definitely, that have to do with moving from one institution to another, particular- ly for faculty with families, are complex ones. Institutions that want to advance their reputations need not only the kind of data generated by the NIH study, but also to play closer attention to these issues.

That means that administrators, from depart- ment chairs to provosts, have to be involved with their faculty by showing a closer personal touch with them and demonstrating a genuine interest in their personal lives. We also need better funding for higher education. Including federal funding. Better funding will help attract and retain good faculty. We need more tenure-track professors, and will provide better infra- structure for faculty who want to do more research. It will also increase the future earnings of the students we get you to pay for. At the end of the day, that is right for the students.

Dr. Aldemaro Romero Jr. is a senior and college provost with leadership experience in higher education. You can contact him through his web site at: http://www.romerointel.org

Picnic on the Riverfront scheduled

Event marks the opening of the new park area near the Gateway Arch grounds

For the Intelligencer

Great Rivers Greenway, the City of St. Louis, CityArchRiver Foundation and other partners will be hosting a Picnic on the Riverfront this Sunday, May 8, to celebrate the opening of the new Riverfront area.

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