Regional

Location means a lot for college enrollments

Many believe that geography is just a matter of latitude and longitude coordinates, but the science of geography is much more than that. It is, among other things, about understanding human activity and place. Now that institutions of higher education are making sure that they have the enrollment they need in order to continue competing, the importance of geography has itself become far more important.

In a study published recently by the American Council on Education, Los Angeles-based Research and Strategy titled “Education Deserts: Is There a New Map of First-Generation,” the authors, Nicholas Hillman and Joshua P. Nwaneri, found that geography matters. Madison, provided with as new and very revealing data about the importance of geography in higher education, shows the importance of geography.

To begin with we need to understand that the idea of education deserts is driven by four factors: cost, academic offerings, job preparation and location. The researchers also found that these factors have been true throughout the years, and the fact of the matter is that there are many of what they call education deserts, geographic areas where college opportunities are quite few and far between. This is why higher education is only a fraction of higher education within a 50-mile radius. This is particularly relevant to public institutions with extremely limited geographic reach. In rural areas, they are not only small in size but also serve to move more warehouses when creating student interest. They also tend to serve many students from far outside their geographic area.

The definition of an "educational desert" in relation to the population, by county, is based on the fact that the two highest "deserts" are located in the Los Angeles–Ventura (California) and Harris County–Galveston (Texas) areas. Although this may be surprising given both of these communities have large public university populations – Los Angeles is home to both the University of California, Los Angeles and Stanford University, respectively – these institutions are not known for their attractiveness and do not serve their communities as a whole. But this dearth in opportunities manifests itself far beyond those two areas. The researchers calculated that these education deserts cover home to over 25.3 million adults, roughly 12 percent of the nation's population. The lack of educational opportunities particularly affects Hispanics in the United States and Latinos. Furthermore, the graduation rate for college is well below the national average, resulting in socio-economic inequalities among students and communities. To educate students, the government needs to invest in education.

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