

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

Urbana-Champaign • Chicago • Springfield

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On September 25, Forbes published a commentary entitled “Higher Ed’s ‘Mission Corrupted,’” written by Adam Andrejewski, founder of OpenTheBooks.com.

The article alleges that higher education is failing and that universities are serving themselves rather than students and society. It maintains that campuses are padding payrolls and spending lavishly on construction, while enrollment stagnates and student tuition spirals upward.

In arguing his premise, Andrejewski cites inaccurate information about the University of Illinois – information that, if corrected, runs counter to his theory that higher education has lost its way. He incorrectly points to a nearly 83 percent increase in university employment over the last 13 years, to construction cranes that are currently erecting buildings on the Urbana-Champaign campus and to annual tuition of \$31,000.

Employment across the university’s three campuses has increased by only a fraction of the amount cited in the commentary – 9.2 percent over the last 14 years, serving a student population that has grown by nearly 15 percent over the same period, to more than 78,000 students.

While it’s true there is construction underway on our Urbana-Champaign campus, most is not at university expense. For example, a \$180 million renovation of the campus’s arena, State Farm Center, is being funded through private donations. A recently completed project, funded with support from the state of Illinois and donors, provides a new, state-of-the-art home for the campus’s nationally ranked Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering. Cranes are also currently working on several privately funded, high-rise apartment buildings that will serve students in the Campustown area.

Finally, and most egregious, the commentary vastly overstates tuition at the University of Illinois, which stands at \$12,036 this year in Urbana-Champaign, \$10,584 on the university’s Chicago campus and \$9,405 in Springfield. In fact, the \$31,000 tuition rate cited in the article exceeds the annual total for tuition, fees and room and board on any of our campuses.

For nearly 150 years, the University of Illinois has carefully stewarded its financial resources to serve the needs of society – through academic programs that transform the lives of students and research that leads the way to progress and economic growth. We will never waver from those core missions, and are committed to rewarding the trust and support of our students, alumni, government and industry partners, donors and friends.



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