

SENATOR MOREHEAD: There are 8 excused, Senator Vickers.

SENATOR VICKERS: Okay, thank you. Yes, I'll proceed. Madam President and members, Senator Wesely and Senator Scofield both said that we need to have some way to coordinate higher education. They didn't like the way we've got now, but I didn't hear them say what they wanted to do. I didn't hear them say what the better way was. We've got a mechanism and I admit it's not the perfect mechanism. I admit not everybody in this country, in this state likes Bill Fuller. I would suggest to you that if you've got a Coordinating Commission that really is going to do his job, there is not going to be an awfully lot of love from the institutions for whoever it is in the Coordinating Commission. There wasn't an awful lot of love over there at the Institute of Agriculture among those people that wanted a vet school for Tom Vickers for the last several years, I can tell you that. Senator Wesely said that I've stood tall on that issue. Well I've stood tall on it because I knew something about it, but there's not an awfully lot of us in here that knows something about every program that is offered in higher education and maybe Senator Scofield does because she has been in higher education herself. Maybe Senator Hartnett does because he is in it, but there is a lot of others of us that don't and yet we're supposed to make the decisions. They both said that this body is the one that is going to have to make the tough decisions. I suggest to you we're going to need a state agency to help us make that as tough decisions. We're going to have to have some oversight capability over those institutions that use over 25 percent of our total budget. I don't think it's inappropriate. I don't think it's inappropriate to ask this body, instead of giving a 59.3 percent reduction, to add enough back in and make it a 36.4 percent reduction so that this commission will have enough funds to carry out the purposes this body gave them to do just last year, evaluate and assess the programs within all of public, postsecondary education. I don't know any other way and I've searched my mind long and hard. I don't know any other way to begin to get at those programs and how we're going to help hold down the cost of them in higher education. 981 last year I think was a good start. I think we're making a real mistake in the name of budgetary restraints in eliminating the mechanism that this body adopted last year and the only mechanism that I've heard anybody come up with yet to try to evaluate those programs of those very, very expensive