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Performance-based funding inevitable

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Performance-based funding for higher education is not so much an if but a when.

Should the state adopt the model, universities will be funded based on success in areas such as enrollment and retention figures rather than receiving a set amount. Lt. Gov. Sheila Simon, a former SIUC professor, has shown support for the change.

SIU President Glenn Poshard said the change is coming and SIU must fight to be judged on improvements rather than a set model for all universities.

He said when performance-based funding comes into effect, SIU should be judged on its own merits of improvement with set goals rather than having everything directly compared to other institutions such as the University of Illinois system.

"It needs to start with where we are now and go forward," Poshard said.

He said legislators will be looking to universities to trim down on programs that do not produce graduates and concentrating on areas that do.

"They're not going to let us go any longer with what they consider ineffectiveness," Poshard said.

SIUC Chancellor Rita Cheng said the Carbondale campus has some preparedness for the change through models such as the university college.

Cheng also serves with the Illinois team of Complete College America, a national organization that works to increase the number of people with college degrees and to strengthen the academic preparedness of students entering higher education.

She said SIUC accepts the most community college transfer students in the state, so better equipping students to perform well at SIUC is key to improving enrollment and retention.

Poshard said there probably will be some push-back against performance-based funding, but the university will roll with what the state throws at it.

"We'll do what needs to be done," Poshard said.

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