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*An Overview*

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# Higher Education in the Western Region of the United States

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An Overview

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Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education  
P.O. Drawer P, Boulder, Colorado 80301-9752

*Partial financial support was provided by The Ford Foundation*

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This paper provides an overview of the characteristics and policy issues and practices in the western United States. It was developed to provide a foundation of understanding and contribute to discussions among higher education leaders in Mexico and the bordering western United States in their joint exploration of opportunities for collaboration and resource sharing.

The paper was prepared for the April 23-24, 1993 meeting "Avenues for Cooperation: A WICHE/Mexico Meeting to Strengthen Higher Education Collaboration." The meeting was held at the Cintermex Convention Center in Monterrey, Mexico in conjunction with the 1993 Border Governors' Conference.

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# HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE WESTERN REGION OF THE UNITED STATES

## An Overview

A system of public colleges and universities, highly autonomous and largely state-funded, has served to promote significant educational opportunities in the western United States. However, rapid economic, social, and demographic changes, as well as limited fiscal resources, place new and additional demands on higher education. Critics in higher education, and in business, government and the media have identified a number of much needed reforms. Their concerns translate, more often, into the following challenges:

- renewal of undergraduate education;
- re-emphasis on the importance of teaching;
- stronger collaboration between secondary schools and colleges;
- development of an international and multicultural curriculum and campus environment;
- effective use of technology in courses and administration;
- innovation in educational delivery systems;
- expanded access; and
- research aimed at solving specific problems in the economy and society.

These challenges are not unique to the United States. And because they are common to many higher education systems throughout the world, collaboration among countries in discussing possible solutions is beneficial and efficient.

This paper provides an overview of the characteristics and policy issues and practices in the western United States. It was developed to provide a foundation of understanding and contribute to discussions among higher education leaders in Mexico and the bordering western United States in their joint exploration of opportunities for collaboration and resource sharing.

## STRUCTURE OF PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES<sup>1</sup>

Education was not mentioned in the U.S. Constitution because the framers' intended it to be primarily a state responsibility (Fuller and Peterson, 1969). While the

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<sup>1</sup> Displays referenced in this section appear in Appendix A.

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federal government plays a role in higher education in the United States, the principle of states' rights (granted through the Tenth Amendment) prevails with respect to control of education (Blocker, Bender, and Martorana, 1975). Today, the federal government role in higher education focuses on providing research funding and student financial aid.

## **Governance**

***Governors and legislatures.*** In some states the governor is recognized as the single most important influence on state education policy (Hines, 1988; Gilley, 1991). Since the early 1980s governors have played a heightened role in higher education policy development, in part due to the actions of a few highly visible former "education governors" such as Bill Clinton of Arkansas, Thomas Kean of New Jersey, and Lamar Alexander of Tennessee, and current governor Roy Romer of Colorado (Gove, 1987; Krotseng, 1990). The role of the legislature in higher education also has expanded in most states—legislatures exert considerable influence through budget procedures, functions which are increasingly influenced by professional legislative staff (Folger, 1978).

There are significant differences between the higher education governance roles of the governor and legislature. Individual legislators are more responsive than their governors to local needs and constituencies; constituents' interests are frequently factored into legislative budget and policy-making decisions (Layzell and Lyddon, 1990).

***Higher education coordinating and governing boards.*** Although gubernatorial and legislative roles are important, policy direction in the public higher education sector is provided in each of the fifty states by state higher education boards that vary significantly in structure and authority (Education Commission of the States, 1986). These boards were established in recognition of the state's substantial financial investment in public colleges and universities and to protect the public's interest. The development of state policy toward higher education is a primary responsibility of these boards (Callan and Finney, 1988).

State boards of higher education fall into two categories: coordinating and governing. Coordinating board responsibilities include: budget review, program review, and planning (Callan and Jonsen, 1987). They typically have responsibility for reviewing and sometimes approving, institutional operating budgets. Coordinating boards usually develop higher education funding recommendations for the governor and legislature (often using funding formulas that are tied to campus enrollments). Most coordinating boards are responsible for reviewing and frequently approving new academic degree programs (Schachter, 1986). They also are responsible for statewide higher education planning, including policy development in areas such as transfer agreements between two-year and four-year institutions, tuition and financial aid, minority student participation, and general admissions requirements. In coordinating board states, colleges and universities are governed by institutional boards of trustees or regents.

Statewide governing boards have all of the authorities of coordinating boards and the additional responsibility for campus governance, including: the selection and evaluation of college and university presidents; intervention, if required, in internal campus affairs; and budget implementation (Hines, 1988). The greatest difference

between statewide governing and coordinating boards is the fiscal powers of the governing boards.

Both governing and coordinating boards face a dilemma: the executive and legislative branches of government tend to see them as state agencies responsible for regulating higher education institutions, while campuses see the job of boards as advocates for institutional needs (Greer, 1986). A board's effectiveness is determined in large measure by their skill and leadership in balancing these conflicting roles.

Twenty-three states currently have state governing boards for higher education, while 27 use coordinating boards (Education Commission of the States, 1986). The state structure of higher education in the western United States mirrors that of the nation. In the WICHE region, 10 states have some form of statewide governing boards, while five have statewide coordinating boards.

### **Financing**

Public higher education in the United States is financed by state and local governments, students and their families, the federal government, and private sources (e.g., corporations, individual philanthropists). The two largest funding sources are states and students.

**State support.** Through direct appropriations, grants and contracts, and student financial aid, state governments provide the largest share of funding for public higher education: nationally, 53 percent<sup>2</sup> (Chronicle of Higher Education, 1993) (see Display A1). However, the state share of unrestricted revenues for public higher education in the WICHE region has declined by approximately 5 percent over the past decade (1980 to 1990) (see Display A2). In addition, total dollars appropriated to higher education in the nation declined between 1990 and 1992 by approximately 1 percent.

Higher education is largely financed by state governments because of the widely held belief that education is an investment in the state's own economic and social growth, and cultural enrichment (Sloan Commission, 1980; Millett, 1984). Through their three primary functions — teaching (knowledge transfer), research (knowledge discovery), and public service (knowledge application) — higher education institutions educate the workforce, develop much of our nation's technology innovation, and provide leadership on important policy decisions.

In 1991-92, states appropriated approximately \$40 billion to higher education in the nation (\$162 per capita). WICHE states appropriated \$10.2 billion (\$175 per capita) (see Display A3). While appropriations to higher education have declined nationally, WICHE institutions have, on average, fared better than colleges and universities in the other 35 states. From 1990 to 1992 state appropriations to higher education, in current dollars, increased in all WICHE states. However, when adjusting for inflation:

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<sup>2</sup> Sales and services such as hospital revenue and auxiliary enterprises are excluded from revenue totals.

appropriations declined in three states and when using per capita data, appropriations declined in eight states (Hines, 1992).

***Student support.*** Tuition and required fees paid by students and their families account for a significant share of public higher education revenues: 20 percent (see Display A1). During the 1980s, tuition as a share of unrestricted higher education revenue in the WICHE region increased by 3 percent (see Display A2). Students and their families now bear a greater share of revenue costs than they did 10 years ago.

Tuition charges at public higher education institutions vary widely across the nation, with students at community colleges in California paying \$210 and students at research universities paying as much as \$10,000 annually. Tuition rates tend to vary depending on the level of study (undergraduate, graduate) and the residency status of students (resident or nonresident). For example, a student from New Jersey attending a public institution in Colorado pays more than three times the rate that a student from Colorado pays.

Average resident undergraduate tuition at public institutions in the WICHE states is nearly \$400 lower than the national average—in the WICHE region students pay on average \$1,755 while nationally they are charged \$2,137 (see Display A4).

### **Institutional Types**

There are approximately 3,600 colleges and universities in the nation (690 in the WICHE region) (see Display A5). In general, colleges and universities in the United States fit into one or more categories: public or private; two-year or four-year; and community colleges, liberal arts colleges, comprehensive or research universities.

The composition of colleges and universities in the latter category are:

**Community college** — Two-year colleges awarding associate degrees in academic and vocational fields, and many vocationally oriented certificate programs. The primary community college mission is to meet the needs of the local community.

**Liberal arts** — Selective, primarily undergraduate colleges awarding more than one-half of the baccalaureate degrees in arts and sciences fields.

**Comprehensive** — Colleges and universities offering baccalaureate programs and, with few exceptions, graduate education through the master's degree. More than one-half of their baccalaureate degrees are awarded in two or more occupational or professional disciplines such as engineering, education, or business administration.

**Research** — Universities offering a full range of baccalaureate programs, with a commitment to graduate education through the doctorate degree. A high priority is given to research.



Community colleges in the WICHE region educate 52 percent of students—in the nation community colleges enroll only 38 percent of all students. In addition, a greater share of students are enrolled at public institutions in the WICHE states (88 percent) than in the nation (78 percent) (see Display A6).

### **Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity**

Colleges and universities in the United States are more racially/ethnically diverse now than at any time in their history. The number of undergraduate racial and ethnic minorities increased 50 percent between 1980 and 1990.

Undergraduate enrollments in the 15 WICHE states are the most racially/ethnically diverse in the nation. In 1990 more than one-fourth (26.4 percent) of students enrolled in colleges and universities in the WICHE region were minority, compared with 20.3 percent in the nation. "Latinos" comprise the largest "minority" enrollment in the region (10.5 percent), followed closely by Asians/Pacific Islanders (9.3 percent) (see Display A7).

## **THE CHALLENGES AND FORCES FOR CHANGE**

A new and global economy, an increasing population, and funding limitations provide the challenges and the forces for higher education changes in the United States.

The demands of a new economy emphasize the need for:

- individuals who are willing to take risks, think critically, be creative, and understand the importance of lifelong learning;
- greater understanding of international languages, cultures and traditions;
- integration of new technologies throughout the curriculum and in campus operations;
- academic programs that respond to the needs of a new and changing workforce; and
- applied research focused on local, state and national problems.

A growing population that is becoming increasingly ethnically and racially diverse demands:

- a higher education system that reflects this diversity, and plays a leadership role in helping society understand and value different cultures;

- stronger partnerships between higher education and the public schools to increase the participation and retention of historically underrepresented populations in education; and
- new approaches to the delivery of academic programs to increase higher education access.

The limitations of state funding require:

- examination of current higher education funding policies and practices;
- educational delivery systems that meet quality and efficiency standards;
- no unnecessary duplication in the educational system from kindergarten through graduate studies; and
- systems of accountability that will rekindle public support for education.

## **POLICY ISSUES FACING HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES**

The challenges listed above provide the foundation for many higher education policy discussions in the WICHE states and across the nation. These discussions focus on the quality of the higher education product; higher education access and delivery of programs; higher education funding; and accountability.

### **The Quality of the Higher Education Product**

During the past decade, higher education's ability to prepare students for the workforce and society of the 21st century has been the subject of much debate. In a world in which industries come and go rapidly and people change careers four or five times in a lifetime, the successful individual will be one who can think rather than simply remember; one who has knowledge and is adaptable; and, one who possesses the values and skills of the entrepreneur (Sculley, 1988; Reich, 1991a, 1991b, and 1988; Thurow, 1992; Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, 1990; U.S. Department of Labor, 1991; WICHE, 1992b).

A perceived deficiency in these competencies by college graduates has promoted serious discussions among higher education leaders and policymakers on the need to improve the quality of undergraduate education and the responsiveness of higher education in meeting the human resource needs of a global economy. The issues include: improving the status of teaching; balancing liberal arts and technical/career education; preparing students to live in a multicultural society and international economy; integrating technology into the curriculum; restructuring teacher education programs; and gaining faculty commitment.

***Improving the status of teaching.*** Quality teaching is a critical component of quality undergraduate education. While no one argues this point, faculty members receive their greatest financial and professional rewards for outstanding research not teaching. Results of this reward system are: general education foundation courses are taught by junior faculty, and full professors teach graduate student seminars; the outstanding teacher does not receive tenure because of a limited research publication record; and the graduate student is mentored in research activities, not teaching skills. Today on many campuses, higher education leaders struggle to improve the status of teaching without initiating a debate on the importance of teaching versus research.

Changing the orientation of faculty behavior and the academic reward structure will be difficult. But on many campuses the work has begun.

- In 1991, the Task Force on Faculty Rewards at the University of California released a report strongly recommending that the review of faculty teaching be broadened and include peer reviews; that applied and interdisciplinary/integrative research be encouraged and rewarded; that faculty be rewarded for their achievements in helping the institutions meet diversity and equity goals; and that faculty be given the flexibility to emphasize different aspects of scholarship at different points in their careers (University of California, 1991). This report was adopted by the University Senate in 1992.
- Making teaching skills an important component of graduate education will improve both the teaching abilities of future faculty and the status of teaching in the profession. Several universities now provide this orientation for graduate student teaching assistants. At the University of Colorado, graduate student assistants are expected to take seminars on topics such as teaching methods, preparing syllabi, lecturing, leading discussions and multiculturalism.

***Balancing liberal arts and technical/career education.*** While it is the study of liberal arts that promotes strong conceptual skills, creative outlets, and the knowledge of the international and intercultural world, there is increasing emphasis and enrollment in undergraduate professional and technical training programs. In 1970 the majority of enrolled students chose majors in the arts and humanities, but by 1985 the percentage choosing these fields had declined by half. In contrast, the percent choosing business as a major increased from 16 to 27 percent, making it the single most popular major (WICHE, 1992c).

Work in the new economy demands a balance between liberal arts education and career preparation at all levels of education (Boyer, 1987; Parnell, 1990; Study Group on the Conditions of Excellence in American Higher Education, 1984). The undergraduate experience, from freshman year through graduation, should provide students not only with essential knowledge, but with connections among disciplines and with the ability to apply knowledge. This course of study is inherently interdisciplinary with professional/technical and liberal arts education intertwined.

**Promoting cultural diversity.** In the 1960s and early 1970s significant gains were made in the postsecondary participation rates of underrepresented racial and ethnic groups. Since 1975, however, progress has slowed. Increases in the enrollment of racial and ethnic minorities have been due primarily to increases in the size of the population, not an increase in participation rates (WICHE, 1991). Initiatives are needed that encourage colleges and universities to promote the participation of underrepresented racial and ethnic students in higher education through partnerships with the public schools, and to develop multicultural campuses that are committed to diversity and student achievement through faculty involvement, changes in academic practices (teaching methods and curriculum), and promotion of a multicultural campus environment.

Recognizing this need, WICHE developed the Institutes on Ethnic Diversity. Institutes provide technical assistance to campuses in developing and building strategic diversity plans and initiatives. The goal of this program is to help campuses better understand the value of multiculturalism, develop strategic action plans for recruiting and graduating diverse student populations, and involve all campus constituencies in producing comprehensive campus changes.

**A commitment to internationalism.** Understanding international events and foreign policy is crucial to effective participation in a global society. Exposing students to people, cultures, and customs different from their own broadens their views on issues, enables wise judgments in the voting booth, and helps to diminish bias against foreigners and U.S. citizens from diverse cultural backgrounds. In the United States, few adults have an adequate understanding of other cultures, world geography, and international events (Barrows, et al., 1981; Gallup, 1988); Economic Development and Trade Association leaders cite this lack of international expertise as a major obstacle to economic competitiveness (Pyle, 1984; Business-Higher Education Forum, 1986; Task Force on International Education, 1989).

The importance of internationalism on campuses received renewed Congressional support in 1991 with the passage of the National Security Education Act. This Act provides scholarships for undergraduates to study in other countries, curriculum grants to colleges and universities for programs in international and area studies and foreign languages, and fellowships for graduate students in those fields. Appropriations authorized by this Act will triple the amount of federal funds currently spent on undergraduate international study and, through fellowships to graduate students, will help to increase the number of faculty members specializing in foreign languages and international and area studies (Desruisseaux, 1991).

Throughout the West there are many examples of college and university commitments to international education. While a regional inventory of international exchanges and related issues is not available, the California Postsecondary Education Commission, at the request of the 1991 United States-Mexico Border Conference on Education, surveyed California's colleges and universities about their exchanges programs with Mexico. The study shows that a large number of institutions offer study abroad programs that provide opportunities for their students to study in Mexico; student and faculty exchange programs focused on Mexico are initiated because of the proximity of the

institution to Mexico or because of faculty or staff interest; bi-national discussions among faculty and students are assisted by international and systemwide computer networks; and financial limitations present the greatest barriers to participation in exchange programs (California Postsecondary Education Commission, 1992).

***Integrating technology into the curriculum.*** The use of information technologies can have a profound impact on the way we learn. In the classroom, new technologies change the relationship between teacher and student. Telecommunicated discussions and computer simulations put everyone on a more equal footing regardless of assertiveness, or physical, regional, and cultural differences (Johnstone, 1991). Moreover, computer simulations and dialogues enable students to engage in dynamic problem-solving exercises. Learning becomes a process of understanding and application rather than memorization, transforming students from passive receptors of knowledge to active participants in the learning process. In this situation, the instructor becomes a mentor or facilitator rather than a purveyor of knowledge. For the instructor this means a greater commitment to course preparation and to learning new ways of interacting with students as active learners (Kozma and Johnston: Johnstone, 1991).

Effective use of technology can improve the quality of undergraduate education in many ways, including providing opportunities for important international learning experiences. Used to its full potential, technology can provide undergraduates with a global perspective, by connecting students and faculty with colleagues around the world.

***Restructuring teacher education programs.*** Since the 1983 publication of *A Nation at Risk*, which describes our nation's schools as "eroded," "mediocre," and "compromised" (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), reforming public schools and improving teacher education have been key issues in discussions on improving the higher education product.

Many experts argue that strategies to improve the skills, abilities, and attitudes of our nation's education professionals, and thus improve our nation's educational system, require a complete restructuring of the education profession from undergraduate and professional education, to state certification requirements, the work environment, pay schedules, and continuing professional education (Holmes Group, 1986, 1989, 1990; Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986; Goodlad, 1991). A number of specific proposals have been made for strengthening teacher education programs. Most popular among these are: requiring future teachers to complete a liberal arts degree before being admitted to a professional program in education (Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986); and redesigning the clinical experience for future and continuing teachers to include service in "teaching schools" or "professional development schools" (Goodlad, 1991; Holmes Group, 1990).

The reform of the public school system and teacher education programs has been on the agenda for over a decade. However, much work is still needed. Progress on this issue is hindered by a lack of campus-wide commitment to this reform effort. The dire implications for higher education and society of an "eroded," "mediocre" and "compromised" public school system require the attention and commitment of all faculty. The school reform agenda must become a campus-wide agenda. For this reason WICHE

Commissioners have recommended:

Higher education must view campus-wide involvement with public schools, including teacher preparation programs, as its most important collaborative program. State governing boards and legislatures must articulate their expectations of higher education's involvement with the public schools. Higher education funding should be partially dependent on demonstrating accountability in this area (WICHE, 1992b).

***Gaining faculty commitment.*** Fundamental change for higher education is not possible without the commitment of the faculty. Faculty must be encouraged to be leaders of a campus committed to improving the quality of undergraduate education and responding to the human development needs of a global economy. This commitment will mean a change in the academic culture including the incentives and rewards structures for faculty. More importantly it means a commitment to a curriculum and campus environment that values teaching, integrates liberal arts with technical/career education, promotes multiculturalism and internationalism, uses technology effectively, and embraces a strengthening of the public schools-higher education connection.

### **Higher Education Access and Delivery of Higher Education Programs**

Responding to the human resource development needs of a global economy requires a commitment to meeting the access demands of a growing population and a new student clientele. As we near the 21st Century, colleges and universities will serve an increasingly diverse population. Working adults, many of whom are members of underrepresented populations, now make up a majority of college students. Although the size of the 25-to-34-year old population that swelled higher education enrollments in the 1980s is declining, the working adult is likely to remain a significant consumer of postsecondary education. New technologies and the increasing demand for higher-order skills require a larger proportion of the current workforce to pursue training and retraining. Higher education is challenged to find new ways to prepare, recruit, retain, and graduate underrepresented students, to make education and training more accessible and convenient to working adults of all backgrounds, and to serve the needs of rural communities (Green, 1989; Perelman, 1984).

***Meeting the needs of the new clientele.*** The typical college student of the 1960s was an 18-to-24-year-old, white male. The college student of the 1990s is far more likely to be over 25 years old, a woman, and/or member of an ethnic or racial minority. This new clientele approaches postsecondary study differently. Most older students study less than full-time, work at least part-time, are married and/or have family responsibilities, and return to school for career related reasons. This "new majority" student cannot relocate or travel great distances to pursue educational opportunities, and the inflexibility of the traditional university schedule often presents a hardship (Aslanian, 1988). The community colleges have been most responsive to this new clientele (Boyer and Kerr in WICHE, 1992d).

Many four-year colleges and universities have responded to the needs of their new clientele by adding some combination of evening and weekend classes, early-morning and

late-evening courses, correspondence and telecommunicated courses, and off-campus sites. Student services designed specifically for the older, working student have emerged, including early orientation and preparatory programs designed to aid adults re-entering college. However, for most colleges and universities special programs for the adult student and life-long learner are grafted onto the traditional mix of courses and programs.

***Distance learning.*** The use of new technologies (telecommunications and computers) plays an important role in higher education's overall strategy for meeting the needs of rural communities, and the life-long learning needs of the workforce. Distance learning enables businesses to provide specialized training to their employees on a regular basis at multiple sites, while minimizing the amount of time employees must take away from their job to pursue education.

In western states, with widely dispersed rural populations, providing distance education to retain the existing workforce is crucial to economic vitality. Rural economies which once thrived because of location-specific advantages such as timber, crops, or minerals, increasingly depend on specialized human services, information processing, and telecommunications (Parker, et al., 1989; Hobbs, et al., 1989).

Every state in the West has invested to some degree in educational telecommunications services. Some states, such as Hawaii and Utah, have highly developed state systems of telecommunications designed to deliver educational services to communities throughout the state. Educational telecommunications is growing rapidly and will continue to grow in all of the western states (Dively and McGill, 1991).

### **Higher Education Funding**

During the past decade, state budgets have been increasingly burdened by federal mandates to expand Medicaid coverage and services, an explosion in the cost of medical services, and rising costs for corrections spurred by increasing prison populations and court mandates to eliminate overcrowding and improve conditions (Gold, 1989). Growing resistance to tax measures by citizens, coupled with a recession, limited the states' ability to raise additional revenues to meet these burdens.

In such austere times, higher education finds itself competing for shrinking resources with other state-funded services, including elementary and secondary education, corrections, and health care. Most of these programs have two distinct advantages over higher education: (1) they appear to address more pressing and immediate social needs; and (2) in some instances, minimum levels of state support are set by federal or court mandates. Funds for higher education, on the other hand, are viewed as discretionary and additional dollars can be raised from tuition increases (WICHE, 1992a).

Between fiscal year 1990 and 1992 state appropriations to higher education declined in real dollars. Since it is doubtful that demands on state treasuries will abate, or that the national aversion to tax increases will soon be overcome, the current financial conditions in higher education are likely to continue. Institutions of higher education have responded by reducing expenditures on capital improvements and equipment, reducing course offerings, increasing class size, raising tuition, and aggressively seeking

external funding sources (El-Khawas, 1991; WICHE, 1992a; Harney, 1990 and 1991). These actions, however, are not sufficient to meeting future access demands and the human resource needs of a global economy. This reality has promoted a new discussion among higher education leaders, scholars, and policymakers on the financing and productivity of higher education.

***The changing role of state funding policies.*** Several WICHE states have examined their policies for financing the higher education system in an effort to determine the relationship between funding and state educational goals and priorities (Millet, 1986). The need to review funding policies resulted in part from the increasing competition for limited state finances (Chambers, 1987). As a result of the need to do more with less, states increasingly see their budgets as tools for the implementation of public policy priorities. One result of these concerns has been the use of revenues as incentives to encourage activities which support state policy goals. The use of incentive funding, however, is used most frequently in states outside the WICHE region.

***Increasing tuitions.*** In the 1980s tuition and fees increased at double the rate of inflation and outpaced increases in family income (NACUBO, 1991; Hauptman 1990; Hauptman and Merisotis, 1990; Gilley, 1991). Since 1983, resident undergraduate tuition and fees in public four-year institutions in the West increased 124 percent (WICHE, 1993). Tuition increases in the 1980s can be traced to the increasing cost of a college education, and to dwindling state and federal appropriations.

The western states' long history of low cost and open access to quality higher education is threatened by limited state funding and escalating student costs. In response to the need for a discussion on the important policy implications of rapidly rising tuitions, WICHE is conducting a student costs study including a policy workshop for state legislators and higher education policymakers. The workshop goals are: (1) to encourage the discussion of student costs in the context of state policy objectives and policy choices; (2) to promote coordinated policy development among the different state groups; and (3) to stimulate participants to leave the workshop with a state agenda for further policy discussion and action.

***Role and mission differentiation.*** Limited resources, increasing enrollments, concerns about quality, and a changing economy mean that institutions must define and emphasize their distinctive strengths if the needs of states — and the goals of higher education — are to be met.

A reversal is needed in the ten-year drift toward homogeneity among bachelor degree-granting institutions. Several forces have been responsible for this movement including: pressure for all campuses to be all things to all people, and a faculty incentive system that gives its greatest rewards to disciplinary research. In addition, state policy frequently reinforces the press toward institutional sameness. For example, funding mechanisms that provide more dollars for full-time equivalent (FTE) students at the research universities encourage comprehensive universities to offer more graduate programs (WICHE, 1992b).



Financial limitations now mandate differentiation not sameness among colleges and universities.

### **Higher Education Accountability**

In recent years, there is a sense on the part of public policymakers that many colleges and universities are not of the "real world," nor responsive to the needs of the larger society and the economy; nor responsible in their use of limited state dollars and student tuition revenue. Distrust in the quality and integrity of higher education has been fostered by: increasing tuition rates, in the absence of a perceived increase in quality; rising instructional costs; oversubscribed courses; difficulties in finding employment with "only" a bachelors degree; classes taught by graduate students; and faculty research on "abstract" topics.

Higher education must regain the public's trust. Opportunities for doing so include making a commitment to the assessment of student outcomes, and committing to "two-way" partnerships that contribute to important applied research on state needs.

***Program assessment and student outcomes measures.*** In the mid-1980s higher education was challenged to demonstrate quality in undergraduate education programs, and student outcomes assessment became synonymous with higher education accountability (Interinstitutional Committee of Academic Officers, 1989). Legislators were particularly interested in the idea of quantitative data that could be used as a criterion of quality. In many states, but particularly in the southeastern United States, statewide higher education boards and state legislatures mandated requirements for the development of assessment programs. This also was true in two WICHE states: Colorado and Washington.

Although resisted at first, assessment as a tool for improving the teaching-learning process is endorsed on most college campuses. Faculty, once threatened by the unknown and perhaps negative uses that might be made of student assessment data, now recognize its potential for improving educational quality.

***Commitment to partnerships.*** Collaborations among higher education, the public sector, state government and the private sector are an important demonstration of accountability. They are "visible proof" of higher education's contribution to economic well-being. Collaborations illustrate college and university efforts to meet aggressively a range of public problems from restructuring public schools to fostering entrepreneurship and innovation.

Partnerships are not new to higher education in the United States. However, they assume a greater urgency as many state-funded programs adapt to a new climate of increasing demand, limited resources, and escalating economic and social needs. Important higher education collaborations include the agricultural experiment stations and cooperative extension programs of the land-grant universities; contracts between industries and community colleges; partnerships with elementary and secondary schools; public policy institutes and research centers; and small business development centers and business incubators.

## BI-NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS

Greater understanding of the global society and economy is important to the future of all nations. Current information on the politics, economy, and culture of other nations is easily obtained through computers and telecommunications systems that do not recognize international boundaries. But the difficult truth for American higher education leaders, unlike their international colleagues, is that the United States has not given high priority to the critical importance of providing students with this information. Success in a global economy demands dramatic change. American higher education must assume a responsibility and a leadership role in the education of its citizens to the global world. This can begin immediately with programs to increase bi-national communications.

This meeting among higher education leaders in Mexico and the border United States is an important first step. WICHE boldly suggests the development of an infrastructure promoting further discussions as the next step. The cooperative development of a forum of higher education leaders from Mexico and the border United States can provide educational benefits and opportunities to both countries.<sup>3</sup>

A bi-national higher education forum can further promote the objectives of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and a regional identity. This forum would enable higher education leaders to share information, encourage student and faculty exchange agreements, promote the use of telecommunications systems and computer networks (e.g., PROFMEX a network of over 50 U.S. and Mexican academic institutions engaged in efforts to strengthen the academic research infrastructure between the two nations), and support the development of a clearinghouse of information on important higher education programs and policy issues.

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<sup>3</sup>WICHE is experienced in the development of forums crossing political boundaries. In the late 1980s WICHE established the Northwest Academic Forum. Its members are public and private doctoral and master's level institutions, university system offices and statewide higher education coordinating boards in Alaska, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, Oregon and Washington. The Forum addresses regional higher education issues and engages in cooperative resource sharing. In 1988 the Forum helped establish NorthWestNet, a research and education computer network.

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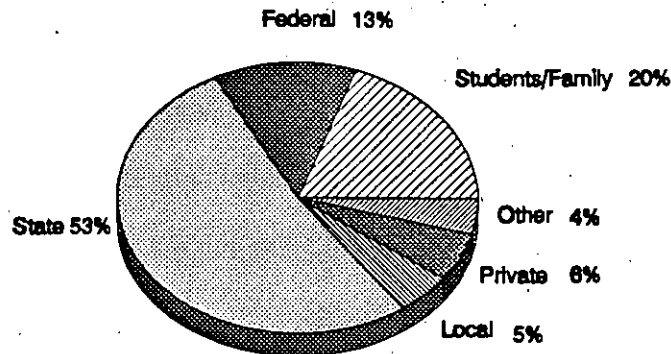
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## **APPENDIX**



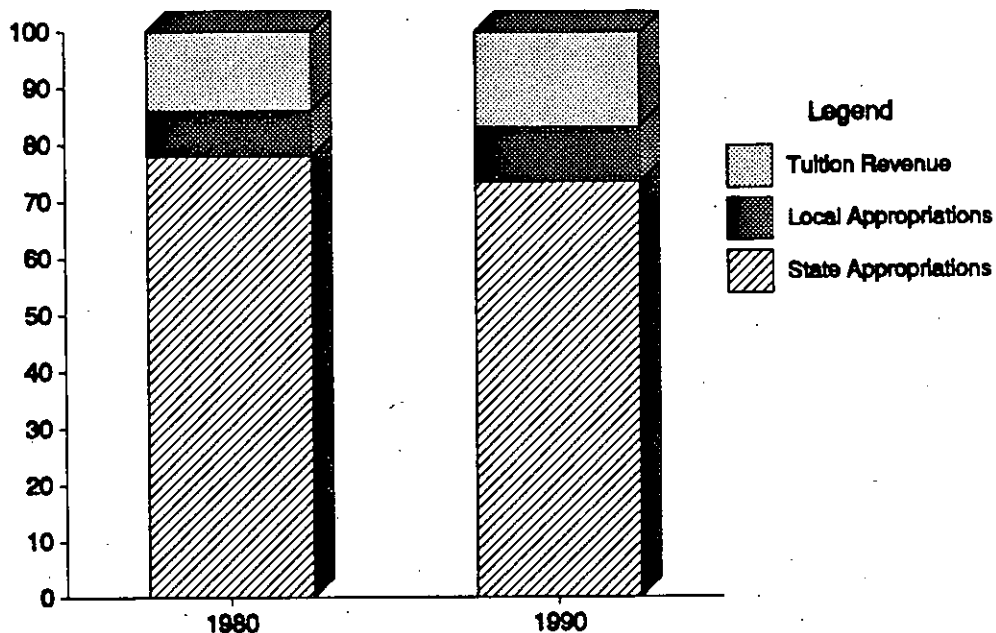
**Display A1**  
**PERCENTAGE OF REVENUE SOURCES FOR PUBLIC**  
**HIGHER EDUCATION, UNITED STATES, 1990**



Sales and services such as hospital revenue and auxiliary enterprises are excluded from revenue totals. Private includes gifts, grants, contracts, and endowment income.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Almanac of Higher Education, 1993.

**Display A2**  
**PERCENTAGE OF UNRESTRICTED REVENUES**  
**FOR PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION, WICHE STATES**



Unrestricted revenues are the sum of state higher education operating appropriations (minus funds for research, agriculture, and medicine); local appropriations; and net tuition revenues (total tuition minus student aid). These data are aggregate revenue figures for both two-year and four-year higher education institutions.

Source: Research Associates of Washington, 1991.

**Display A3: Appropriations of State Tax Funds for Higher Education  
Operating Expenses, Total and Per Capita Appropriations  
Fiscal Year 1992**

	Total (thousands)	Per Capita
WICHE	\$10,211,090	\$174.68
U.S.	40,066,823	161.51

Source: Edward R. Hines, Illinois State University, March 1992

**Display A4: AVERAGE TUITION AND FEES AT PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS \*  
1991-92 and 1990-91**

	WICHE			UNITED STATES		
	1991-92 (\$)	1990-91 (\$)	One-year Change (%)	1991-92 (\$)	1990-91 (\$)	One-year Change (%)
<b>FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS</b>						
Resident Undergraduate	1,755	1,555	12.9	2,137	1,888	13.2
Nonresident Undergraduate	6,038	5,262	14.7	5,446	4,816	13.1
<b>TWO-YEAR INSTITUTIONS</b>						
Resident In-District	1,066	997	7.0	1,022	824	24.0
Nonresident [1]	3,205	2,965	8.1	3,418	2,794	22.3

\* Tuition and fee average for the WICHE region is a simple average. Tuition and fee average for the U.S. is weighted using enrollment data.

Source: Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 1992 and Department of Education, 1992

**AVERAGE UNDERGRADUATE TUITION AND FEES AT INDEPENDENT  
INSTITUTIONS, UNITED STATES, 1991-92 and 1990-91**

	1991-92 (\$)	1990-91 (\$)	One-year Change (%)
Four-Year Institutions	9,841	9,083	8.3
Two-Year Institutions	5,784	5,570	3.8

Source: Department of Education, 1992, Almanac of Higher Education, 1993

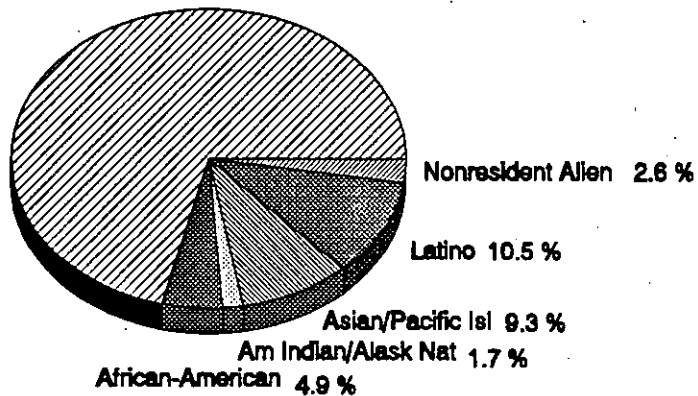
Display A5: NUMBER OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES		
	WICHE United States	
Public four-year institutions	102	595
Public two-year institutions	265	972
Independent four-year institutions	243	1,546
Independent two-year institutions	77	446
Total	687	3,559
Source: Higher Education Almanac, 1992, Almanac of Higher Education, 1993.		

Display A6: Total Enrollment in Institutions of Higher Education by level, control, type, and attendance status, 1990				
	WICHE		United States	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Undergraduate	2,872,089	88.8	11,046,235	86.5
Graduate/Professional	363,094	11.2	1,720,407	13.5
Public	2,843,884	87.9	10,740,540	78.3
Independent	391,299	12.1	2,969,610	21.7
Two-Year	1,690,307	52.2	5,181,018	37.8
Four-Year	1,544,876	47.8	8,529,132	62.2
Full-time	1,582,253	48.9	7,780,429	56.7
Part-time	1,652,930	51.1	5,929,721	43.3
Source: Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics				

**Display A7**  
**Undergraduate Enrollment in Higher Education**  
**by Race/Ethnicity, 1990**

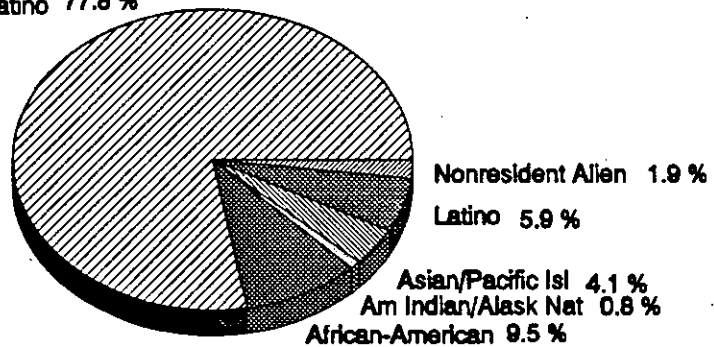
**WICHE**

White non-Latino 71.1 %



**UNITED STATES**

White non-Latino 77.8 %



Source: National Center for Education Statistics