

POLITICAL & PUBLIC POLICY TRENDS

2007 Environmental Scan Committee

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POLITICAL AND PUBLIC POLICY TRENDS COMMITTEE

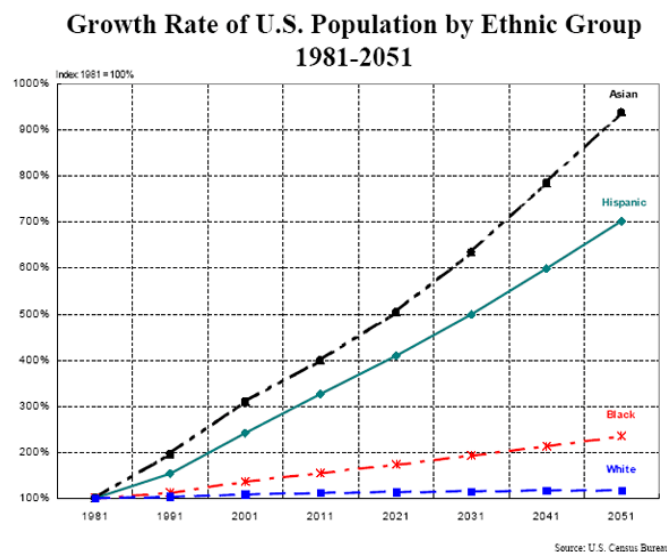
Final Report

Introduction: Policy decisions at both the national and state levels continue to significantly impact higher education. The decrease in funding for institutions of higher education and the inability of students to pay rising tuition costs are creating an *affordability crisis* in the US. These decisions will influence the college-going rate of both traditional and non traditional students, the ability of colleges to afford the technology demanded by its constituents and the urgency to establish new and innovative collaborations between public and private entities for years to come.

TREND 1: Community colleges must recognize the language and cultural differences that occur with the increase in Hispanic and other populations.

FINDINGS:

- 1) Most educators who have studied the demographic projections for the next decade and beyond are aware of the need to plan for changes in their enrollments. In some parts of the country, institutions will face significantly more high school graduates who may (or may not) be planning to continue their education beyond high school. Colleges and universities in other parts of the country will see major declines in their traditional pools of prospective students. In addition, the composition of upcoming school populations is changing and will include more minority students (particularly from Hispanic and Asian backgrounds), more students whose first language is not English, more immigrants, more students from low-income families, and more students whose parents did not attend college.



- 2) During the past two decades two-year colleges have become an increasingly important part of the American higher education system, especially for Hispanics who are disproportionately likely to start their careers in two-year colleges.

- 3) The US workforce is becoming more diverse. Minority/ethnic groups are the least educated and the fastest growing.
- 4) Colleges must create new venues to reach and recruit under-represented students.
- 5) University of Texas at El Paso and Maricopa County Community College were recognized for their Hispanic graduation records. Improving Latino student success in higher education is of great national interest as Latinos are one of the nation's largest and fastest growing minority groups.

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 Bank to increase services to Hispanic Population http://www.firstcitizenonline.com/index.html?loc=/press/desc/press_release_hispanic_init.shtml (1-1)
http://eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/Home.portal?nfpb=true&ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=two+year+colleges&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=k&pageLabel=ERICSearchResult (1-1)
The Role of 2-Year Colleges in the Improving Situation of Hispanic Postsecondary Education (EJ739028) by Gonzalez, Arturo; Hilmer, Michael J. Economics of Education Review, V25, No. 3, p249-257, June 2006 (1-2)
 Policy Alert – The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, November 2005
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'Big Idea' for Higher Education – Diverse Magazine, October 19, 2006, p91. (1-4)
 Maricopa County Community College Recognized for Hispanic Graduation Records – Diverse Magazine, October 16, 2006, p24. (1-5)

TREND 2: Decreases in state and federal resources are creating an affordability crisis in higher education.

FINDINGS:

- 1) **Institution Support** - The College has experienced declining contributions from the state of South Carolina in recent years. It is projected that the state will struggle with fiscal stress in the foreseeable future; therefore Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) can not reasonably expect an increase in state support. It is also projected that growth in demand for other services such as K-12 Education, Medicaid, Social Services, etc., will compete with higher education for limited resources. As a result of the under-funding from the state, it is necessary for IHE's to look at options for providing needed programs and services, including increases in tuition, eliminating programs and services and managing enrollment. All the options have a negative impact on selected groups of citizens. The fiscal condition of the state has had the effect of limiting access to IHEs.

- 2) **Student Support** – More of the cost of public higher education is becoming the responsibility of students and their families. The cost of tuition nationally is increasing at alarming rates; faster than general inflation. Tuition has increased because state spending for colleges and universities has dropped sharply, making the dream of a college education out of reach for more American students and their families. The average student debt burden in 2004 was almost 60% higher than the mid 1990's and is projected to continue to rise.
- a. **State Funding** – In 2005-06, MTC received approximately 30.3% of the revenue needed based on the State's funding formula. The percentage of the formula funded by the State is expected to continue to decline, although not as dramatically as it has in the immediate past. The college anticipates the funding for the Merit Nursing Program to remain stable at approximately \$0.6 million for the foreseeable future.
 - b. **Federal and State mandates** - State accountability and performance mandates will continue to drive higher education funding. Higher education in the United States is primarily a state and local function, however, the federal government plays an important role. The tax cuts in the current Federal Administration's 2007 fiscal year budget are projected to cause state governments to lose an additional \$38 billion over the next decade. South Carolina stands to lose \$693 million as a result of federal tax cuts.
 - c. **Federal Grants and Student Loans**– Federal support of higher education has not kept pace with the increasing cost of education. Pell grants, the basic federal grant on which many low-income students rely on to finance postsecondary education, have not kept up with college price increases. The maximum Pell grant award has not increased over the past four years and is worth less in real dollars than 30 years ago. Recent changes were made in the Pell Grant formula for determining students' eligibility, therefore, some students who were once eligible for the Pell grant may become ineligible or will receive less funding. Over the years, Congress has cut \$12 billion from federal student loan programs and raised loan interest rates for students and their parents.
 - d. **Grants and Supplemental Funding** – Federal funding in the next five years will focus on healthcare, K-12 education, science and technology, foreign languages (Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean), workforce development, security training, security technology, and biological defense.

SOURCES:

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Measuring Up 2006 The State Report Card on Higher Education- South Carolina, The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education. <http://www.ccpe.state.ne.us/publicdoc/ccpe/Reports/budget/2007-2009/PDF/appendix1.PDF> (2-1)

State Funding Limitations and Community College Open Door Policy: Conflicting Priorities? (EJ739444) by Hendrick, Ruth Zimmer; Hightower, William H.; Gregory, Dennis E., Community College Journal of Research & Practice, V30 No. 8, p627-640, Sep. 2006 (2-1)
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 “Widening the Access Gap”- Diverse Magazine February 23, 2006, page 42 (2-2A)
 “Parents Worry More About Paying For College Than Retirement, Survey Shows.” Diverse Magazine January 26, 2006, page 10. (2-2B)
 “GAO Report: College Collaborations on Financial Aid Packages Fail to Improve Affordability for Students”- Diverse Magazine October 19, 2006 (2-2C)
 “Congress Approves Cuts to Student Loan Programs Diverse Magazine January 26, 2006, page 6 (2-2D)

TREND 3: Community colleges must be flexible to meet the needs of potential students in an increasingly competitive environment.

FINDINGS:

- 1) As the overall population increases, community college enrollment is expected to grow, and the colleges will likely confer more associate degrees.
- 2) Baby boomer children will send an influx of traditional college age students to community colleges.
- 3) New technology providers can be models and leaders for higher education institutions in the development of student services for adult and continuing students. Adult students are more sophisticated consumers, and will look to those institutions that can offer the education that fits their academic needs as conveniently and inexpensively as possible. In addition to the traditional classroom instruction, students can easily take courses from other 'approved' institutions in real time or asynchronously through the use of various mediating technologies.
- 4) Due to influx of students, colleges have spurred a flurry of IT improvements. Colleges that address these trends by improving their academic and vocational offerings, both in traditional classes and at a distance, and improving their student services, will be the ones that survive the inevitable shakeout to come.
- 5) While overall higher-education enrollment in the U.S. is virtually stagnant, online enrollment is skyrocketing. The recent repeal of a federal rule requiring colleges to provide at least half of their instruction on campus will further the online enrollment boost. By early 2008, one out of 10 college students will be enrolled in an online degree program, Boston-based market research firm Eduventures estimated last year.

- 6) Proprietary schools recruit more aggressively, require less general education and place much greater emphasis on job placement. The factor that most sharply separates outstanding proprietary colleges from most public institutions is that the 'for profits' view employers, not students, as their primary clients.
- 7) In a "Community College Today" survey, college and university presidents reported that eighty-seven percent of leaders consider student retention as highly important and eighty-four percent of leaders consider under-prepared students as a major issue.

SOURCES:

Population increase will cause enrollment to grow. "Community Colleges Raise the Bar"

University Business Magazine November 2004- page 65 (3-1)

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TREND 4: The focus on domestic safety and security will create the need for new careers and cause colleges to develop new curricula.

FINDINGS:

- 1) Colleges will need to develop plans to address workplace and domestic violence safety on college campuses.
 - a. **Violence in the workplace:** Violence in the workplace is a serious safety and health issue. Its most extreme form, homicide, is the fourth-leading cause of fatal occupational injury in the United States. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI), there were 551 workplace homicides in 2004 in the United States, out of a total of 5,703 fatal work injuries.
 - b. **Violence on the Job:** National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Publication No. 2004-100d,(2004) discusses practical measures for identifying risk factors for violence at work, and taking strategic action to keep employees safe.
 - c. **Overview of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP):** Every federal agency has an EAP which provides short-term counseling and referral services to its employees at no cost. These programs are staffed by professional counselors who are available to discuss problems that can adversely affect job performance, conduct and reliability. EAPs are required to help employees deal with alcoholism or drug abuse problems and most

programs also help employees with other problems such as marital or financial problems. EAP counselors often refer employees to other professional services and resources within the community for further information, assistance or long-term counseling.

- d. **The Employee Assistance Program's Role in Dealing with Workplace Violence:** EAP staff members generally assist in policy and strategy development and help determine the EAP's role on the agency's workplace violence incident response team. EAPs bring a special expertise to the planning process. They are in an optimal position to assist with many of the activities conducted by the planning group.
 - e. **Midlands Technical College EAP:** The College's EAP services shall provide for confidential assessment and referral services as well as related short term counseling services to participating employees and their family members whose work performance may be affected by alcohol or drugs, family problems, legal/financial problems, behavioral problems and/or physical/emotional illness. Participation may be voluntary or by supervisor/management referral.
- 2) Community colleges are a major part of the solution to the continuing shortage of health care providers needed to meet safety issues.
- a. Our country is experiencing a nationwide shortage of nurses. As more of the baby boom generation retires and ages, that shortage will increase. To help combat the overwhelming shortage of nurse educators, various institutions are allocating more dollars and offering incentives to lure current nurses into a teaching role. In fact, the U.S. Senate amended the 2007 defense appropriations bill to include \$500,000 to encourage former military nurses to become instructors in nursing schools.
 - b) Nursing education has a critical role in preparing the nursing profession to serve as an integral part of this country's disaster preparedness plan. Collaboration among education and professional organizations, schools of nursing, accreditation and regulatory bodies, and continuing education providers is necessary for the successful attainment of the college's goals related to mass casualty education and specifically for the implementation of disaster preparedness competencies.
- 3) Eighty-one percent of leaders consider "rising personnel costs" as a major issue.

SOURCES:

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<http://nursingdegreeonline.blogspot.com/2006/10/critical-shortage-of-nurse-educators.html> (4-2)
Veenema, Tener Goodwin; Disaster Nursing and Emergency Preparedness for Chemical, Biological and Radiological Terrorism, pg. 460. (4-3)
Community Colleges Today: The Presidents Speak Study
www.salliemae.com/ccsolutions/cc_report.pdf (4-4)

TREND 5: New collaborations and partnerships are needed to create effective pathways to and through postsecondary education.

FINDINGS:

- 1) *Retaining Students Until Graduation* and *Under-prepared Students* were among the top three daily challenges faced by community colleges according to a survey of executives conducted by the American Association of Community Colleges in 2006. A student's academic history is a key factor in their ability to perform in the postsecondary environment.
- 2) Close collaboration of secondary and postsecondary institutions is necessary to engage and motivate students and provide them with the "rigorous preparation that will equip them for a lifetime of learning and productive, rewarding work." The South Carolina High School Redesign Commission, comprised of education and business leaders across the state, put forth recommendations for future state actions to address the needs of SC students.
- 3) An intensive four-year study of workplace needs resulted in the passage of the Education and Economic Development Act (EEDA) of 2005. The goal of the program is to personalize high school coursework to match each student's career interest, provide intensive guidance and counseling, provide real-world learning experiences, and provide structure to ease a student's transition from high school to college or a career. Guidelines for implementing the EEDA have been provided through the State Department of Education.

SOURCES:

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TREND 6: Colleges must address the diversity needed among members of its faculty and staff.

FINDINGS:

- 1) In the past ten years, many colleges and universities have acknowledged the diversity shortage, creating a variety of programs and strategies to increase the diversity of faculty to more closely mirror their student populations. In spite of these efforts, however, the statistics show little progress in the diversification of faculty. According to the U.S. Department of Education, 90 percent of full-time faculty members are white.

- 2) Community colleges are filled with multicultural, diverse students who bring different knowledge and skills to educational institutions. The faculty/student relationship is seen as the core to the learning experience. Students have to be able to identify with the faculty, and the faculty members have to be able to identify with the students. A diverse student body needs instruction and leadership from a diverse faculty and administration.

SOURCES:

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November 17, 2005 (6-1)

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