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## features

GRE Use Among the Higher Education Community:  
Historical Practice Is Not Always Best Practice

*Troy Johnson*

Variations in Salaries and Diversity: Representation of Financial Aid Directors  
at Public and Private Institutions

*David Walker*

How College-Bound Prospects Perceive University Web Sites: Findings,  
Implications, and Turning Browsers into Applicants

*Michael C. Poock and Dennis Lefond*

People of Nia: The Story of a Black Graduation

*Lynette Danley Heggins, Jerlando F. L. Jackson and E. Reginald Parks*

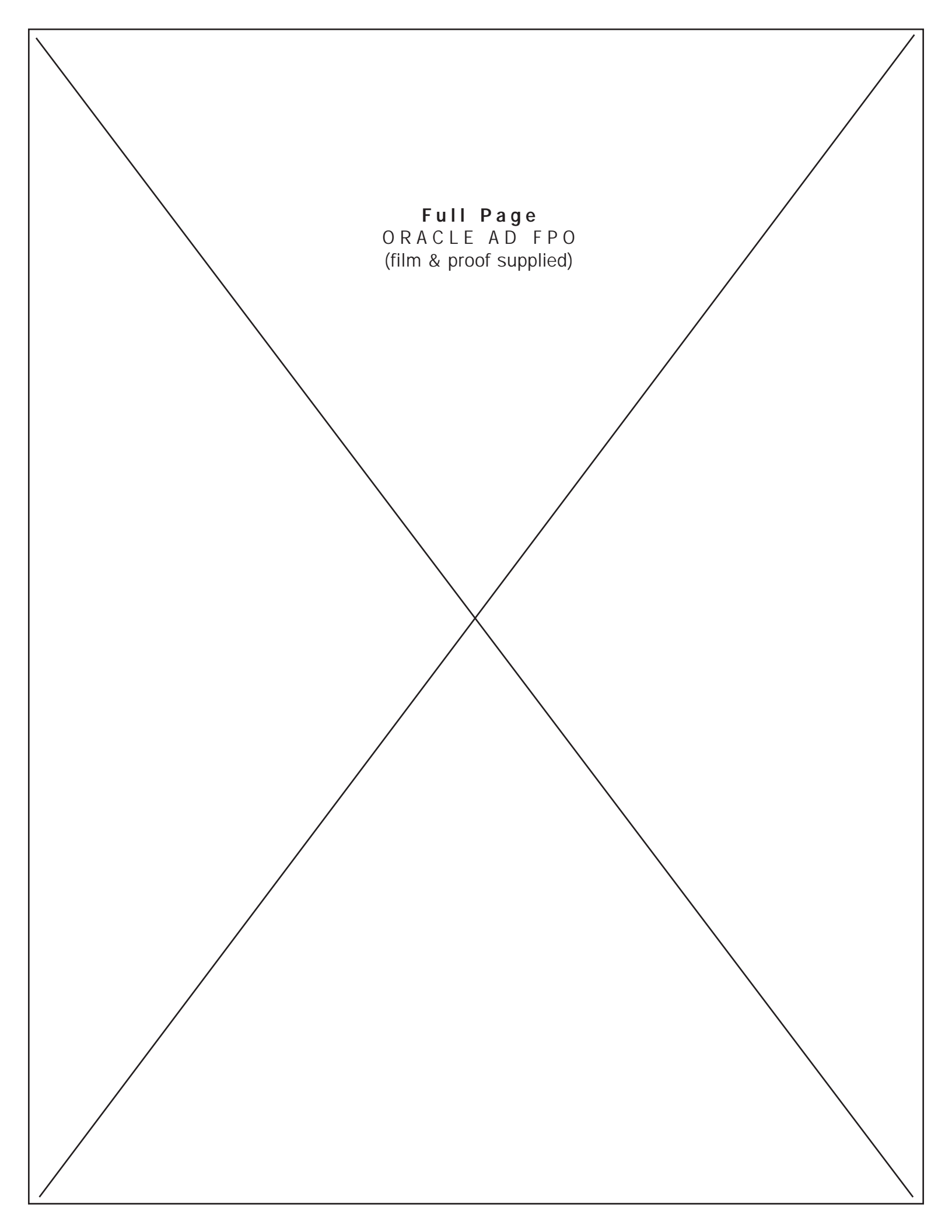
## the forum

Policy Analysis

Commentary

International Resources





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Summer 2001 Volume 77 Number 1

77

## Features

- 3 GRE Use Among the Higher Education Community: Historical Practice Is Not Always Best Practice  
*Troy Johnson* describes three areas in which the graduate community is vulnerable to substandard practice when using Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) scores in decision processes.
- 9 Variations in Salaries and Diversity: Representation of Financial Aid Directors at Public and Private Institutions  
*Research conducted by David Walker* addresses the issues of salary equity and demographic proportionality among financial aid directors at public and private institutions.
- 15 How College-Bound Prospects Perceive University Web Sites: Findings, Implications, and Turning Browsers into Applicants  
*Michael C. Pook* and *Dennis Lefond* examine how college-bound high school students perceive college and university Web pages.
- 23 People of Nia: The Story of a Black Graduation  
*Lynette Danley Heggins, Jerlando F. L. Jackson, and E. Reginald Parks* discuss *People of Nia*, a cultural commencement honoring Black students who have successfully completed their college degrees at a predominantly White college or university.

## The Forum

Readers' perspectives through Q&A, guest commentary, letters, and book reviews.

- 29 Policy Analysis—Financing State Colleges and Universities: What Is Happening to the “Public” in Public Higher Education?
- 45 Commentary—Why Students Can't Be Customers in the Classroom
- 47 International Resources—“Legalization”: The Apostille

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# Editor's Note

For the first issue of C&U for which I am serving as Interim Editor, I want to thank Roman S. Gawkoski for his years as Editor of C&U. Since 1997, Roman has served AACRAO as Editor of *College & University* although he had retired from his position at Marquette University. He continued a history of

dedicated solicitation and critical review of articles and commentaries useful to the membership of AACRAO and to the higher education community. I want to take this opportunity to recognize his personal dedication to service and his chosen profession.



## Instructions to Authors

The C&U Advisory Committee welcomes manuscripts for publication in *College & University*, AACRAO's scholarly research journal. AACRAO members are especially encouraged to submit articles pertaining to their own experiences with emerging issues or innovative practices within the profession.

The Committee also welcomes comments on articles, timely issues in higher education, and other topics of interest to this journal's readers in the form of letters to the editor or longer guest commentary. We especially invite AACRAO members to participate in reviewing books.

### Manuscript Preparation

Manuscripts for feature articles should be no longer than 4,500 words. Manuscripts for guest commentary and book reviews should not exceed 2,000 words. Letters to the editor will ordinarily be limited to 200 words.

All submissions must be saved to an IBM-compatible disk (Microsoft Word, preferably) and include a hard-copy original printed on 8.5" x 11" white paper. Because the Committee has a blind review policy, the author's name should not appear on any text page. A cover sheet should include the title of the manuscript, author's name, address, phone and fax number, and e-mail address.

References should be formatted in the author-date style and follow guidelines provided on page 526 of *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 14th edition. A list of references should appear at the end of the article. Text citations also follow the author-date format; examples may be found on page 641 of the Manual. For more information or for samples, please contact the C&U editor.

Essential tables and charts should be included on separate pages at the end of the manuscript. All graphics should be submitted on clean, reproducible, or camera-ready paper.

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Betty J. Huff  
C&U Editor  
Assistant Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Services  
5203 Cheadle Hall  
University of California  
Santa Barbara, CA 93106  
phone: (805) 893-3651; fax: (805) 893-5640  
e-mail: huff-b@sa.ucsb.edu

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This review may take as long as three months, after which the C&U editor will inform the author of the manuscript's acceptance or rejection.

# GRE Use Among the Higher Education Community: Historical Practice Is Not Always Best Practice

## Abstract

This paper describes three areas in which the graduate community is vulnerable to substandard practice when using Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) scores in decision processes. The results of a survey of the graduate community suggest that when using GRE scores in admission processes, the graduate community frequently does not implement best practices for test score use, and that its admissions officers are unaware of a notable limitation regarding raw scores and percentile equivalents. The survey showed that the graduate community frequently falls short of best practices regarding GRE scores in the following three areas: (1) percentile versus raw scores, (2) cut-off scores and (3) summed scores. Most notably, the graduate community is generally unaware that raw scores on the verbal, quantitative, and analytical sections of the GRE do not represent matching percentile scores. This paper intends to increase awareness about some ways the GRE is commonly misunderstood and misused.

This paper reveals that in particular instances, the graduate community may not be aware of optimal Graduate Record Examinations (gre) score use and may not be heeding guidelines for score use as described by Educational Testing Service (ets), which develops and annually administers the test. The results of recent surveys suggest that when using the gre in admissions decisions, the graduate school community commonly falls short of following the best practices when considering (1) percentile versus raw scores, (2) cut-off scores, and (3) summed scores. In the case of percentile versus raw scores, there seems to be a lack of knowledge about the fact that raw scores may represent very different percentile scores for the three major sections of the gre: verbal (V), quantitative (Q) and analytical (A). Though substantial differences can exist between raw and percentile scores for high frequency score ranges, raw scores are widely used without recognition of the corresponding percentile score. Cut-off scores are commonly used as a means of winnowing applicant pools despite discouragement by ets. Finally, contrary to ets recommendations, gre sub-scores are commonly summed for use in general analysis and decision processes. Though the vast majority of the graduate community are generally aware that using summed scores is poor practice, a sizeable portion, almost one-third, continues to use summed scores in the decision process.

In revealing these conditions this paper does not intend to diminish the usefulness of the gre, but rather, the paper intends to increase awareness about some ways in which the test is frequently misunderstood and misused. The graduate community—faculty, admissions officers, deans, fellowship committees, etc.—substantially rely upon standardized test scores when evaluating applicants for admission to graduate programs and granting financial awards. For other than professional schools, e.g., law, medicine and business, the gre is the most commonly

used standardized admission test. Annually, thousands of prospective graduate students take the exam, hoping that satisfactory scores will result in admission and favorable financial assistance packages. After using the gre scores for decades, the graduate community has developed an underlying understanding of the test and the scores. Unfortunately, that understanding is characterized by pervasive practices that consider neither stated limitations of the test nor important, but not so obvious, differences between raw and percentile scores.

This review of test score use within the graduate community coincides with the ongoing national discussion about proper use of scores in undergraduate admissions. In that arena, too, widely held beliefs about test score use are being reconsidered to evaluate the proper use of the test (Healy 2000). Recently, ets executive John Yopp testified to the importance and difficulty of ensuring that gre test scores are used properly (Council of Public University Presidents and Chancellors 2000). In the graduate community many faculty, admissions experts, and deans have had years of experience reviewing test scores and subsequent student performance. This experience has generated a predefined environment surrounding gre scores that may hinder the graduate community from recognizing that its practices may be less than optimal. In other words, the scores have been used in particular ways for so long that there has become a built-in assumption that the historical use is the best use. From the results of a recent survey of the graduate community we can see that historical practice does not always equate best practice.

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Dr. Troy Johnson is the Senior Director of Enrollment Management at West Texas A&M University. His graduate work is in economics and higher education. He has worked in university administration for 14 years and served five of those years as Assistant Dean of the Graduate School at Texas Tech University.

## The Signs of Vulnerability to Substandard Practice

The possible lack of awareness about the limitations of cut-off, summed, and raw scores became apparent during an annual meeting of the National Association of Graduate Admissions Professionals (Johnson 1999). At this meeting of deans, admissions directors, and faculty, pre-session survey results showed the graduate community regularly uses cut-off and summed scores and lacks knowledge about the differences between raw and percentile scores. These findings were corroborated using the same survey at a statewide meeting of admissions professionals in Texas. Thirty-three institutions from across the country are represented in the results. The survey responses confirm what is commonly known to be widespread practice when gre scores are used in the graduate community. The survey was not originally developed with the expectation of being discussed in a national forum, however, the findings are so telling it is important to share them in an effort to better inform the graduate community about best practices and areas vulnerable to misuse of the gre.

Though the survey results show widespread substandard practice, the results are not entirely surprising. It is very common to hear comments such as “you won’t get in without a 1300” and read in admission literature statements such as “a minimum 1000 is required for admission.” These and seemingly endless professions and practices demonstrate substandard score use in all three areas discussed in this paper. In fact, the widespread use of summed scores is even implicitly recognized by ets (1995) as its *DataViews* report makes the foundation of its argument to the graduate community based on the presumptive score of 1000 (V+Q). After all, the title of this article is “Why Not 1000,” implying that the graduate community uses cut-off scores such as 1000 and can relate to the idea that a 1000 is a summed (V+Q) score.

Because faculty and professionals nationwide so commonly refer to gre scores in terms of summed scores, the survey findings are not surprising. For example, in the graduate community, the comment “a student scored a 1450” is automatically understood to mean the score is the summation of the verbal and quantitative score and that the score is a relatively high score. Additionally, graduate school and department annual reports often cite test score performance in terms of summed scores. However, it is surprising to learn of the continued use of summed scores, despite the fact that this survey also suggests that the graduate community generally knows using summed scores is not good practice.

Table 1 summarizes the survey findings. When asked if cut-off scores were used in admission literature, 40 percent responded “yes.” Though less than a majority of respondents reported showing the cut-off scores in the admission literature, 65 percent report that cut-off scores are actually used to eliminate applicants. Finally, 50 percent of the respondents reported knowing that ets discourages the use of cut-off scores. Regarding summed scores, the respondents were generally aware that ets discourages the use of summed scores (90 percent), yet 32 percent reported using summed raw scores in the admission selection process.

Table 1: Survey Results of Awareness about Raw Versus Percentile, Cut-off, and Summed Scores

Survey Response to the use of GRE Scores (33 institutions surveyed)	Percentage Responding “Yes”
Cut-off scores are listed in admissions literature	40%
Cut-off scores are used to eliminate applicants	65%
Know ETS discourages cut-off scores	50%
Summed scores are used in admissions decisions	32%
Know ETS discourages using summed scores	90%
Use raw scores, not percentile scores	78%

With regard to raw versus percentile scores, there was both a low percentage use of percentile scores and a low percentage level of general knowledge about the differences between raw and percentile scores. The vast majority, 78 percent of respondents, use raw scores rather than percentile scores. The lack of awareness about raw and percentile score differences became clear from a series of questions asking respondents to identify percentile scores for corresponding raw scores. For example, when asked from a multiple-choice question to designate the percentile score for a 500 verbal score, only 16 percent answered correctly. For the same raw score on the analytical section, only 13 percent answered correctly. Through these examples, the graduate community demonstrated that its daily practices include the use of cut-off scores and summed scores despite ets’s discouragement, and that the community is widely uninformed about raw and percentile score differences.

## Description of the GRE and How ETS Encourages Proper Use of Scores

The Graduate Record Examinations (gre) are the most commonly used standardized tests for graduate school admission and fellowship competitions in the United States. Though most test takers sit for only the gre General Test, ets also offers subject tests in various disciplines such as physics and English, as well as a writing assessment. This paper concerns only the General Test’s three sub-scores—verbal (V), quantitative (Q) and analytical (A).

Approximately 400,000 General Tests are administered each year to students hoping their scores will help them gain acceptance to the graduate school of their choice or win financial awards for graduate study and research (ets 1999, “Sex, Race...”). Over about a four-hour period, students take a series of tests that comprise the gre General Test. Though the gre is typically thought of as one exam, the test actually consists of three key components. Unlike the Graduate Management Admission Test (gmat—the test typically required for admission to business administration graduate programs), the gre does not provide a “total” score or any summed index that attempts to represent a combined performance on the test as a whole. Each section of the gre (V, Q, A) is separately scored on a raw score scale of 200–800. Additionally, ets provides tables demonstrating the percentile performance for raw scores on each of the tests shown in Table 2 (ets 1999, “Guide to the Use of Scores”).

Table 2: ETS Summary of GRE Raw (Scaled Scores) and Percentiles\*

Scaled Score	Percent of Examinees Scoring Lower than Selected Scaled Scores (by Ability)		
	Verbal	Quantitative	Analytical
800	99	99	99
780	99	95	98
760	99	90	95
740	99	86	92
720	98	82	89
700	97	78	86
680	95	74	82
660	93	71	77
640	91	66	72
620	88	61	66
600	85	57	61
580	80	52	56
560	76	48	50
540	71	43	45
520	65	38	40
500	60	34	34
480	54	29	30
460	47	25	26
440	41	21	22
420	34	17	18
400	27	14	14
380	22	11	11
360	16	8	9
340	11	5	7
320	7	4	5
300	4	2	3
280	3	1	2
260	1	1	1
240	1		
220			
200			

\* Based on the performance of all examinees who tested between October 1, 1995, and September 30, 1998

In an effort to educate individuals who use gre scores, ets publishes an annual *Guide to the Use of Scores*. This guide book (also available on the ets Web site: [www.ets.org](http://www.ets.org)) is available to institutions, agencies, universities, and fellowship programs that receive gre score reports. With heavy workloads and limited staff, it is understandably uncommon that score users study this publication in detail, fully comprehend the contents, and apply the information with high levels of attention. After all, at many institutions, faculty and admissions professionals have been using the gre for decades and there is little reason or time to question historically-based beliefs about the meaning and proper use of test scores.

Occasionally, ets also publishes special reports about test score use called *DataViews*. These two-page special reports are often reprinted, recirculated, and described in various forums such as Council of Graduate School meetings and ets presentations at other related conferences.

## Why Best Practices are Overlooked

The condition of less than optimal practice when using gre scores is largely the result of three circumstances. First, history, anecdotes, and experience with the tests result in a collective wisdom that continues these practices. Many faculty and staff working in the graduate community have a background of experience that leads to the continuance, if not proliferation, of inappropriate use of gre scores. The characteristic comment, “we have always done it this way,” suggests one reason why these flawed practices persist. Second, in times of heavy workloads and limited staff, ease and expediency take precedent over the use of best practices. For example, cut-off scores provide a simple method by which very busy admission selection committees can trim the volume of applications to consider. This practice is exacerbated by a collective, intuitive presumption that quantitative measures are unbiased, which becomes a catalyst to taking the quickest route to applicant evaluation. Third, lack of knowledge plays a role in not using best practices when relying on test scores to make critical decisions. The survey findings demonstrate that graduate admissions professionals are frequently unaware of ets guidelines and recommendations regarding cut-off score use. Furthermore, the same professionals are vastly unaware of the differences between raw and percentile scores.

## How Decisions are Effectuated: Raw Versus Percentile Scores

In simple terms, a 500 Verbal score is not the same as a 500 Quantitative score. A 500 Verbal score is the 60th percentile (60 percent of test takers scoring lower) while a 500 Quantitative score is the 34th percentile—a difference of 26 percentile points. Through *DataViews* and the *Guide to the Use of Scores*, ets has specifically cautioned the graduate community about cut-off and summed scores. However, such caution is not as clear when it comes to raw versus percentile scores. Though the percentile distribution chart in the *Guide to the Use of Scores* (Table 2) lists the percentile differences for raw scores, the wide variance between percentile and raw scores is not highlighted. Therefore, the graduate community easily overlooks the differences. Figure 1 charts the difference between verbal and quantitative percentile scores for the same raw score, (i.e., V% – Q%). This visual demonstration of the differences may be surprising to even frequent users of gre scores. The graduate community should be aware that the percentile differences are notable, not negligible. The differences are particularly high in the range of high frequency scores, i.e., scores where most test takers place (the 400–700 range). Furthermore, it is important to note from Figure 2 that the sat exam for high school graduates does not reflect the same difference between raw and percentile scores (College Entrance Examination Board and Educational Testing Service 1999). The peak difference between sat verbal and math scores is only 4 percentile points, whereas for the gre verbal and quantitative scores it is up to 28 points. Figures 3 and 4 show the percentile differences between gre ‘V’ and ‘A’ and gre ‘A’ and ‘Q’.

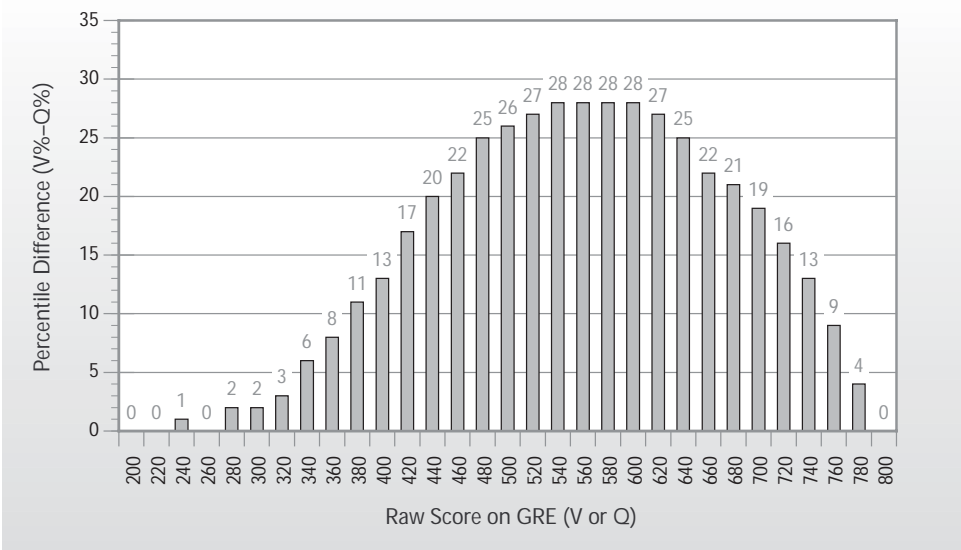


FIGURE 1

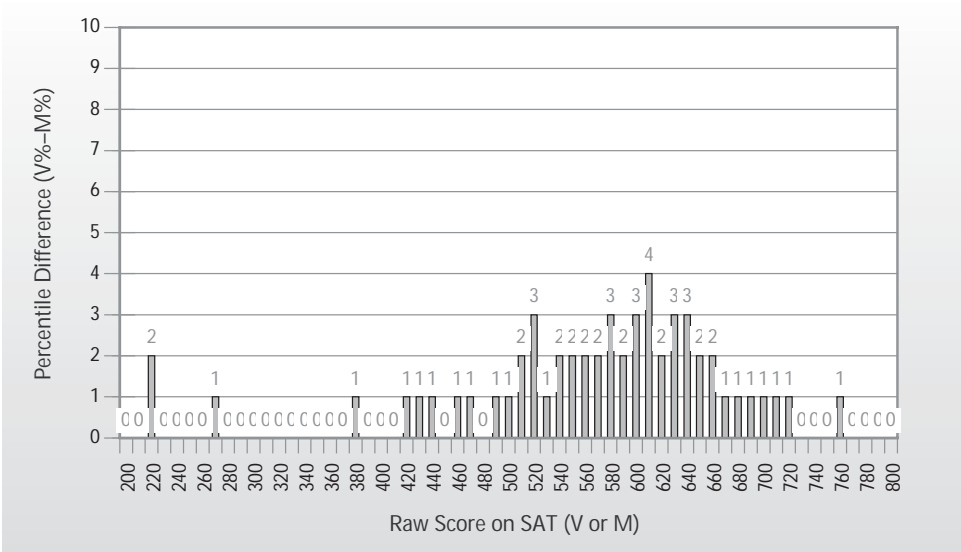


FIGURE 2

A notable percentage of survey respondents was generally unaware of the potentially substantial difference between raw and percentile scores for each of the gre sub-scores. The standard understanding and use of gre scores in the graduate community typically assumes, for example, that scores of 400 'V' and 400 'Q' reflect similar percentile performance. The reality is a substantial difference (13 points) between percentiles and between the like raw scores. In other words, a 400 'V' is the 27th percentile and a 400 'Q' is the 14th percentile. A peak difference example is the raw score of 580. This raw score represents the 80th percentile on 'V' and only the 52nd percentile on 'Q', a difference of 28 percentile points.

When raw and percentile score differences are unrecognized, the accuracy of applicant evaluation becomes questionable through the common, though discouraged, practice of summing scores. For example, a score of 1300 (V+Q), is typically assumed

to be a generally high score without regard to the fact that the average percentile  $(V\% + Q\%)/2$  could vary widely. For example, a score of 800 'V' and 500 'Q' (1300 summed) yields an average percentile of 67, while scores of 600 'V' and 700 'Q' (1300 summed) yields an average percentile of 82. Thus, the difference between the average percentile performances for the summed score of 1300 is 15 points. In summary, it is neither accurate to assume that a 400 'V' is the same as a 400 'Q' nor that all 1300 (V+Q) scores are equal. Faculty, admissions officers, and fellowship and scholarship evaluators are rarely aware that the summed score could yield such difference in the average percentile performance.

What does ets say about raw versus percentile scores? ets does not noticeably address this issue, which may be a reason for the lack of awareness about the differences. Though the annual *Guide to the Use of Scores* provides the table showing the percentile equivalent of raw scores, the table does not amplify the dichotomy between raw and percentile scores. At this time it is left to the user to decipher this information from the chart provided.

**Cut-off Scores**

Cut-off scores are generally used for two purposes in the admissions process. First, cut-off scores limit the applicant pool by discouraging applications from "low scoring" students. Second, cut-off scores streamline the applicant selection process by allowing decisionmakers to quickly eliminate students below a certain standard. Using cut-off scores provides a simple, easy-to-understand and "quantitative" method for trimming the applicant pool. By stating cut-off scores up front in admission literature and standards statements, the graduate community is able to limit the number of applications to particular programs and institutions. Publishing the minimum scores may also be viewed as informing applicants as to their chances of being selected for admission. For example, if an applicant knows the average accepted student usually scores a 1200, the student may decide whether to apply to an institution based on that information. At the next level of the application process, after applications are received by weeding out "lower performers," arbitrary cut-off scores simplify the



work of selection committees who are generally burdened with multiple duties and high time demands.

What does ets have to say about cut-off scores? In short, ets strongly cautions against using them. In its *DataViews* publication, ets (1995) demonstrates the potential pitfalls of using cut-off scores. In this article, ets shows that if a program were to use a cut-off score of 1000 (V+Q) the program would be eliminating a vast pool of candidates. Specifically, 86 percent of African Americans and 61 percent of Hispanics score less than 1000 on the gre. Therefore, by using the sole criterion of summed V+Q without allowing the consideration of other criteria, the prospective student population has been vastly limited, particularly from a diversity perspective.

### Summed Scores

The practice of using summed scores, *e.g.*, V+Q, is best demonstrated by the fact that most members of the graduate community have a general notion of the performance level of a combined score of 800 versus a score of 1300. This understanding is based on years of experience with the scores and perhaps even validity studies that may show positive correlations between graduate school grade point average and gre summed scores. However, as noted in this paper's section about raw versus percentile scores, not all similarly valued summed scores represent similar percentile performance. Also, the scores are from distinct tests, with each score giving an independent measure that is unrelated to the other scores. To illustrate, suppose you are planning to make a fruit salad with apples, oranges and bananas. You are told there is one bag of that fruit ready for you to use. At this point you know you have the fruit you need—at least some of each is in the bag. But, until you open the bag containing all the fruit (*i.e.*, the summed score) and find the amount of each fruit (the individual scores V, Q, and A) and compare that with the recipe (admission needs) you don't know if you have the right amount of each fruit. Therefore, though it was useful to know the fruit was there, further review is required to be sure you have the right amount of each fruit to make the salad you want. The summed score has relevance though it is not the entire, accurate picture. By relying on only

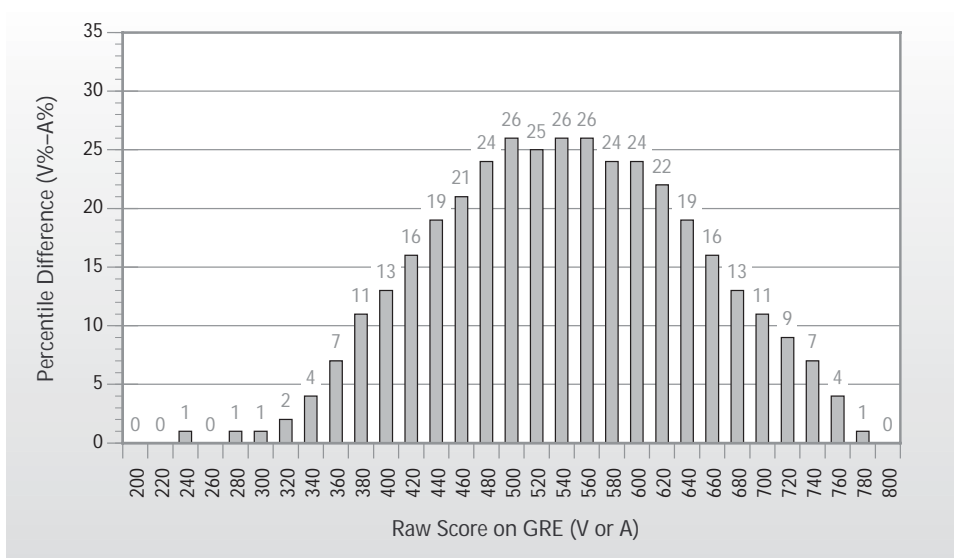


FIGURE 3

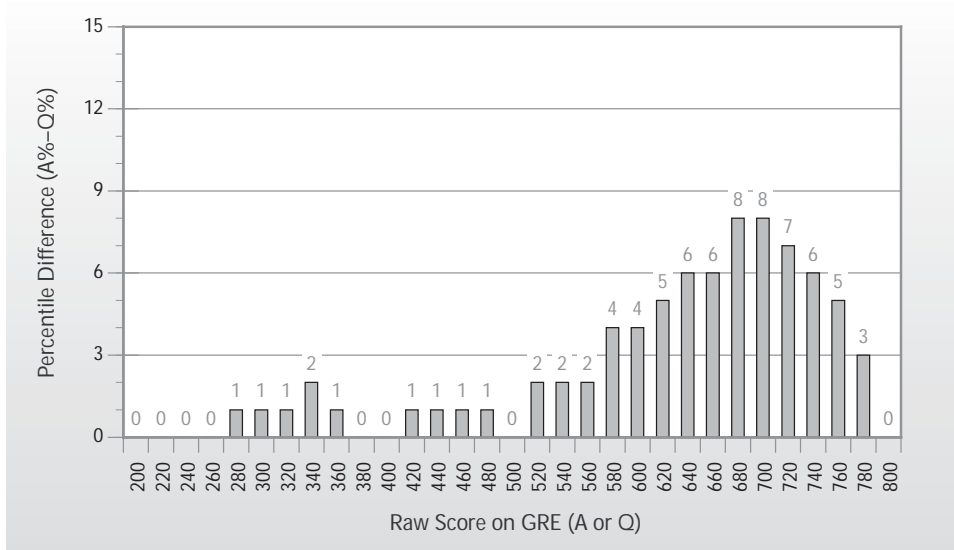


FIGURE 4

summed scores, the graduate community diminishes the usefulness of the test.

What does ets say about using summed scores? On page 8 of the *Guide to the Use of Scores*, ets (1999) clearly states that summed scores should not be used, that the graduate community should “Consider Verbal, Quantitative and Analytical Scores as Three Separate and Independent Measures [sic]... verbal, quantitative, and analytical scores should not be combined arbitrarily.” The correlation of one score to success in a course of study, *e.g.*, verbal score for communication programs, may be a more valuable predictor than a combination of verbal with quantitative and/or analytical scores. Each score is a separate measure and validity studies should be conducted at institutions to help understand the relationship of each score to student performance (ets 1999, “Guide to the Use of Scores”). Though using summed scores may not present the same dramatic consequences

of using cut-off scores (eliminating large numbers of candidates), summed scores do not give decisionmakers accurate information and can be misleading.

## Recommendations to the Graduate Community and ETS

There are several ways to improve the current condition of gre score use described here.

- First, the graduate community should increase its awareness of the limitations described in this paper and, therefore, adjust its practices. Getting this detailed information about these issues to faculty committees, admissions officers, etc. is a challenging task, but it should be taken seriously.
- Second, ets should continue its effort to inform its users about score limitations, anomalies and best practices. Specifically, ets should point out in its *Guide to the Use of the GRE* that there is a significant gap between percentile scores for the same raw scores between the verbal and quantitative, and the verbal and analytical sections of the test. The differences between raw and percentile scores can be dramatic, as large as 28 points (580 V = 80th percentile and 580 Q = 52nd percentile). Therefore, to better inform the graduate community about this condition, ets should include a notation about these differences.
- Third, the graduate community should review and, as necessary, revise its selection processes. In the case of raw versus percentile score differences, the graduate community should start factoring in the percentile when making decisions. In the case of both cut-off scores and summed scores, the graduate community should stop using them.
- Fourth, the graduate community should revise its descriptive materials that list summed and cut-off scores. From the graduate school viewbook, to the department brochure, to the admission matrices, percentiles should be referenced; cut-off score references should be eliminated; and summed score references should be eliminated.
- Fifth, the graduate community can improve by having selection processes that include multiple criteria such as essays, portfolios, etc. By using multiple criteria, even if the substandard practices are in use, potential detriment will be diminished because other factors are being considered. Multiple criteria are recommended by ets.

- Sixth, the graduate community may improve its overall selection processes by conducting validity studies as recommended by ets. These studies can reveal important relationships between test scores and grades.
- Seventh, the graduate community should review its annual and other reports that include summed score comparisons, and move toward reporting percentiles and individual 'V,' 'Q,' 'A' scores, and cease reporting summed scores.

This paper suggests the graduate community should continuously monitor its test score use practices and in some cases be proactive in revising its practices despite historical beliefs.

## Conclusion

Though Educational Testing Service (ets) provides statements encouraging the graduate community to recognize gre test score limitations by not using cut-off scores or summed subscores in decision processes, both of these questionable methods are widely used. Additionally, even though raw and percentile score tables are provided by ets, the graduate community appears relatively unaware that raw scores do not generally match percentile scores between the verbal and quantitative sections. It is important to recognize these potential sources for score misuse because failure to account for them can compromise the graduate community's decision-making processes.

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# Variations in Salaries and Diversity: Representation of Financial Aid Directors at Public and Private Institutions

## Abstract

Using data gathered through the 1999-2000 NASPA salary survey, analyses of covariance found that gender significantly affected salaries at public and private institutions, while ethnicity and highest degree earned were not statistically significant. An OLS regression analysis indicated that size of institution and gender were good predictors of salary at both public and private institutions.

Several studies in the field of student affairs have identified variables such as gender, ethnicity, degree attainment, and proportionality (defined as gender and ethnicity representations) as key factors in determining retention, position changes, or career advancement for student affairs administrators (Evans 1988; Gross 1978; McEwen, Engstrom, and Williams 1990; Moore and Sagaria 1982; Sagaria 1988). However, research designed to identify the most efficient predictors of salary, particularly for females and professionals of color in senior-level student affairs positions, is absent from our current scholarship.

## Purpose of the Study

Because salary research, related to senior-level student affairs officers, is noticeably missing from analyses or is outdated (Blackhurst 2000), the current study is intended to fill a void in this area of the research. This study, therefore, will look at the variables: gender (*gen*), age of respondent (*age*), length of time in position (*leng*), institutional classification (*clas*), size of institution (*size*), geographic location (*loc*), ethnicity (*eth*), and level of education (*deg*) to determine the impact and predictive qualities of these variables on the salaries (*sal*) of senior-level student affairs officers responsible for financial aid at public and private institutions.

## Review of the Literature

Within higher education, salary surveys have been conducted for various reasons such as to examine the concept of salary compression or “salary structures [that] are not proportional to professional maturity,” (Snyder, McLaughlin, and Montgomery 1992, p. 113); equity issues affiliated with promotion and tenure of men, women, and people of color; or to ascertain if colleges and universities are in compliance with the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and EEOC rules (McCulley and Downey 1993).

The number of women and professionals of color (*e.g.*, African American, Latino/Hispanic, Asian American, Native American) in the high-level administrative role of director of a

student affairs unit continues to increase slowly (McEwen, Engstrom, and Williams 1990; Reason, Walker, and Robinson, forthcoming). Despite these advances within the field, research has established that females and professionals of color, when compared to Caucasian males, are represented at much lower percentage rates in senior-level student affairs positions (Drummond 1995; Evans 1988; Gross 1978; Rickard 1985). As Gross (1978, p. 234) noted over 20 years ago, “systematic biases exclude women and minorities from proportional representation in the highest levels of student personnel hierarchies.”

The National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (naspa) has conducted one of the few salary surveys pertaining to administrators in the field of student affairs. Recent results derived from the naspa survey have indicated that salaries and proportionality percentages for senior-level females and professionals of color have remained constant, or slowly increased, when compared to male and Caucasian professionals, but persist as key issues of concern (naspa Research Division 1996, 1998).

In a study that examined enrollment and graduation data of student affairs graduate programs, McEwen, Engstrom, and Williams (1990, p. 51) found a “clear shift toward greater proportions of women entering the profession.” The demographic shift toward a higher proportion of females in student affairs, when coupled with lower salaries, has been termed the “feminization” of the field (Hamrick and Carlisle 1990; McEwen, Engstrom, and Williams 1990). Further, Wills, Healy, and Mahan (as cited in Hamrick and Carlisle 1990) found that

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David Walker received a Ph.D. in Education from Iowa State University and worked in student affairs for five years in the area of international education. Currently, he is an assistant professor of educational research at Florida Atlantic University. His research interests include: international education, issues of salary equity and personnel proportionality of student affairs administrators, testing and measurement, and working with large data sets.

women made up only 25 percent of voting delegates to naspa. Since voting delegates typically are senior administrators, these results indicated that men were represented disproportionately in senior student affairs officer (SSAO) positions. More recently, Blackhurst, Brandt, and Kalinowski (1998) found that 23 percent of vice presidents and 35 percent of deans were women. The increase in the number of women entering the profession did not translate, therefore, into increases in the proportion of women in senior-level positions (Earwood-Smith et al. 1990).

Gross (1978, p. 232-233) noted that men occupied most senior-level student affairs administrative positions and, "appear to be more likely to hold positions as directors of counseling, financial aid, placement, and admissions; [while] women were more evident as residence staff, placement staff, and student activities staff." In addition, researchers (Drummond 1995; McEwen, Engstrom, and Williams 1990; Twale 1995) found that Caucasian males dominated senior-level positions, while women were over-represented at lower-level, "more nurturing, feminine" positions such as residence life and orientation. Positions that were occupied by a larger percentage of women or people of color were more likely to be filled by these same groups (Konrad and Pfeffer 1991) and were often viewed as "devalued" positions (Hamrick and Carlisle 1990). As Hamrick and Carlisle (1990, p. 307) noted about the field of student affairs, "there appears to be disproportionate numbers of women at lower levels and in traditionally female areas of responsibility."

Maintaining a diverse demographic composition in student affairs is critical to the profession and the issue of salary equity. Further, Drummond (1995) found that professionals of color in administrative positions helped with recruitment and retention programs. These administrators assisted in the areas of role modeling, mentoring, and community relations. McEwen et al. (1990) called for an increase in cultural diversity among future generations of student affairs administrators.

## Method

### INSTRUMENT

Data were gathered using the salary survey, conducted by naspa every two years, to collect, compile, and disseminate salary information to senior student affairs officers. Data for this article come from the 1999-2000 survey implemented during the fall of 1999. The focus of this study is four-year, public and private institutions and extracted data related only to senior student affairs officers responsible for financial aid (SSAofA) at those institutions of higher education from the larger naspa data set. Two-year institutions were excluded from this sample due to their low representation in the data set.

The survey consisted of subscales for each of the 15 areas of responsibility defined by naspa. The subscales solicited respondent and institutional demographic information from the sample such as age, gender, ethnicity, institutional size, and public or private support for the institution. The construct "senior student affairs officer" was operationalized as the position that assumes responsibility for the total student affairs program at an institution (naspa Research Division 2000). In addition, SSAofA was further categorized through implementation of the

dichotomous variable having major responsibility, or not, over the area of student affairs termed "financial aid."

To estimate the measurement reliability for the present study, an internal consistency procedure, Cronbach's coefficient alpha ( $\alpha$ ), was computed. The results indicated that the measures for this sample's subscale were reliable ( $\alpha = .81$ ); meaning the items on the survey shared 66 percent of the variance (i.e.,  $.81^2$ ). This is very desirable because having more variance to predict tends to increase correlation and regression results. Further, Cronbach's alpha was computed separately for each of the other subscales' measures, all of which had adequate coefficient alpha reliabilities: senior student affairs officer [SSAO] (.83), assistant SSAO (.78), associate SSAO (.81), dean of students [DOS] (.86), assistant DOS (.77), associate DOS (.79), admissions (.80), registrar (.74), housing (.77), counseling services (.79), career services (.76), security (.72), student union (.70), and student health (.77).

### SAMPLE

Participants included student affairs administrators at naspa member institutions. Surveys were mailed to 1,198 higher education institutions in the United States. Respondents returned 419 surveys, a response rate of 35 percent. Although lower than previous years, the present sample is very representative demographically of past naspa populations (naspa Research Division 1996, 1998).

### VARIABLES

Due to low frequencies of professionals of color, ethnicity was collapsed into a dichotomous variable: Caucasian/non-Hispanic and professionals of color. Degree was separated into ph.d./ed.d., m.a./m.s., and "other." The "other" category consisted of predominately b.a./b.s. degrees, as well as a very small number of professional degrees (mostly in the area of business/finance).

### DATA ANALYSIS

Using a fixed-effect analysis of covariance model, meaning the variables of interest have the same values in any repeat of the study, the researcher examined the effects of gender, ethnicity, and highest degree earned (independent variables) on SSAofA salary (dependent variable) at public and private four-year institutions. A covariate is a quantitative variable that has a statistically significant, strong linear relationship with a dependent variable, and is used to adjust for initial differences between groups. Since this assumption was met, analyses of covariance (ANCOVA) were used to determine the effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable, controlling for size of institution at public ( $r = .72$ ;  $p < .001$ ;  $.66 \leq \rho \leq .77$ ) and private ( $r = .65$ ;  $p < .01$ ;  $.59 \leq \rho \leq .71$ ). Because the sampling distribution of Pearson's  $r$  is not normally distributed, the Fisher's  $z$  transformation was calculated to compute confidence intervals on the Pearson's correlation. These confidence intervals, noted in the parentheses above, provide a range of values that have a specified probability (.90 in this instance) of containing the population value of Pearson's correlation ( $\rho$ ) for both public and private institutions. The lower limit indicates how small the effect might be and the upper limit shows how large the effect might be in the population.

Further, an ancova general linear model examined the two-way and three-way interactions between the independent variables. Assuming homogeneity of variances and a significant F ratio, the Bonferroni post-hoc test was used to determine the pairwise comparisons for all combinations of the multiple level independent variable (highest degree earned) on the dependent variable. Finally, an OLS (ordinary least squares) regression analysis was implemented to identify variables that yield the most efficient prediction of SSAOFA salaries at public and private institutions.

To determine statistical significance, which indicates the likelihood of the sample results, the probability of a Type I error was established as alpha ( $\alpha$ ) at the .05 level. Because effect sizes show the extent, strength, or effect of a relationship, they are meaningful due to their ability to evaluate the importance of the result and not just the probability of the result (Kirk 1996; Shaver 1985). The eta square ( $\eta^2$ ) effect size measure and/or the R square value ( $R^2$ ), which indicate the percentage of variance in the dependent variable explained by the linear combination of independent variables, were reported for all of the analyses. Since standardized coefficients ( $\beta$  or Beta) should not be the exclusive determining factor when interpreting regression results because they may lead to improper renderings of predictor meaning and significance and are affected by collinearity (Thompson 1997; Thompson and Borrello 1985), the structure coefficient ( $r_s$ ) was reported along with the beta weights to help explicate the sources of explained variance or “the contributions of individual variables to the synthetic, linear combination of the variables” (Henson and Thompson 2001, p. 23). Confidence intervals, having a probability of .95, were reported around the observed sample regression coefficients (B) to show the size and direction of the observed effect.

## Results

Of the 207 SSAOs responsible for financial aid, the overall mean salary at public institutions was \$62,933 (sd = \$16,567) and at private institutions \$49,340 (sd = \$16,153). Women comprised a majority with 59.4 percent of the SSAOFA sample (n = 123). The mean salary for women SSAOFAs at public institutions was \$58,864

(sd = \$17,438) and at private institutions \$44,923 (sd = \$14,841). These salaries were substantially lower when compared to the mean salaries for male SSAOFAs at public (m = \$67,988; sd = \$13,963) and private institutions (m = \$59,402; sd = \$14,754). An ancova revealed that there was a significant statistical difference in mean salary based on the independent variable (gender) at both public and private institutions ( $F = 11.053$ ,  $p < .01$  and  $F = 24.331$ ,  $p < .001$ , respectively). It should be noted that gender at public institutions, although statistically significant, had a somewhat modest effect in explaining much of the variance in the dependent measure ( $\eta^2 = .086$ ). However, gender at private institutions had an extremely immense effect in explaining the variance in the dependent measure ( $\eta^2 = .372$ ).

The majority of respondents possessed an m.a./m.s. degree (n = 133 or 67.2 percent). Fifty-five respondents (27.8 percent) earned an “other” degree, while 10 (5.0 percent) of the respondents indicated a ph.d./ed.d. degree. An ancova indicated that highest degree earned significantly affected the mean salary of SSAOFAs at public institutions only ( $F = 3.188$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Further, highest degree earned at public institutions had a small effect in explaining some of the variance in the dependent measure ( $\eta^2 = .053$ ). Bonferroni post hoc tests indicated that a statistically significant difference existed among one of the three mean salaries for each category of highest degree earned at public institutions. Respondents indicating m.a./m.s. degree reported a mean salary of \$64,848, which was significantly higher than the mean salary of “other” degree at \$54,229 ( $p < .05$ ).

Professionals of color comprised 11.3 percent of the sample (n = 23). Caucasian/non-Hispanics at public institutions reported a mean salary of \$62,643 (sd = \$16,624), while SSAOFAs of color reported a similar mean salary of \$61,959 (sd = \$15,523). At private institutions, Caucasian/non-Hispanics reported a mean salary of \$50,669 (sd = \$15,882) and SSAOFAs of color reported a lower mean salary of \$31,075 (sd = \$5,218). An ancova revealed no significant statistical differences in mean salary based on ethnicity between the Caucasian/non-Hispanic group and professionals of color at public institutions.

Initially, a one-way ANOVA indicated that ethnicity influenced salary level for SSAOFAs at private institutions ( $F = 5.955$ ;

Table 1: Analyses of Covariance: Mean Salary by Gender, Highest Degree Earned, and Ethnicity Controlling for Size of Institution

Variable	Public						Private					
	n	M	SD	F	p	$\eta^2$	n	M	SD	F	p	$\eta^2$
Gender				11.053	.001 <sup>2</sup>	.086				24.331	.000 <sup>3</sup>	.372
Female	64	\$65,114	\$16,690				31	\$43,829	\$13,581			
Male	56	\$70,311	\$13,290				13	\$60,862	\$12,695			
Highest Degree Earned				3.188	.045 <sup>1</sup>	.053				2.194	.127	.114
PH.D./ED.D.	8	\$77,426	\$15,341				1	\$43,000	\$0			
M.A./M.S.	83	\$66,785	\$15,944				21	\$50,917	\$15,065			
Other	28	\$57,140	\$16,374				16	\$46,817	\$16,489			
Ethnicity				2.990	.086	.025				1.923	.173	.045
Caucasian/Non-Hispanic	104	\$64,849	\$17,055				42	\$49,629	\$15,264			
SSAOFAs of Color	14	\$65,362	\$14,040				2	\$32,750	\$5,303			

<sup>1</sup> = < .05

<sup>2</sup> = < .01

<sup>3</sup> = < .001

Table 2: Analyses of Covariance Model—SSAOPA Salary by Gender, Highest Degree Earned, and Ethnicity Controlling for Size of Institution

	Public				Private			
	n	F	p	$\eta^2$	n	F	p	$\eta^2$
<b>Main Effects</b>								
Gender		1.192	.277	.011		25.142	.000 <sup>1</sup>	.456
Female	63				25			
Male	54				13			
Highest Degree Earned		1.907	.154	.034		.467	.631	.030
PH.D./ED.D.	8				1			
M.A./M.S.	82				21			
Other	27				16			
Ethnicity		2.905	.091	.026		.956	.336	.031
Caucasian/Non-Hispanic	103				36			
SSAOPA of Color	14				2			
<b>Interactions</b>								
Gender x Ethnicity		.109	.742	.001		*	*	.000
Gender x Degree		1.026	.362	.019		.039	.845	.002
Ethnicity x Degree		.309	.580	.003		.095	.760	.003
Gender x Ethnicity x Degree		*	*	.000		*	*	.000

<sup>1</sup> = < .001

\* denotes sum of squares = .000 and df = 0

$p < .05$ ). After introducing the covariate (size of institution) to the variable (ethnicity) in the ANCOVA, this apparent statistically significant difference disappeared. This was supported further by conducting a partial correlation technique, which is the correlation of two variables (eth and sal) while controlling for a third variable (size). This indicated size had an effect on the relationship between eth and sal, causing it to approach 0 (zero) and not contain statistical significance (i.e., the ratio was in the predicted direction of advancing toward the value 0 (zero) with  $r = -.31 > -.21$ ). Thus, the original correlation between eth and sal is spurious and there is no causal link between these two variables because size is acting as an intervening variable; meaning there is not a direct causal path from eth to sal.

An ANCOVA model examined the two and three-way interaction effects on mean SSAOPA salary between gender, ethnicity, and highest degree earned. Table 2 summarizes the findings of the model. No interactions were found for any of the variables at public schools and only one statistically significant main effect was found at private institutions (gender  $F = 25.142$ ;  $p < .001$ ). No statistically significant main effects or interactions were found for any of the variables at public institutions. This could be attributed to a suppressing effect of the covariate on other variables within the model.

In an OLS regression analysis, we are testing whether a dependent variable is related to more than one independent variable. The basic theory behind OLS is to select estimates of regression coefficients ( $\beta_1, \beta_2, \dots$ ) to minimize the sum of squared residuals. The regression coefficients are estimated by minimizing the mean squared error (MSE), which is an estimate of the population variance. Thus, the model for the regression takes the form:  $y = \beta_1x_1 + \beta_2x_2 + \beta_3x_3 + \dots + \epsilon$ . We wish to estimate the  $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$  by obtaining  $\hat{y}_i = b_1x_1 + b_2x_2 + b_3x_3 + \dots$  where  $\hat{y}_i$  is the predicted value of the dependent variable,  $x$  are the

independent variables, and  $b$  are the regression coefficients.

With that understanding substantiated, the multiple correlation coefficient ( $R = .741$ ) at public institutions indicated that there was a strong co-occurrence between the combination of size of institution and gender (predictors) and salary (criterion). As indicated in Table 3, 55 percent of the variance in salary ( $R^2 = .549$ ) was shared by these two predictor variables. The standardized regression coefficients ( $\beta$ ), along with structure coefficients ( $r_s$ ), help to indicate predictor variable importance by demonstrating weights ( $\beta$ ) assigned to each variable and the correlation ( $r_s$ ) of each of the variables with the linear composite created by the weights thus truly indicating the relative contribution of each predictor variable on salary. For instance, size had the largest influence on salary ( $\beta = .675$ ;  $p < .001$ ;  $r_s = .895$ ), followed by gender ( $\beta = .223$ ;  $p < .01$ ;  $r_s = .410$ ). For private institutions, size and gender were also indicated to be the best predictors of SSAOPA salary.

The multiple correlation coefficient ( $R = .859$ ) implied that there was a very strong correlation between size, gender, and the criterion variable salary. Seventy-four percent of the variance in salary ( $R^2 = .737$ ) at private schools was attributed to size and gender. Further, size had a substantial influence on salary ( $\beta = .608$ ;  $p < .001$ ;  $r_s = .768$ ), as did gender ( $\beta = .525$ ;  $p < .001$ ;  $r_s = .669$ ).

## Discussion and Implications

All of the study's analyses indicated that gender influenced salary level for SSAOPAs at both public and private institutions. The regression analysis suggested that gender was a very efficient predictor of salary at both public and private institutions (i.e., as identified by its robust structure coefficient correlations of .410 and .669 for both institutional types). Also, this transpiration is shown quite clearly in terms of the data indicating that women, being in the majority at both public and private institutions, had few problems ascending to the level of director of financial aid. However, once there, female directors' mean salaries were considerably lower than their male counterparts who only represented about 40 percent of directors. Thus, when reaching the director level, women do not seem to be compensated financially at the same level as their male counterparts.

As was mentioned previously, educational attainment did not appear to influence salary level for SSAOPAs. Only between respondents with an M.A./M.S. and "other" degrees at public institutions was there a statistical difference between mean salaries (in this instance nearly all of the "other" degrees were B.A./B.S.). Past studies pertaining to salary and proportionality (Earwood-Smith et al. 1990; Reason, Walker, and Robinson forthcoming) have determined that student affairs professionals with higher levels of education are more likely to receive greater salaries. However, in the current study, this does not appear to

Table 3: Ordinary Least Squares Regression Summary

Predictor Variable	Public				Private			
	Unstandardized Sample Coefficients (B)	Standardized Coefficients (β)	Structure Coefficients (r <sub>s</sub> )	95% Confidence Interval for B	Unstandardized Sample Coefficients (B)	Standardized Coefficients (β)	Structure Coefficients (r <sub>s</sub> )	95% Confidence Interval for B
SIZE	0.779	0.675 <sup>2</sup>	0.895	(0.627, 0.931)	0.958	0.608 <sup>2</sup>	0.768	(0.658, 1.257)
GEN	0.719	0.223 <sup>1</sup>	0.410	(0.296, 1.143)	1.596	0.525 <sup>2</sup>	0.669	(1.019, 2.173)
DEG	-0.276	-0.089	-0.351	(-0.680, 0.127)	-0.320	-0.116	-0.201	(-0.922, 0.283)
LENG	-0.009	-0.043	0.163	(-0.041, 0.022)	-0.002	-0.009	0.308	(-0.055, 0.051)
AGE	0.456	0.221	0.394	(-0.164, 0.748)	-0.007	-0.005	0.125	(-0.406, 0.392)
ETH	0.828	0.156	0.068	(-0.158, 1.499)	-1.280	-0.204	-0.311	(-2.734, 0.175)
CLAS	-0.558	-0.142	0.320	(-1.119, 0.002)	-0.374	-0.115	0.235	(-1.134, 0.386)
LOC	-0.038	-0.033	-0.080	(-0.182, 0.106)	0.279	0.293	-0.057	(-0.035, 0.523)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.549				0.737			
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.541				0.720			

<sup>1</sup> p < .01  
<sup>2</sup> p < .001

Note: Structure coefficients ≥ .400 are italicized.

be the case, which could be explained in part by the very low, disproportionate number of ph.d./ed.d respondents in the sample (n = 10 or 5 percent).

Ethnic background did not significantly affect mean salary at public or private institutions. Interpreting such a finding must be cautioned, however. As with the lack of degree differences discussed above, the number of ssaofas of color at sampled public institutions (e.g., 6.1 percent African American, 4.7 percent Latino/Hispanic, 1.4 percent other, and .7 percent Native American) and at private institutions (e.g., 2.9 percent Latino/Hispanic, 1.4 percent African American, and 1.4 percent Native American) is disproportionately lower than Caucasian/non-Hispanic at public schools (87.1 percent) and private schools (94.3 percent). Further, it is relevant to note that there were no male or female ph.d./ed.d. directors of color at both public and private institutions, which affords evidence to researchers' calls for increased diversity within senior-level positions (Drummond 1995; McEwen, Engstrom, and Williams 1990). As Collins (1990, p. 62) noted, the successful recruitment and retention of professionals of color often centers on the commit-

ment of high-level administrators. "The institution that succeeds in employing and retaining Blacks and other minorities will have garnered administrative support, especially from the president or provost."

Of the eight variables used in the regression analysis, institutional size and gender seemed to be the most consistent, efficient predictors of salary for ssaofas. Yet, the variable size has not been well discussed in the scholarly literature pertaining to its potential ability to efficiently predict salaries of various high-level student affairs administrative positions such as director of financial aid. The largest group of financial aid directors worked at public institutions with an enrollment range from 10,000 to 19,999 students (26.7 percent). At private schools, administrators from institutions with enrollments ranging from 1,000 to 2,499 (43.2 percent) were the most prevalent.

Because the variables ethnicity and degree have been noted in the scholarly literature pertaining to salary inequity and issues of proportionality percentages (Blackhurst 2000; Reason, Walker, and Robinson forthcoming), surprisingly, they were not found to be appropriate predictors of salary. As noted previously,

Table 4: Salary Means by Gender, Highest Degree Earned, and Ethnicity

	Public						Private					
	Female			Male			Female			Male		
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD
Caucasian/Non-Hispanic												
PH.D./ED.D	3	\$73,844	\$19,229	5	\$79,575	\$14,546	1	\$46,000	\$0	1	\$43,000	\$0
M.A./M.S.	39	\$60,930	\$17,343	47	\$67,483	\$13,952	17	\$46,157	\$14,776	13	\$63,687	\$12,870
Other	24	\$52,546	\$16,314	6	\$60,207	\$11,867	13	\$46,021	\$15,945	4	\$49,575	\$16,522
SSAOFAs of Color												
PH.D./ED.D	0	missing	missing	0	missing	missing	0	missing	missing	0	missing	missing
M.A./M.S.	9	\$62,409	\$15,051	5	\$69,994	\$9,366	2	\$35,250	\$1,768	0	missing	missing
Other	5	\$53,114	\$19,093	0	missing	missing	2	\$26,900	\$2,970	0	missing	missing

ethnicity may not appear to be a suitable predictor of salary due to low percentages of professionals of color at sampled institutions, thus raising the issue of disproportional representation of ethnic groups in financial aid directorship positions. This bolsters the call for stronger, more aggressive programs and policies that assist people of color to enter and/or remain in the profession (Earwood-Smith et al. 1990; Hamrick and Carlisle 1990).

### Future Research

This research addressed only the issues of salary equity and demographic proportionality. Future salary research should also include an analysis of promotion equity and how that may or may not connect with salary equity and demographic proportionality.

The variable ethnicity requires further research pertaining to its ability to predict salaries. Of interest would be to examine historically black colleges and universities (hbcus), predominately Latino/a institutions, and tribal colleges to determine if ethnicity was an effective predictor of salary outside of historically Caucasian institutions.

Finally, the implementation of qualitative methods would enable the profession to capture the richness of high-level student affairs officers' individual stories. These narratives could be used as case studies to complement and enhance past research, thus providing a more complete picture across administrative areas.

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# How College-Bound Prospects Perceive University Web Sites: Findings, Implications, and Turning Browsers into Applicants

## Abstract

Colleges and universities are increasingly using the World Wide Web as a vehicle for student recruitment and a method of application. However, little is known about prospective students' use of college and university Web sites, namely elements that users find engaging, inhibit browsing, and increase the likelihood of submitting an application. To address these issues, this study examined how college-bound high school students perceive college and university Web pages. This study concludes with practical advice for admissions professionals and others who use the Web for recruitment and application procedures.

Few developments in recent history have experienced as rapid an evolution as the Internet. It has been suggested that the Internet will have a societal impact similar to that of electricity, but is developing far more rapidly (Brown 2000). Others have argued that the Internet is "the fastest growing communications medium in history" (Bell and Tang 1998, p. 1). To put the magnitude of the growth of the Internet into perspective, Bell and Tang (1998) cite a senior official of Internet giant Netscape, who noted that in the quest to reach 50 million users, it took radio 38 years, television 13 years, but just five years for the Internet. Yet, despite the rapid growth of this medium, surprisingly little is known about the perceptions and habits of Internet users (Maignan and Lukas 1997).

Research addressing use of the Internet, and particularly the most widely used application known as the World Wide Web (Sloane 1997), tends to revolve around business and commercial applications (e.g., Lu and Yeung 1998; White and Manning 1998). Indeed, little is known about the use of the Web in higher education, particularly by college-bound high school students. This is a bit surprising given that high school students' use and access to the Internet is increasing (Gladieux and Swail 1999) and the vast majority use the Internet to some degree in their college search process (Abrahamson 2000; Strauss 1998).

Studies that have addressed the use of the Web in higher education tend to focus on admissions, specifically on increased efficiency in processing student data (Frazier 2000; Kvavik and Handberg 2000), providing students with a greater level of information and communication (Hartman 1997; Hossler 1998), and understanding the characteristics of Web users (Perry, Perry, and Hosack-Curlin 1998; Pooch forthcoming). Clearly lacking are empirical data to assist college and university admissions staff in developing effective Web pages based on the wants and needs of prospective students.

The purpose of this study, therefore, is to examine how college-bound high school students perceive college and university Web pages. Specifically, this study addresses three research questions: What elements of a college/university Web page do prospective students find engaging? What elements of a college/university Web page inhibit browsing by prospective students? What elements of a college/university Web page increase the likelihood of prospects submitting applications?

## Background

Although the Web continues to evolve rapidly, it has received surprisingly little attention from academic researchers. In 1997, Day suggested that the scant amount of empirical research pertaining to the Internet is due to its newness. However, Day also suggested that another key reason for this scarcity is the nature of those who are involved in the development of this technology. That is, those who produce college Web sites tend to be on the cutting edge of the Web and seldom, if ever, take the time and effort to contemplate the implications of their work. Consequently, she argued that this leaves descriptions of the implications and effectiveness of the Internet to two schools of thought: the anecdotal (e.g., "I use loads of graphics and it works well") or prescriptive (e.g., "don't use more than three icons per page"), both of which are "equally unhelpful" (1997, p. 1).

Abels, White and Hahn (1997) also expressed similar thoughts. These authors suggested that the literature on the effectiveness of Web pages was limited to the personal experiences of designers, adapted from the established principles of print media, or

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Michael C. Pooch, Ph.D., is the Assistant Dean for Academic and Student Affairs in the Graduate School at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Dennis Lefond, Ph.D., is President of Pinehurst Marketing and Research, a firm that specializes on the needs of colleges and universities.

based on the more specific computer interface design. Head (1997) also acknowledged this tendency to apply what has been learned from more established media. However, he noted that the true challenge is “figuring out what applies, what does not, and what requires new solutions” (p. 162).

Research addressing the challenge that Head notes above tends to focus on business and commercial applications. For example, Palmer and Griffith (1998) randomly selected 250 Web sites among Fortune 500 companies and studied the impact of the Web on organizations’ strategic marketing. Lu and Yeung (1998) proposed a comprehensive framework for developing effective commercial Web applications. Day (1997) offered a model for monitoring effective commercial Web sites based upon a traditional three-pronged process of communication: clear purpose, logical structure, and relevant conclusion. Meanwhile, White and Manning (1998) studied the Web sites of online food vendors, seeking a correlation between Web characteristics and increased sales.

While the impact of the Web on business has clearly been addressed in the literature, such attention is distinctly lacking when it comes to colleges and universities. Perhaps one reason for this disparity is the amorphous mission of higher education vis-à-vis business. That is, “for businesses, the objectives of having a Web site are fairly transparent; in higher education, however, a heterogeneous audience dictates that these goals are manifold and can become confused” (Middleton, McConnell, and Davidson 1999, p. 219). Indeed, Middleton, McConnell, and Davidson suggest that Web sites are critical for colleges and universities for three distinct reasons: communication, access to tools (i.e., databases, indices, directories, etc.), and—perhaps most importantly—promotion and marketing of the institution.

The importance of the use of the Internet for promotion and marketing by colleges and universities becomes readily apparent when examining the technology habits of preteens and teens who will be of college-going age in the near future. Citing a study by a private marketing firm, Stoner (1998) indicated that 4.5 million preteens and teens would be using the Web by 2002. Indeed, high school students are already using the Web in the college selection process. Strauss (1998) studied the use of the Web in the college selection process and found that the majority of respondents had access to—and utilized—the Web in some capacity during their college search process. While Strauss found that the Web is being used in the college choice process, he also noted that current students continue to rely heavily on more traditional forms of information.

Evidence suggests that high school students will rely more and more on the Web for information about colleges and universities (Abrahamson 2000). As a result, colleges and universities need to adapt their recruitment strategies to be consistent with the opportunities of the Internet. Perhaps stated more succinctly,

college and university Web pages should be designed to meet the individual needs of prospective students (Williams 2000).

### Characteristics of Effective Web Sites

While there is a clear need for colleges and universities to understand how prospective students use the Web in the selection process, little empirical data exist in this area. Indeed, as Middleton, McConnell and Davidson suggest, “efforts to date have been built largely on enthusiasm and ‘best guesses’” (1999, p. 219). As noted above, much of the research on the use of the Web for marketing purposes has focused on the business sector. However, there is clearly a benefit to colleges and universities in understanding the fundamentals of an effective promotional Web design.

Table 1 summarizes the findings from earlier research on the effectiveness of Web sites. Although the information is self-explanatory, there are four points that warrant attention. First, this table clearly indicates the importance of content. Given that the Web site is a form of communication, this is understandable. Second, the importance associated with how this content is organized is well documented. Clearly, access to the content is for naught if a user cannot easily retrieve the information. Third, and somewhat expected given the business/marketing focus of the research, the focus on the needs of the target audience received much support. Undoubtedly, the choice of content and its organization is dependent on the desired user(s).

Table 1: Summary of Findings from Earlier Research on Characteristics of Effective Web Sites

Characteristic	Studies Cited
Content	Abelse, White, & Hahn (1998); Abels, White, & Hahn (1997); Abrahamson (2000); Bell & Tang (1998); Cunliffe (2000); Day (1997); Hartman (1997); McMurdo (1998); Middleton, McConnell, & Davidson (1999); Rice (1997); Teo (1998); White & Manning (1998).
Enjoyable Experience	Lu & Yeung (1998); Rice (1997); White & Manning (1998).
Organization of Site	Abelse, White, & Hahn (1998); Abels, White, & Hahn (1997); Day (1997); Hartman (1997); Head (1997); Johnson & Dunlop (1998); McMurdo (1998); Middleton, McConnell, & Davidson (1999); Palmer & Griffith (1998); Rice (1997); Teo (1998); White & Manning (1998).
Limited Impact of Graphics	Abelse, White, & Hahn (1998); Hartman (1997); Abrahamson (2000); Head (1997); Middleton, McConnell, & Davidson (1999); Rice (1997); Teo (1998).
Ease of Navigation	Abelse, White, & Hahn (1998); Abels, White, & Hahn (1997); Abrahamson (2000); Lu & Yeung (1998); Rice (1997).
Uniqueness of Site	Rice (1997); White & Manning (1998).
Focus on Target Audience	Abelse, White, & Hahn (1998); Abrahamson (2000); Cunliffe (2000); Day (1997); Hartman (1997); Middleton, McConnell, & Davidson (1999).
Speed of Connection	Abrahamson (2000); Middleton, McConnell, & Davidson (1999); Head (1997); Teo (1998).

Finally, and somewhat surprising, is that graphics are apparently not very important when compared to other features of the Web site. Moreover, “glitz” over substance may actually detract from the usefulness of a Web site.

Remarkably, how to best utilize the Web in higher education remains somewhat vexing. Indeed, “the question of how best to exploit the www in higher education remains problematic. It is becoming accepted that it is somehow important, but defining this importance and what to do about it is not well understood”

(Middleton, McConnell and Davidson 1999, p. 219). Understanding who develops the Web pages on college campuses best supports this point. Given the importance of the Web, one would expect a great deal of research into the Web habits of college-bound high school students, followed by the development of the actual Web sites by professionals who incorporate the research findings as part of an overall marketing strategy. Unfortunately, those who develop these Web pages tend to be self-taught employees (Kiernan 1999) or students who are given little supervision (Stoner 1998).

For colleges and universities to fully exploit the promotional and marketing aspects of the Web, the application of this technology must be based on empirical data from the target audience. This study addresses this very issue.

## Methodology

Participants in this study were college-bound junior and senior students from four high schools in North Carolina and Michigan (three public and one private). A total of 55 students participated (27 male, 28 female) representing various racial groups (73 percent White, 21 percent African American, 4 percent Latino, and 2 percent Asian). Convenience samples were used, as participants were members of student groups who participated in exchange for a modest financial donation to their respective organizations. All data were collected in spring 2000.

This study used both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. A survey addressing students' opinions of Web sites utilized a five-point Likert scale and followed a format suggested by Fink (1995) and Fowler (1995). Participants also had the opportunity to list the information they expected to find when visiting a college/university home page.

Data for this study were also gathered through focus groups using a modification of a process offered by Krueger (1994). These focus groups generally occurred in high school computer labs where the students had immediate access to the Internet. Each focus group consisted of three elements. First, students were asked open-ended questions about their Web habits and opinions regarding college/university home pages. Items addressed focused on content, distinctiveness of sites, ease of navigation, focus on target audience, impact of graphics, site architecture, and speed of connection/download.

Second, students were collectively asked to view specific university home pages and offer their opinions regarding content, design, etc. The participants were led through various links, such as admissions criteria, how to apply, and program offerings. Participants were then re-asked their opinion on content, design, etc.

Third, students were given Web addresses for specific universities and asked to find specific information. For example, one student was asked to find the cost of in-state tuition at North Carolina State University, while another was asked to see if the University of North Carolina at Wilmington had a women's varsity tennis team. These tasks were timed in a non-competitive format, and students were immediately debriefed.

## Findings

As noted earlier in Table 1, the findings in the literature can be grouped into eight distinct categories: content, site architecture, navigation, connection speed, enjoyable experience, target audience, distinctiveness of site, and graphics. The following findings parallel that format.

### CONTENT

Content is clearly the most important element of a Web page, with 97 percent of the participants rating it as important or very important (Table 2). Content of Web pages was clustered into two different categories: admission content and environmental content. Admission content consists of elements such as admissions criteria, application process, cost, financial aid, etc. Environmental content consists of elements such as the physical appearance of campus, what the students look like, clubs/activities that are available, etc.

When respondents were asked to indicate what they expected to find on a college or university Web page, elements

Table 2: The Importance of Various College/University Web Characteristics

Characteristic	Importance <sup>1</sup> [n (%)]				
	VU	Un	NS	Im	VI
Content	1 (2)	1 (2)	—	12 (22)	41 (75)
Organization/architecture	1 (2)	1 (2)	1 (2)	23 (42)	29 (53)
Friendliness	1 (2)	13 (24)	1 (2)	25 (46)	15 (27)
Graphics (major emphasis)	1 (2)	18 (33)	9 (16)	21 (38)	6 (11)
Graphics (minor emphasis)	1 (2)	13 (24)	18 (33)	18 (33)	4 (7)
Distinctiveness	1 (2)	18 (33)	8 (15)	21 (38)	6 (11)
Organization by target audience (applicants, alumni, etc.)	—	3 (6)	9 (16)	32 (58)	11 (20)
Organization by functional topic (admissions, athletics, etc.)	1 (2)	5 (9)	3 (6)	25 (46)	21 (38)
Download speed	1 (2)	3 (6)	3 (6)	19 (35)	29 (53)

<sup>1</sup> VU=very unimportant; Un=unimportant; NS=not sure; Im=important; VI=very important.

related to both admission content and environmental content were expected (see Table 3 on the following page). For example when examining items related to admission content, 24 percent of the students expected information on course offerings, 22 percent expected information on admissions, and 20 percent expected details on available majors and minors. Similar examples can be found for environmental content, where 38 percent of the students expected information on athletics, 24 percent expected information on extracurricular activities, and 20 percent expected information on the campus social life.

Despite the clear patterns that emerged within both admission and environmental content areas, there was also a large number of elements that had surprisingly low frequency. That is, when asked what they expected in a college Web site, respondents identified 60 pieces of information, many of which were cited by only one or two respondents. Thus, there appears to be a number of factors that are expected by relatively few students.

Table 3: Expected Offerings When Visiting a College/University Web Page

Topic	N	(%)
Athletic information (varsity and intramural)	21	(38)
On-campus housing information	14	(26)
Extracurricular activities (clubs)	13	(24)
Listing of courses offered	13	(24)
Admissions information (fee, general)	12	(22)
Financial aid and scholarship programs	12	(22)
Majors/minors	11	(20)
Student life (social life)	11	(20)
Directions (maps)	10	(18)
Admissions criteria	10	(18)
Tuition and other costs	9	(16)
Student demographics (gender, age, GPA)	9	(16)
Information about the faculty	8	(15)
Quick facts (history, size, missions, location)	7	(13)
Description of school (mission)	7	(13)
Location (city, state and zip)	7	(13)
General academic information	5	(9)
Application	5	(9)
Size of school	5	(9)
Contact information (e-mail, phone)	5	(9)
Pictures of campus	4	(7)
Campus events	4	(7)
Student opinions and thoughts	3	(6)
Information on local community	3	(6)
List of selling points of the school	3	(6)
Music programs/activities (marching band)	3	(6)
Student newspaper	2	(4)
Local hotels	2	(4)
Class sizes	2	(4)
How to contact faculty (e-mail, phone)	2	(4)
Important dates	2	(4)
Chances of being accepted	2	(4)
Important phone numbers	2	(4)
Campus calendar	2	(4)
Departments	2	(4)
Off-campus housing	2	(4)
Campus news	1	(4)
Facilities	1	(2)
Rules and regulations	1	(2)
Student newsletters	1	(2)
"Cool" facts	1	(2)
Pictures of dorms	1	(2)
Career and grad school success rate of grads	1	(2)
School colors and nickname	1	(2)
Dorm costs	1	(2)
Course requirements	1	(2)
What to expect	1	(2)
Campus publications	1	(2)
Virtual tour	1	(2)
Orientation schedule	1	(2)
Administration	1	(2)
Dorm room (overhead schemata)	1	(2)
Listing of strong programs	1	(2)
Job opportunities on campus	1	(2)
Degrees available	1	(2)
Online class registration	1	(2)
Dining services	1	(2)
Listing of courses needed before enrollment	1	(2)
Fight song	1	(2)
Fun activities	1	(2)

## SITE ARCHITECTURE/ORGANIZATION

The way a Web site is organized is almost as important as the content that is provided. That is, 95 percent of the survey respondents rated site architecture as important or very important (see Table 2). Indeed, the most effective sites were viewed as "visually intuitive." The information on these sites was readily identifiable, with little interpretation required by the students. Focus group results suggest that sites with highly identifiable links in easy to find formats were well received. Sites with links in no organized manner (often viewed as "overly busy" or "artsy" by students) and graphics that were both dominant and the focal point of the Web page (and thus making links the secondary focal point) were poorly received.

Equally important is that Web pages organized by target groups were more effective than those organized by function topic. Links grouped by target group (e.g., "for prospective students") made the sites much easier to use than pages with links grouped by function (e.g., "admissions," "academics," "research," etc.). Although the survey results indicate that function is of more value than target group, the students reversed their views once they saw the differences on actual Web pages.

Finally, terminology that is familiar to the students greatly enhanced the organization of the site. It was easier for students to find needed information if they knew what the links meant. Most apparent were the various nomenclatures for academic majors. Sites that used "academic programs," "departments," and "schools and colleges" tended to be confusing to the students since this was unfamiliar language. Once it was explained that these terms generally meant "academic major," the organization of the site became much clearer.

## EASE OF NAVIGATION

Closely related to site architecture/organization is ease of navigation. That is, despite how well a site is organized, how easy is it to maneuver through the Web site? During the timed searches that occurred during the focus groups, the average time to locate the specified information was 3 minutes and 45 seconds, with a range of 15 seconds to 8 minutes (the maximum time allowed). Indeed, three students could not locate the information within the eight-minute time limit, and many others took well over five minutes.

Four findings were related to ease of navigation. First, there was a surprising lack of accommodation for slow modems. The majority of students had slow speed access from their computers at home (67 percent) and only about half had high speed access from their high schools. This contrasted greatly with many college/university Web pages that required high speed access to quickly download the graphics embedded on the Web pages.

Second, students voiced frustration when they needed to drill deeper than three levels to obtain the information. Fewer levels with more information per level appeared far more effective. Additionally, rollovers (the information obtained in that link appears when the cursor touches the link) greatly enhanced the time to find information. This allowed students to find the requested information without blindly entering numerous links.

Third, the "search" feature was popular, especially for students with a greater familiarity with the Internet. However, this

rarely produced useful information. For example, when searching for a major in communication technology, one student found numerous Web pages by a technology class, the Office of Communications (an administrative office), and various technology clubs, but no information on whether or not that major existed at the university.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, students appreciated easy and intuitive access to the application. Conversely, students expressed a high level of frustration when they could not find either an online application or an application to download and print. Indeed, applications that were buried several levels into the home page, or that took a long time to access with a slow modem, greatly increased the likelihood that students would be frustrated and terminate their search.

#### SPEED OF CONNECTIONS/DOWNLOAD

Participants were keenly sensitive to the speed with which they could access Web pages or download information, as 88 percent rated this as important or very important. When asked what would cause them to terminate their connection with a Web page, most participants indicated that the primary reasons would be slow connection/download speed. The participants were aware that waiting was an inherent element of being online. They indicated that sites where browsers had the option of bypassing elaborate (slow-loading) graphics or viewing the pages in text-only format, made the Web site more user-friendly, increased the effectiveness of the site, and reduced the likelihood of terminating the connection before the information was retrieved.

#### FOCUS ON TARGET AUDIENCE

More than three-fourths of the participants (78 percent) felt that it was important or very important for a Web site to focus on their needs. Perhaps this is best expressed in the words of one participant who, when viewing a university home page that prominently displayed the picture of its retiring president, stated, "Why is there a picture of an old white guy?" Participants were generally unaware of other constituencies of a university (alumni, faculty, donors, etc.), and therefore viewed any information not directly specific to them as superfluous. However, Web pages that students felt went too far in appealing to them—generally characterized by numerous images, extravagant designs, vivid colors, quickly changing images—were both difficult to use and appeared unprofessional. The vast majority of the participants felt that an unprofessional Web page indicated a lower quality institution.

#### DISTINCTIVENESS OF SITE

This was not a critical factor for students, with only 49 percent of the participants rating it either important or very important. In general, the participants felt that few Web pages appeared similar, thus making distinctiveness an inherent attribute. Surprisingly, however, participants' perception of distinctiveness was generally limited to physical appearance and ignored other distinctive elements such as unique content, site architecture, etc.

#### IMPORTANCE OF GRAPHICS

Graphic images, or pictures, used for their own sake rather than to enhance the organization of content were not well received. Less than half of the students (49 percent) rated this element as important or very important. Indeed, two key themes emerged with regard to graphics. First, pictures worked best to communicate environmental content. Participants felt strongly that pictures should assist the prospective student in determining what the campus looks like, what the students are like, what student clubs and activities are available, etc. That is, they should help the prospective student answer the question, "Will I fit in?" Pictures that didn't address this point were viewed as gratuitous at best or detrimental at worst by creating unnecessary downloads and wasted time.

Second, participants felt that when Web pages address environmental content, a general mix of 70 percent text and 30 percent graphics was optimal. While the participants valued the information in text, they also stressed that the graphics provided information unavailable in text and were willing to put up with some slow download speed to access this information.

#### Implications and Discussion

The aforementioned findings support a number of implications for the strategic development and design of college and university Web pages. These implications are grouped by research question (rq).

RQ 1: What elements of a college/university Web page do prospective students find engaging?

An overriding conclusion is that high school students tend to be seasoned Web explorers and the more effective Web sites are designed around a strategic plan. Overall, Web sites should have an organization (or site architecture) that is logical, easy to follow, and has a focus on the prospective student in mind. Web sites should be visually intuitive, making the architecture of the site instantly understandable.

Clearly, colleges and universities have myriad constituent groups, including alumni, current students and faculty, donors, and, of course, prospective students. The most efficient and effective method for providing information to prospective students is organizing the home page according to these constituent groups or target audiences. That is, home pages that have links grouped by "prospective students," "current students," etc., tend to greatly enhance the architecture as compared to groupings by function category ("admissions," "athletics," "administration," etc.).

Grouping the links on the home page by target groups also allows for the appropriate use of audience-specific terminology. That is, high school students may not be familiar with college or university terminology. Links grouped by target audience allow the Web designers to use terminology with which the high school student is more familiar (e.g., academic major) rather than "program," "department," or "college or school." Simply using the term "major" and ensuring the architecture lists majors alphabetically—thus avoiding any grouping by department or school—greatly enhances prospective students' ability to understand the architecture of the site.

An equally compelling implication relating to this is the use of graphics. As with the overall purpose of the Web site, graphics should be used strategically, not casually. Pictures enhance environmental content but are often detrimental to admission content. Factual information such as admissions criteria, costs, and application deadline do not require pictures. However, pictures and other graphics best help prospective students know if they fit in. A practical rule-of-thumb is 70 percent text /30 percent graphics when addressing environmental content.

RQ 2: What elements of a college/university Web page inhibit browsing by prospective students?

- **Slow Downloads.** There are factors that can actually inhibit browsing by prospective students. The greatest villain here is slow download and connection speed and the amount of time associated with that process. A simple solution is to design Web pages so as to accommodate various modem speeds, thus giving users the option to use text-only screens, bypass elaborate graphics, etc. In short, people who develop Web pages should expect low speed connections but also accommodate higher speed access.
- **Elaborate Graphics and Pictures.** Related to the above is the overuse of graphics and pictures, and the delay in accessing them. Participants understood that waiting for graphics and pictures is an inherent part of using the Web. However, students tend to get frustrated quickly when elaborate graphics cause an inordinate amount of wait time, or the site in general does not accommodate slower modems and results in a great deal of short-term waiting.
- **Not Providing Desired Content.** While the time delay associated with slow modems and elaborate graphics and pictures can be annoying, it pales in comparison to the frustration associated with failing to find desired information. Indeed, the highest level of frustration occurred when students searched for information without being able to locate it.
- **Ineffective Search Functions.** Students who are more experienced computer users often use the search function as a way to speed-up their browsing. Unfortunately, ineffective search functions not only inhibit acquiring desired information, but also can increase the level of frustration, which leads to a premature termination of the connection.
- **Excessive Levels of Information.** Many Web pages have numerous levels, oftentimes requiring students to go through more than five links. Once a student passes three levels, the feeling of searching is replaced with the feeling of hunting for an unknown ending point. Fewer levels, with more information per level, are far more effective. Related to this is requiring students to use the “back” button to return to major junctions on the Web site. Taking the time to hunt through several levels, only to spend an equal amount of time retracing the same steps, requires unnecessary time and could easily be avoided by a link that connects directly to a major junction.

RQ 3: What elements of a college/university Web page increase the likelihood of prospects submitting applications?

As colleges and universities seek to increase the likelihood that students browsing the Web will apply for admission, there are clear steps that can be taken to increase the likelihood of achieving that desired end. These include the following:

First, make the application easy to find and access. Locating the application (either to download or to apply online) is difficult on some institutions’ home pages. One university requires prospective students to drill down seven levels, and even then the directions are unclear. The ability to access the application should be either on the home page, or within the first link under “for prospective students.” In brief, finding the application should be the easiest part of the application process.

Second, design prospect portions of Web sites with a strategic purpose. The Web site is a tool for prospective students, and the burden falls upon the colleges and universities to develop an effective and useful tool. A strategic purpose includes a visually intuitive site architecture, limiting graphics to the enhancement of environmental content, accommodating slower modem speeds, and perhaps most importantly, providing clear and easy access to admission content.

Third, include information that is tailored to individual applicants, even though it may only be important to a few people. This may, at first glance, appear counterintuitive, and it is problematic when using print materials where space is limited and postal rates are costly. However, the Internet offers institutions the unique opportunity to address the needs and interests of individual applicants, as space and mailing costs are no longer barriers. For example, few applicants may be interested in kayaking, but including information on local recreational activities is relatively inexpensive, consumes fairly little time, and yet may have a large impact on applicants who highly value outdoor activities. This message is perhaps best expressed by one admissions professional who argues that college and university Web sites “that can serve each visitor individually will be the key to establishing and maintaining relationships with students in the digital realm” (Williams 2000, p. 18).

Fourth, spend the resources necessary to engage in market research. These findings can apply to all Web sites, but market research will identify other factors unique to individual colleges or universities. Results of market research should be woven into the fabric of an overall recruitment strategy and not simply developed in a vacuum.

### Limitations

While the findings and implications may be helpful to individuals who develop college and university Web pages, there are inherent limitations in this study that should be noted. First, this study used self-selected convenience samples. Therefore, generalizability is limited. Second, this study used a relatively small sample size. While the size of the sample is appropriate for the qualitative nature of the focus groups, it prohibited the application of all but descriptive statistics for the quantitative survey. Finally, this study examined student opinion only. This results in greater insight into effective Web development, but does not offer specific causal connections.

## Recommendations for Future Research

This study was exploratory in nature and took a first step into an area lacking empirical research. However, there are other areas of research that deserve attention. Most readily apparent is the importance of replicating this study with students from other parts of the country. Greater geographic representation may yield different results. Similarly, developing a comprehensive survey based on the findings of this study would enable researchers to utilize a greater number of participants. Additionally, the role of parents in the college search process is well documented, but it would be useful to understand parents' use of the Internet, specifically in their children's college selection process. Finally, it would be useful to understand the impact of information that is not in the control of college and university officials but is available to prospective students. This includes Web sites of official and unofficial student organizations, individual Web pages from students and faculty, and the anticipated negative consequences of applicants' e-mails sent to faculty or department chairs that are not returned.

## Conclusion

The Internet is becoming increasingly pervasive in society, but research on its impact has lagged behind its growth. Research that does exist tends to focus on business and other commercial enterprises, but little attention has been directed toward colleges and universities. This is a bit surprising, given that these sites are often a major source of information for college-bound high school students.

As the Internet continues to grow, and colleges and universities increasingly rely on it for disseminating information, communicating with prospective students, and as a means for applying, there is a corresponding need to understand the impact of this technology and how colleges and universities can better utilize this tool in their recruitment and marketing efforts. This study took an initial step towards that end.

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# People of Nia: The Story of a Black Graduation

## Abstract

People of Nia is a cultural commencement designed to honor and embrace Black students who have successfully completed their college degrees at a predominantly White college or university. This article offers discussion about this unique campus celebration, presents the history of People of Nia, and describes how People of Nia is presented on one predominantly White research university campus.

Organizational culture is “the interwoven patterns of beliefs, values, practices, and artifacts that define for members who they are and how they are to do things” (Bolman and Deal 1997, p. 217). Organizations such as colleges and universities foster unique individualized institutional culture. As a result, the organizational culture affects the constituency that interacts within the college or university (i.e., students, faculty, staff, and administration). Within college and university settings, specific actions defining culture include fraternity and sorority hazing and commencement exercises. Organizational symbols distill meaning, belief, and faith and are central to the development and perpetuation of the organization’s culture (Keesing 1974). Examples of symbols in the university culture are textbooks, doctoral dissertations, and graduation degrees.

For the purpose of this article, organizational culture for colleges and universities will be delineated in three levels: institutional, student, and subcultures (see Figure 1 on the following page). Situating this discussion of a Black graduation in organizational cultural theory is critical in understanding the effects on students whose individualized culture may fall outside of the traditional notion of organizational culture. The purpose of this manuscript is to present a format for People of Nia, a graduation ceremony designed to honor Black students for degree completion at predominantly White colleges and universities.

## Culture

Students actively contribute to the university culture (Weidman 1989). Irrespective of personal differences, college students will confront similar academic and developmental tasks throughout their years of study (Becker et al. 1961; Newcomb and Wilson 1966). Their common experiences, in addition to diverse patterns of reactive behavior and thought that create the student culture, lead to “the experience of being a college student” (Love et al. 1993, p. 61). Despite commonalities among students, the variety of student beliefs and affiliations within institutions leads to the development of subcultures (Kuh 1993; Tinto 1987).

Within any organization are subcultures, which are distinct secondary groups operating within the same context and setting (Sergiovanni 1984). Secondary groups are distinctive enough in their beliefs, norms, and practices that they are distinguished from other groups within the same organization. Examples of university subcultures are residential-based programs (i.e., living-learning centers) and athletic teams (Love et al. 1993). Although subcultures express a sense of ownership to the greater university environment, they consist of culturally marginalized groups of students that exist within student subcultures (e.g., physically disabled and international students). They commonly express dissatisfaction, lack of status, and inability to graduate within the university environment (Pascarella and Terenzini 1991). Due to the fact that university campuses are increasingly diversified, the norms and traditions within a university must be examined to determine if any value adjustments need to be created to heighten the collegiate experience of diverse populations.

The intersection of race and culture on college campuses often finds Blacks feeling isolated and marginalized, wherein

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Lynette Danley Heggins is a Doctoral Candidate and Teaching Assistant in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at Iowa State University. Her research interests include the promotion and tenure of African-American faculty, and recruitment and retention of underrepresented student groups on college campuses.

Jerlando F. L. Jackson is an Assistant Professor of Higher and Postsecondary Education in the Department of Educational Administration at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His research agenda is conceptualized around two construct areas: (1) administrative science in higher education; and (2) the sociology of people of color in higher education.

E. Reginald Parks is a Doctoral Student in the Department of Educational Administration at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His research interests include organizational culture within higher education and factors that promote and inhibit distance education.

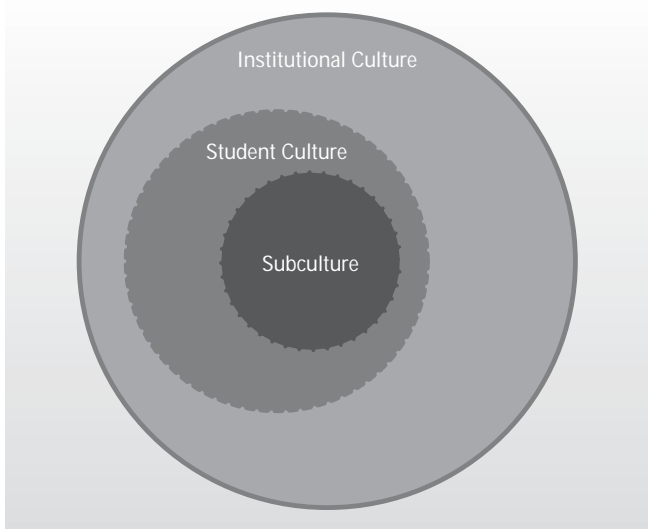


FIGURE 1: THE LEVELS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

their collegiate experience is not as positive as their White counterparts (Nettles 1988; Taylor and Howard-Hamilton 1995). Furthermore, university culture does not actively support the needs of disenfranchised Black students. This reinforces the perception that they are an unnecessary component of the institutional environment and negatively impacts their student achievement and status (Gosset, Cuyjet, and Cockriel 1996; Schlossberg 1989).

Allen (1992) states that Black students create their own meaningful experiences that contribute to their sense of communal support within institutions of higher learning. Although within-group support is beneficial to achievement and persistence, Gossett, Cuyjet, and Cockriel (1996) maintain that it is only a combination of support from a university's staff, faculty, and students that will provide a maintained benefit to the disenfranchised Black students. Campus administrators and student service professionals must therefore actively seek to enhance the social and cultural adjustment of Blacks to the campus community.

As expressed earlier, rituals and ceremonies help define a university's culture. Bolman and Deal (1997, p. 227) distinguish rituals from ceremonies by stating that "ceremonies are grander, more elaborate, less frequent occasions. Rituals are simpler day-to-day patterns." In addition, ceremonies benefit society in that they: (1) socialize; (2) stabilize; (3) reassure; and (4) reassure and convey messages to external stakeholders (Bolman and Deal 1997).

University commencement ceremonies are celebratory experiences that culminate a student's academic, intra-, and interpersonal experiences. Banning (1989) further maintains that positive student development outcomes should receive rewards, which provides a basis for the adoption of commencement exercises exclusive to Blacks and other marginalized student groups. Stated differently, having surmounted the personal alienation and cultural incongruity that often accompanies racial and ethnic minority participation in higher education, opportunities must be sought that increase their perceptions of belongingness, both in and out of the classroom (Parker, Scott, and Chambers 1985). Therefore, based on this premise, the People of Nia ceremony was developed.

## Origins of People of Nia

The four and six-year graduation rates for Black students at Iowa State University is significantly lower than the overall graduation rates of the total student population. In fact, the graduation rate for Black students is lower than any other ethnic group at Iowa State University, with the exception of Native Americans (Iowa State University 1999). The four-year graduation rate of Black students from 1993-1997 was 9.4 percent as compared to White students at 22.8 percent, and that of the total population's graduation rate of 22.3 percent. The four-year graduation rate for the years 1994-1998 and 1995-1999 reports more diminutive percentages for Black students, who were reported at 7.2 percent and 9.7 percent, respectively. In comparison, White student graduation rates were 24.3 percent and 25.5 percent during those same years, which reflect the total population's graduation rates of 24 percent and 25.1 percent (Iowa State University 1999, p. 55). The six-year graduation rate for Blacks was 27 percent as compared to the White students' rate of 62.7 percent, which was higher than the total population's rate. Although from 1993-1999 the graduation rate for Black students increased somewhat to 34 percent, it was almost half of the White student graduation rate, which remained consistent at 62.7 percent (Iowa State University 1999, p. 55).

In an effort to help combat the low retention and high attrition rates of Black students, organizations such as the Black Graduate Student Association (bgsa) and the Black Student Alliance (bsa) mobilized themselves. As a proactive strategy, the student organizations decided to focus on targeted student profiles who were not only surviving at the institution, but were doing well academically and were on track to graduate. The concept of honoring Black students who successfully matriculated through the challenges and rigor of a predominantly White research institution (Iowa State University) appealed not only to the Black student leaders but also to the University's chief administrative officers. It became crucial to restore the pride, heritage, and sense of purpose that the African ancestry passed on to Blacks throughout history. As a result, the Black students named the ceremony Nia (the fifth principle of Kwanzaa), which means "purpose." Thus, People of Nia was born in the Fall semester of 1997 and implemented in the Spring semester of 1998. Since its inception, the Black graduation has been held twice a year.

The celebration is spiritual, uplifting, and affirming because it not only serves as a celebration of a deeply rooted heritage, but it also illustrates an acknowledgement of the historical contributions of Black people. People of Nia provides a sense of pride and cultural connection to an ancestry, though lost or unknown to many, by the singing of the Black National Anthem, the singing of spirituals, display of African dance, and partaking in Black cultural cuisine. The occasion is also enriched by the graduates' procession, which is led by African drums, to the cultural presentation where graduates are robed in kente cloths (kente is an Asante ceremonial cloth hand-woven on a horizontal loom). The People of Nia ceremony has restored a sense of heritage, faith, and belonging to the students by illustrating that their ancestors' sacrifices were not in vain.

For the People of Nia ceremonies held during the Fall session, there is a Lighting of Candles Ceremony, which represents passing the torch to preserve the ancestry of the Black experience. Additionally, at the People of Nia ceremony, students are recognized for their academic and/or student leadership achievements, which are equivalent to valedictorian, salutatorian, and class president honorees at the university-wide commencements.

#### OVERALL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR PEOPLE OF NIA

The goals and objectives for People of Nia may vary from institution to institution, but for this institution the goals and objectives included the following initiatives: (1) to recognize the academic achievements of Black students through a Black culture-focused commencement; (2) to support Black students while encouraging them to proactively take responsibility for their academic success as they pursue the completion of their college degree; (3) to promote a sense of pride and respect for the significant contributions that Black students have made to the advancement of their race; and (4) to provide a sense of connectedness with the University's faculty, staff, and administrators to help combat feelings of mistrust often experienced by Black students on predominantly White campuses.

#### FROM CONCEPTUALIZATION TO FORMATION OF PEOPLE OF NIA

Both student organizations (bgsa and bsa) agreed that in order for the Black graduation to be an effective and successful event, support from administrators, faculty, and staff was essential. Thus, the People of Nia celebration became a campus-wide initiative which brought a multi-disciplinary team of academic and student affairs offices, colleges, and departments together to recognize the Black student graduates. Although bgsa and bsa student leaders believed that university support was necessary, they equally asserted that Black students themselves are ultimately responsible for their academic success at Iowa State University. Therefore, based on this belief, the majority of representatives on the People of Nia committee consisted of individuals from bgsa and bsa, and their constituents.

After student support was obtained, bgsa and bsa sought and secured representation from the various administrative offices and academic departments on campus. Whether it was in the form of their physical presence or financial and/or in-kind support, individuals from the following offices and departments offered their expertise: Office of the President, Vice President's Cabinet, Academic Dean's Council, Black Faculty and Staff Organizations, African American Studies Department, Dean of Students Office, Graduate College, Registrar, and the Office of the Provost. It is important to note that each person was selected for a specific purpose to maximize the success potential of the People of Nia ceremony. Therefore, every individual, in addition to representing his or her respective departments, colleges, offices and/or organizations, brought at least one additional resource (e.g., funding, clerical support, and office supplies).

bgsa and bsa also thought that the People of Nia ceremony would be beneficial for the Ames, Iowa community to experience

and as a result solicited support from local organizations such as the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (naacp). Once the People of Nia committee was established, the goal was to develop the mission, annual theme, and to format a plan of action for the cultural commencement. The phases of People of Nia occurred as follows:

#### FALL SEMESTER

The planning committee met to establish a meeting schedule for the year as well as to brainstorm ideas and possibilities for the graduation. Once meeting dates were set and committee members agreed on the activities that would be included, sub-committees were established. Sub-committees were assigned tasks including securing the facility for commencement, selecting the menu for the reception, and selecting the keynote speaker. Traditionally an Iowa State University faculty, staff, administrator, or alumni member who has demonstrated a consistent and sincere commitment to the advancement of Black students is selected. Additionally, the sub-committee selected the mistress and master of ceremony, informed the Black students who are listed as seniors or graduate students scheduled to graduate in the Spring of the upcoming event, identified prospective kente cloth vendors, and secured the entertainment (e.g., dancers, singers, drummers, and reception music).

The next planning process consisted of performing a variety of tasks, beginning with the selection of a date for the commencement that would not conflict with the university-wide graduation or conflict with other student activities, limiting attendance. It is essential that People of Nia maintain its original mission and focus on celebrating Black achievement while not alienating other groups on campus. It is equally vital that non-Black students learn more about the various ethnic groups that help make up the tapestry of a university's ecology. The next step was to reserve the celebratory facility. The location and space allocation is important since a number of people are invited, including the families and friends of the graduates, planning committee members, other university officials, and community leaders. The last item to secure was the entertainment, categorized as cultural expressions. This component of the program is essential to the event and sufficient room is needed for the processional, which is led by drummers, singers, and dancers to celebrate the Black experience.

Progress reports, as well as any obstacles that arose, were shared with the overall planning committee at monthly, bi-weekly, and as time progressed, weekly meetings. Funds were requested and transferred to an account in the Minority Student Affairs Office. Monthly financial reports were given. The Registrar's Office gave a list of Black students who were anticipated to graduate in the Spring to the Minority Student Affairs Office. The list was shared with the People of Nia planning committee members so that the students listed could be officially contacted.

In terms of funding, financial assistance was provided from the sponsoring organizations, the Minority Liaison Officers of each academic college, the Vice President of Student Affairs Office, Minority Student Affairs, Department of African

American Studies, and the Graduate College as well as local community organizations (e.g., naacp). A significant amount of financial assistance came in the form of in-kind support from the academic colleges, such as the printing of flyers, certificates, and awards, and assistance with campus and off-campus mailings. The student organizations helped with promotion of the event, contacting prospective graduates, and serving in whatever capacity was needed during the event (e.g., hosts, servers, seating graduates, decorating, etc.). Often items such as food were discounted by local stores or by the facilities in which the commencements were held due to the group's affiliation with the University.

The in-kind funds allowed the planning committee to use the remaining monies for renting the facility, having authentic kente cloths imported from South Africa, providing food and entertainment for the reception, and offsetting the cost of items such as printing, that were not covered in total with in-kind donations.

#### SPRING SEMESTER

Administrative divisions such as the Registrar's Office provided assistance by sharing information such as the list of Black students participating as graduates in the University's commencement. The Provost offered his personal services by serving as a dignitary of the graduation and thus robing the graduates with kente cloths and providing them with certificates recognizing degree completion.

Letters, flyers, e-mails, and phone calls were the publicity tools used to inform the college campus of the event. Confirmations were finalized for the keynote speaker, kente cloth vendor, entertainment performers, mistress and master of ceremony, administrators, faculty, and staff who agreed to participate in one form or another with the commencement. In addition, the People of Nia's budget was reviewed so that committee members would know how much was transferred, how much was still needed, as well as additional sources to seek funding from if needed.

#### TWO MONTHS PRIOR TO THE EVENT

Again contact was made with potential Black graduates to assess how many Kente cloths, certificates, and refreshments would be needed for the graduation. Publicity was redistributed and increased with news releases to both the campus newsletter as well as to local newspapers. Funding was reviewed once more to ensure that sufficient monies would be available to cover all programmatic costs.

#### ONE MONTH PRIOR TO THE EVENT

Final letters, e-mails, and phone calls were made to the graduates to confirm their participation in Black graduation. In addition, reminders to the keynote speaker and program participants (e.g., mistress/master of ceremony, faculty assisting with kente cloths and certificate, libation ceremony leader, and performers) were made to finalize any last minute details.

#### TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO THE EVENT

Decorations were picked up and/or ordered including balloons, flowers, and banner, which displayed the name of the event and the two sponsoring organizations (bgsa and bsa). The Black

student graduates who did not respond to letters and e-mails were contacted once again by phone. The budget was reviewed once again to ensure that co-sponsors paid any remaining balances from their pledged amounts. Moreover, the planning committee verified expenditures that exceeded the monies received. The keynote speaker was called so that attendance could be verified.

#### ONE WEEK PRIOR TO THE EVENT

The facility was reviewed by members of the planning committee to ensure that all of the logistics were in place for the event. The Daily (Iowa State University's campus newspaper) and The Cure (Iowa State University's campus radio station) both publicized the event.

#### THE EVENT

The program order of the People of Nia program consisted of the following: (1) Processional of Graduates (led by drummers and dancers); (2) Welcome and Introduction of Mistress/Master of Ceremony; (3) Black National Anthem; (4) Libation Ceremony (paying respect to ancestors); (5) Cultural Expression (song, dance, poetry, etc); (6) Introduction of Keynote Speaker (7) Graduating Student Speakers (one from each level: undergraduate and graduate); (8) Presentation of Kente Cloths and Certificates; (9) Closing Remarks; and (10) Recessional of Graduates and Reception.

#### POST BLACK GRADUATION

One week after the celebration, the People of Nia planning committee had a follow-up meeting. All of the materials pertaining to the graduation, for example, items from the display case, certificates, and kente cloths that were not distributed, decorations that could be used for the following year, and anything else that could be of use to the planning committee were secured and stored in a centralized location. Thank you letters were forwarded to all the supporters of the event. Members of the People of Nia planning committee shared their evaluations of the Black graduation and offered what feedback they had received from the graduates and the programs' observers.

#### Conclusion

The overall success of the Black graduation depended on two key variables: (1) the implementation of a strong planning committee; and (2) the consistent commitment and communication between campus-wide administrative offices (e.g., Office of the President) and the Black students who served more in the capacity of hands-on (grass root) organizers.

It is important that the entire campus community, from the President's Office to the student organizations, realized that the Black graduation was not designed to replace or devalue the University's commencement. Organizers of People of Nia encouraged Black students to participate in the University's commencement because they felt that the institution's commencement afforded all students, including Black students, the opportunity to be acknowledged by all the constituents of Iowa State University for their academic achievements. For Black students, the University commencement gave them the opportunity and

responsibility to demonstrate to isu administrators, faculty, staff, their families, peers, and most importantly to themselves, that they can set a goal and achieve it even when the odds are stacked against them.

bgsa and bsa and their constituents believe that People of Nia was essential not only for Black students, but for Iowa State University as an institution. The People of Nia planning committee, the Black students who developed and organized People of Nia, and those who participated as graduates concur that the Black graduation is one effective way to retain Black students as well as a tool to increase racial and cultural tolerance on campus. It is believed that while all Black students may not have the same cultural experience or come from the same region or socioeconomic status, they still irrefutably share a history rich in triumphs and tragedies of the Black experience.

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# Financing State Colleges and Universities: What Is Happening to the “Public” in Public Higher Education?

**F**rom time to time, policymakers and analysts are reminded that paradox and unintended consequences are integral parts of the nation's policy landscape. A prominent and timely example of this presents itself in the realm of elementary and secondary education, where policies designed to alleviate teacher shortages (e.g., alternative/emergency certification) are in many cases further compromising the quality of classroom instruction. As a result of this unintended consequence, the paradox emerges that one of the most educated nations in the world is weakening its own educational infrastructure.

These phenomena are at work in the world of public higher education, and in a similarly troubling fashion. At the very time that postsecondary education in the United States is reaching all-time highs in significance as an economic and social good, the public higher education enterprise is gradually being privatized. In recent years, a combination of economic, political, and philosophical currents have contributed to a shift away from public funding of colleges and universities (i.e., federal and state appropriations) and toward private funding of these institutions (i.e., student tuition revenues, external fundraising, and entrepreneurial activities). This shift is not without consequence, as the financing of any public enterprise, including higher education, is as much about societal values as it is about dollars and cents. Such a shift also poses a number of difficult policy questions, all of which revolve around the central question: How “public” should public colleges and universities be in the 21st century?

This article aims to: a) examine how the financing of public four-year institutions has changed from the late 1980s to the present, with a special emphasis on public comprehensive institutions; b) analyze these changes and discuss their potential ramifications for different stakeholders; and c) look ahead to the future of public higher education finance and assess proposals to significantly change the currently prevailing financing structure.

## The Paradox: Rising Public Expectations, Shrinking Public Support

Over the course of our nation's history, the view of higher education as a central part of our economic and social fabric has enjoyed broad acceptance. Articulation of this view dates back to Thomas Jefferson, who wrote:

“I think by far the most important bill in our whole code is that for the diffusion of knowledge among the people. No other sure foundation can be devised for the preservation of freedom and happiness” (AASCU 1998, “Public Higher Education...”).

More than two hundred years later, the United States is a vastly different place than when Jefferson championed the concept of the public university. The centrality of the university in our nation's social and economic fabric, however, has remained unchanged. In fact, our increasing dependence on knowledge and information has only increased the stock of colleges and universities as the generators and purveyors of that knowledge and information. Noted higher education observer Robert Zemsky (1996) aptly articulates this sentiment:

“In fact, higher education has never been more important to society—as an enabler of individuals, an engine of economic transformation, and a source of community cohesion and national awareness.”

Others expand on that reasoning, asserting that a college education is quickly becoming the *sine qua non* of full participation in the economic and civic life of the nation (NCPPE 2000). The intuitive logic of this line of argument is buttressed by the following considerations:

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Travis Reindl is Director of State Policy Analysis and Assistant to the President at the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU).

Dana Brower is Policy Intern at AASCU.

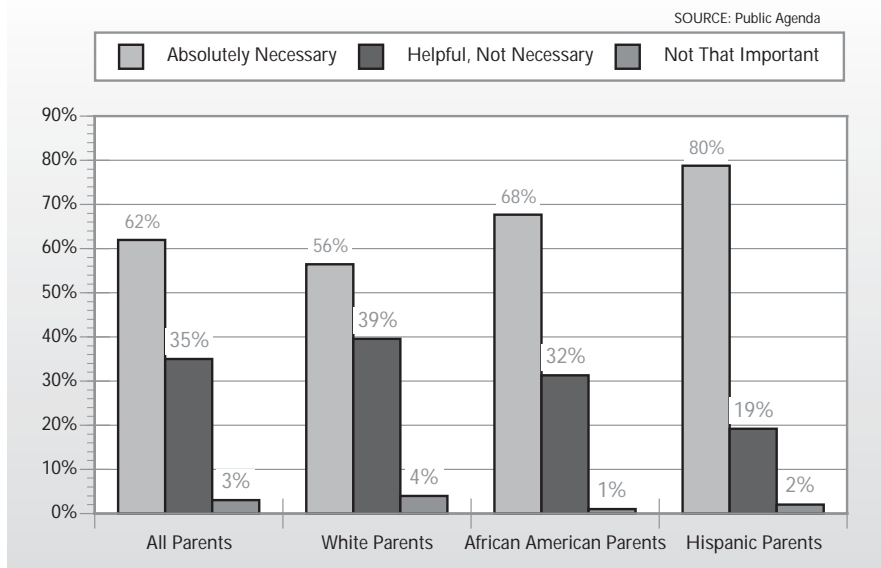


FIGURE 1: PERCEIVED NECESSITY OF COLLEGE EDUCATION, HIGH SCHOOL PARENTS, 1999

- Virtually all of the academics, campus administrators, and government and business leaders responding to a 1998 query by Public Agenda agreed with the statement that “A strong higher education system is key to the continued economic growth and progress of the U.S.” (Immerwahr 1999).
- A majority of the ten occupations (including the four fastest-growing) expected to post the fastest growth from 1998 to 2008 require an associate’s degree or higher. Over this period, the number of jobs requiring an associate’s degree or higher is projected to increase 23 percent, compared to a projected increase of just 13 percent for jobs requiring less than a college degree (Braddock 1999).
- Economists such as Caroline Hoxby (2000) of Harvard University argue that several factors underscore higher education’s role as an economic growth engine for the nation, including: a) the high correlation between educational attainment and economic growth in the United States; b) the fact that the United States has a comparative advantage in producing goods and services with high skill content; and c) the extent to which growth of the technology-related sectors of the economy depends on an ample supply of educated labor.
- According to Immerwahr and Foleno (2000), nearly two-thirds of the parents of high-school students surveyed in 1999 by Public Agenda agreed with the statement that a college education is “absolutely necessary” for their child/children. For parents from racial and ethnic minority groups, the percentages were even higher. (See Figure 1.)
- Recent federal analyses indicate that college graduates are more than twice as likely to engage in volunteer work and political activity than high school dropouts, and are less than half as likely to participate in public assistance programs (Mortenson 1999, “Why college?...”).

By this account, there appears to be a simple and straightforward case for increasing public investment in the nation’s higher education system. The promise of social advancement and economic development suggested above, combined with a widespread public affirmation of the necessity of a postsecondary credential, promotes a view of higher education as a strategic investment, on par with fiscal commitments to public safety, healthcare, and national defense. Following this line of reasoning might also lead those unfamiliar with contemporary higher education finance to assume that the recent past has been a “golden age” for public colleges and universities.

The reality, however, has been substantially different. The past two decades have been among the most turbulent in history for the financing of public higher education in the United States. The story, in its

most basic form, is this: states have provided significant increases for higher education in recent years, but higher education spending as a percentage of total state (general fund) spending has fallen considerably. The share of institutional revenue represented by state appropriations has markedly declined as well. In other words, the total funding “pie” for states and for institutions has gotten bigger, but higher education’s piece of the state funding pie has not concomitantly grown, nor has the state’s share of the higher education funding pie.

- In real dollar terms, appropriations of state tax funds for operating expenses of higher education grew from \$39.8 billion to \$60.6 billion from fy91 to fy01, an increase of 52.0 percent (Grapevine 2001).
- Despite rebounding slightly in the late 1990s, appropriations of state tax funds for operating expenses of higher education per \$1,000 of personal income dropped from \$9.74 to \$7.94 from fy90 to fy2000, a decline of 18.5 percent (Mortenson 1999, “State tax...”).
- Higher education’s share of state and local government expenditures also dropped—although not in a straight-line pattern—during the 1990s, decreasing from 7.49 percent in 1990 to 6.28 percent in 1998, after peaking at 8.25 percent in 1992 (Mortenson 2000, “Refinancing higher education...”).

Due to these trends, state appropriations have constituted a shrinking portion of total higher education revenues.

- In 1988–89, state appropriations represented 39.9 percent of current fund revenues at public four-year colleges and universities.<sup>1</sup> By 1998–99, they represented only 31.5 percent of

<sup>1</sup> To control for data aberrations, mean totals are used for this and all data generated through the U.S. Department of Education’s Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).



such revenues (U.S. Department of Education 1991, 2000). (See Figures 2a and 2b.)

The decline in state support was even more pronounced at public master's/comprehensive institutions, which have relied more heavily on state appropriations as a revenue source than their four-year public counterparts.

- In 1988–89, state appropriations at member institutions of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (aascu)<sup>2</sup> constituted 50.6 percent of current fund revenues. By 1998–99, the proportion of current revenues constituted by state appropriations had shrunk to 40.9 percent (U.S. Department of Education 1991, 2000).

In the face of shrinking government revenues and rising costs, the private sector has picked up the funding “slack” for public higher education. Students and their families have shouldered the largest portion of this shift through increased tuition and fees.

- Between 1988–89 and 1998–99, the percentage of current revenues constituted by tuition and fees increased from 14.7 percent to 18.4 percent at public four-year colleges and universities. At aascu institutions, tuition and fee revenues increased from 19.5 percent to 25.7 percent of current fund revenues during the same period, and at non-aascu public institutions, they grew from 12.7 to 15.2 percent of current fund revenues. (See Figures 2a and 2b.)

- Between 1988–89 and 1998–99, the current fund revenues generated by tuition and fees at public four-year institutions increased 107.4 percent. Revenues from state and federal appropriations increased 30.9 and 1.5 percent, respectively, during the same period (U.S. Department of Education 1991, 2000).

In addition to students and families, other private sector sources have begun funding larger shares of the costs of public higher education. Apart from state and local grants and con-

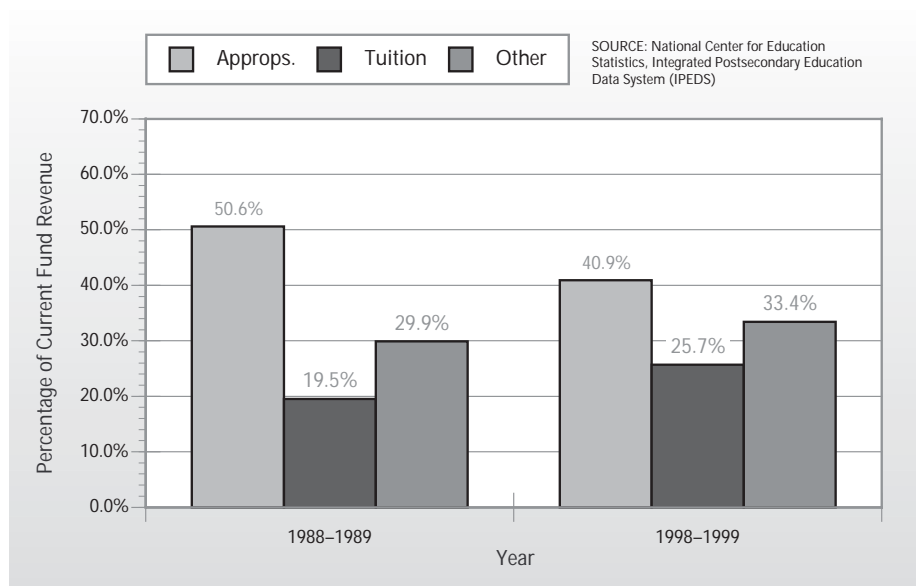


FIGURE 2A: SOURCES OF CURRENT FUND REVENUE, AASCU INSTITUTIONS, 1988-89 AND 1998-99

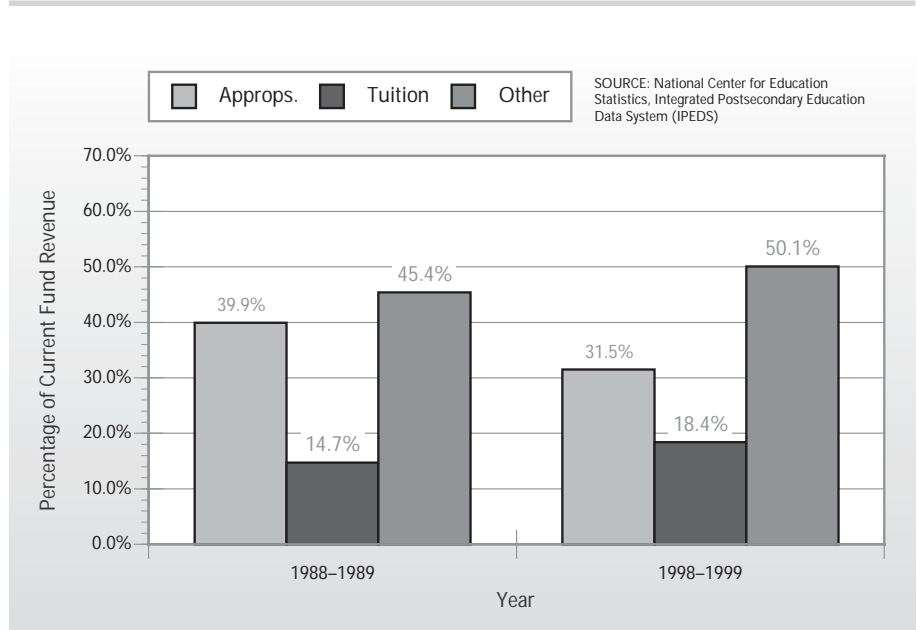


FIGURE 2B: SOURCES OF CURRENT FUND REVENUE, ALL PUBLIC FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS, 1988-89 AND 1998-99

tracts, revenues from university endowments and private gifts and contracts showed the largest rates of increase between 1988–89 and 1998–99—even larger than that of tuition and fees. During this period, mean endowment income at four-year public colleges and universities increased 133.3 percent, while mean revenues from private gifts and contracts increased 110.9 percent (U.S. Department of Education 1991, 2000).

Given the unprecedented economic growth that dominated the last half of the 1990s and the arguments for increased public investment in higher education, why are public colleges and universities on a path of increasing privatization? During the period summarized above, a number of discrete developments converged, resulting in the unintended consequence of reduced fiscal priority for higher education. These developments include:

<sup>2</sup> AASCU member institutions are used here as a proxy for non-flagship public four-year institutions (primarily Master's/Comprehensive I and II and Doctoral II institutions, according to the Carnegie Foundation's Classification of Institutions of Higher Education).

- Increasing demand for public higher education. As noted above, an increasing economic reliance on knowledge and information has prompted a significant rise in the demand for higher education. For more than two decades, enrollment at public four-year colleges and universities has gradually risen, and projections for the coming decade show the total climbing further (National Center for Education Statistics 1998). Recent growth, however, has been uneven—in areas of the West and Southwest, for example, demand is outstripping institutional capacity. Moreover, nearly all of the recent growth has been among historically underserved and underrepresented populations (racial/ethnic minorities, first-generation college students), who bring a number of different academic and co-curricular needs to the campus. The combination of these elements poses an array of daunting challenges—fiscal and programmatic—to many institutions.
- State fiscal pressures/competition for resources. At the same time that demand for public higher education was on the rise, states were plagued with recession-induced budget shortfalls and rapidly growing demands from other services, particularly Medicaid and elementary/secondary education. In fact, Medicaid surpassed higher education as the second-largest claimant on state general fund spending in Fiscal Year 1993, a change that has not been reversed (aascu 1998, “State Issues Digest”). (See Figure 3.) This situation owes to higher education’s status as the largest single discretionary item in states’ budgets. Because of this fact and institutions’ ability to tap alternative revenue sources (such as student tuition), policymakers have tended to lavish spending on higher education in strong economic times and cut disproportionately in leaner times. This dynamic was coined the “balance wheel effect” by the late Hal Hovey, and has been borne out in both rudimentary and more rigorous correlation analyses of change in tuition and state appropriations levels (aascu 2000). (See Figure 4.)
- Developing market forces and philosophies. The notion of higher education as an industry has grown considerably in

recent times, fueled by breathtaking developments in information technologies and in the proliferation of for-profit providers making use of them. As a result, the views of “student as consumer” and “degree as commodity” have also become more prevalent. From a policymaker standpoint, this has meant growing calls to “run higher education more like a business” and increasing emphasis on institution/private sector partnerships and entrepreneurial activity by institutions (Zemsky 1996).

- Shift in public/private good emphasis with respect to higher education. For many years, the policy world has debated whether the pursuit and attainment of a higher education is primarily a public good (benefiting the society as a whole) or a private good (benefiting the student receiving the education). While few would dispute the proposition that a college degree generates public and individual benefits, some contend that the public benefit aspect of higher education is given short shrift, and cite a host of statistics on positive social correlates of education (such as those cited above) to make their point. Others, however, view the public good argument as a marginal consideration, and point to comparative employment and earnings data in arguing that the lion’s share of higher education’s benefit inures to the individual. This division was apparent in the 1998 Public Agenda survey, particularly between public and private sector leaders. For example, nearly two-thirds of the business leaders participating in the survey agreed with the statement that “Since students reap the benefits of going to college, they and their families should be responsible for paying most of its costs.” However, fewer than half of the academic and government leaders participating in the survey agreed with that statement (Immerwahr 1999).

While the debate on this point will likely continue far into the future, there is a relatively clear sense within the higher education community that the private benefit perspective is ascendant. Zemsky (1996) aptly makes this observation:

“Whether it is deliberate or simply an accommodation to strained resources, the new message is that the primary return on investment in education is individual, rather than collective; that the public good is synonymous with the choices and the well-being of those individuals; and that those who benefit directly should assume the greatest share of the cost.”

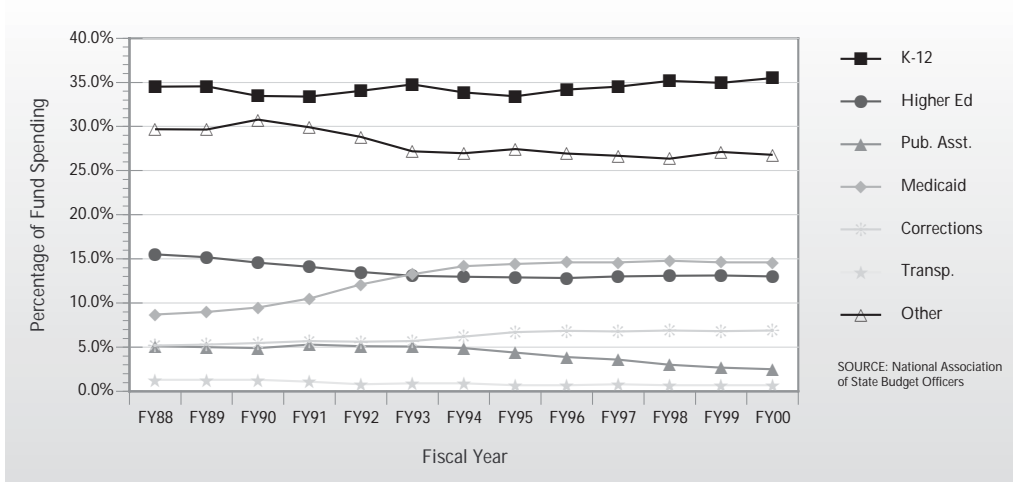


FIGURE 3: SHARE OF STATE GENERAL FUND SPENDING, FY88 TO FY2000

Such a statement prompts the following observations:

- It is entirely possible that the ascendancy of the private good worldview may be due, at least in part, to the advocacy strategies of colleges and universities themselves. To the extent that institutions have used “learn more, earn more” and related arguments to promote themselves to policymakers and other external stakeholders, they may have unintentionally underemphasized the public benefits of their enterprise and contributed to the view that those doing the earning should do more of the paying—a prime example of unintended consequences unleashed.
- At some level, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to neatly separate the public and private benefits of higher education. For instance, would not an aggregation of private benefit (i.e., a large number of persons enjoying increased earnings related to increased educational attainment) constitute a public benefit (i.e., improved ability to provide a social safety net, national defense, etc.)? Thus, it would seem that the appropriate balance of funding responsibility for public higher education needs to recognize a modicum of inseparability between the public and private benefits of higher education.

### Implications of the Public/Private Paradox

The gradual privatization of an increasingly public good raises a number of concerns. These include: the impact on student access to and the quality of public higher education institutions, leadership and management concerns, and broader economic and social issues.

### STUDENT ACCESS

Since the 1970s, the federal government has played a major role in broadening access to higher education through the provision of student financial aid. The Pell Grant has been the aid program most heavily relied upon to ensure access for the nation's neediest students. Unfortunately, the Pell Grant has lost significant purchasing power over the past several years. Between

1989–90 and 1999–2000, the constant (inflation-adjusted) dollar value of the maximum Pell Grant increased only \$27. The purchasing power of the maximum Pell award therefore decreased from 49.2 percent to 38.6 percent of the annual cost of attendance at a public four-year institution (The College Board 2000).

States' end of the bargain in broadening and maintaining access has traditionally been to keep costs as low as possible at their public institutions. Over the past several years, however, state appropriations for higher education have shrunk as a proportion of public college revenues. Research has demonstrated that public colleges and universities rely heavily on tuition to fill funding gaps that result from diminished state appropriations (AASCU 1997). Raising tuition is arguably the easiest mechanism whereby institutions can increase their total revenue. Unfortunately, this practice shifts the burden for public college costs to students and threatens broad student access. This trend, if it continues, threatens to “price out” some students from receiving a public college education.

As it is, the chance to attend college in America varies tremendously based on family income. According to Mortenson, in 1997, students from families in America's bottom income quartile had a 33.6 percent chance of attending college. The chances for college attendance for students from the second, third, and top income quartiles were 54.9 percent, 66.9 percent, and 82.7 percent, respectively (Mortenson 1999, “Educational opportunity...”). To compound already disparate college opportunities, the tuition increases of the 1990s hit low-income families the hardest from the perspective of raising the relative cost of college attendance. Since 1990, the cost of attending a public four-year college or university as a share of family income has risen more than 10 percentage points for low-income families. For middle- and high-income families, the cost of attending a public four-year college or university as a share of family income has remained nearly constant (The College Board 2000). (See Figure 5 on the following page.)

Fortunately, college participation rates for students from low-income families did increase somewhat throughout the 1990s, growing from 20 percent in 1992, to 27.5 percent in 1998 (Mortenson 2000, “College participation...”). This is particularly encouraging in light of the increasing percentage of high school graduates that are pursuing a postsecondary education today.

This trend, however, could be short-lived. Public college and university tuition in many states increased at relatively low rates during the late 1990s due to the fiscal health of the states. A number of states approved measures during this period to freeze, roll back, or cap tuition increases at public colleges and universities. Economic times appear to be

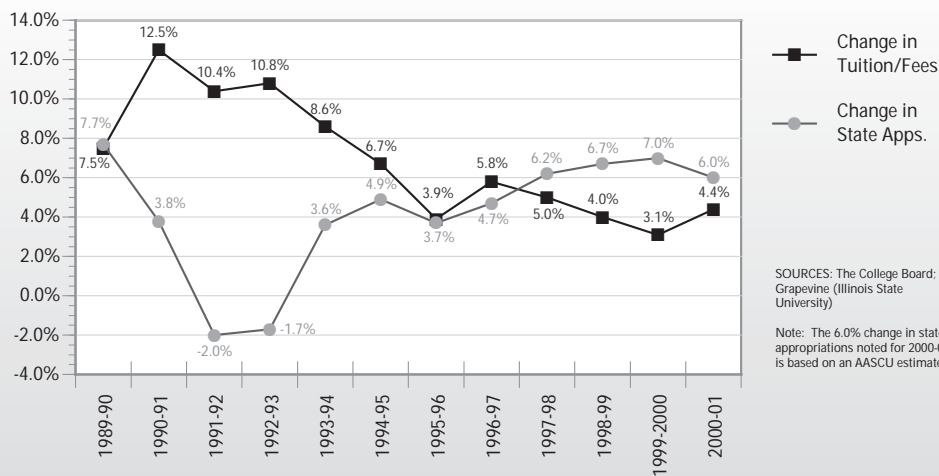


FIGURE 4: CHANGE IN RESIDENT UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT CHARGES AND STATE APPROPRIATIONS, PUBLIC COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES, 1989-90 TO 2000-01

changing, however, and a number of states are already ratcheting up tuition, underscoring the linkage between higher education appropriations and states' economic health (Selingo 2000).

In recent years, colleges and universities have been picking up some of the slack in government funding by increasing expenditures for institutionally-based student grants and scholarships. According to Redd and Reindl (1999), from fy90 to fy96, public four-year institutions increased their institutional aid spending by 71.8 percent in constant (inflation-adjusted) dollars (from \$1 billion to \$1.7 billion). However, an

increasing proportion of both need- and non-need-based institutional grant dollars went to students from middle- and upper-income families throughout the 1990s.

State financial aid provided to students during the 1990s also experienced a shift, with an increasing proportion of dollars being directed toward non-need-based programs and away from need-based programs. Following the inception of Georgia's hope Scholarship in 1993, a number of other states followed suit in establishing merit-based scholarship programs with rather broad eligibility nets. Need-based aid to undergraduate students in Georgia has been completely eliminated since hope's birth. In the six other states that began funding broad merit-based aid programs between 1992 and 1998—Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, New Mexico, and South Carolina—the percentage of total undergraduate aid committed to need-based awards diminished from 55 percent (in 1992–93) to 31 percent in 1998–99, the most recent year for which data are available (nassgap 1993, 1999).

The combination of these trends does not bode well for ensuring that public four-year colleges and universities are accessible to all academically qualified students who would attend them.

#### QUALITY CONCERNS

In addition to threatening broad student access, diminished government funding for public higher education has the potential to undermine the quality of public education institutions around the nation. For those familiar with the higher education arena, the *U.S. News & World Report* college rankings simultaneously represent a much-loved (for those who make the "Top 50") and greatly resented (for those who don't) annual assessment of the nation's leading colleges and universities. Interestingly, though perhaps not surprisingly, *U.S. News's* list of Top 50 national colleges and universities aligns remarkably well with the nation's best fundraising institutions. In fact, seventeen of the twenty colleges and universities (or 85 percent) receiving the most donations in 1999 are on *U.S. News's* 2001 list of Top 50

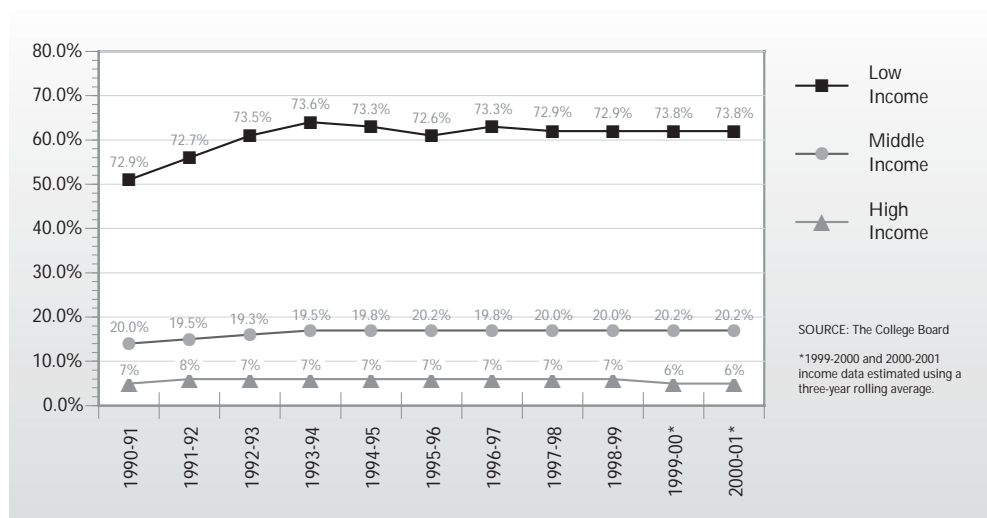


FIGURE 5: COST OF ATTENDANCE AT PUBLIC FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS AS A PERCENTAGE OF FAMILY INCOME, 1990-91 TO 2000-2001\*

National Colleges and Universities (Hall 2000; *U.S. News Online* 2001).

Although many higher education leaders bemoan an inappropriate emphasis on resources or "inputs" in the *U.S. News* college rankings, it is a simple and somewhat harsh reality that those institutions with the greatest resources have the most to spend on a variety of inputs that impact educational quality. Those inputs include faculty, and technology and technology training. In order for public higher education institutions to remain competitive with one another and with their private counterparts, it follows that a sufficient resource base must be maintained.

According to a recent comparison of faculty salaries at public and private colleges and universities, public colleges are losing leverage in the battle to recruit and retain top scholars. King (2001) reports that:

- At institutions with Research I Carnegie classifications, the pay gap for full professors at public versus private institutions increased from \$1,300 in 1979–1980 to \$21,700 in 1997–98. Salary disparities for associate and assistant professors at Research I institutions also increased, from \$900 to \$8,000 for associate professors and from \$900 to \$6,700 for assistant professors during the same period (see Figure 6).
- Salary disparities for full, associate, and assistant professors at Research II, Doctoral I, and Doctoral II institutions followed similar patterns, becoming more pronounced between 1979–80 and 1997–98.
- Public institutions in some states in particular have lost salary leverage, due to higher education funding patterns over the past two decades. Arizona is one example. During the 1997–99 period, two of the state's three public universities (Arizona State University and the University of Arizona) ranked among the top twenty public universities for non-competitive salary rankings. Average salaries for full professors at ASU and UA were \$21,800 and \$21,000 less, respectively, than their private-institution counterparts. Additionally, between 1979–80 and 1997–98, all three

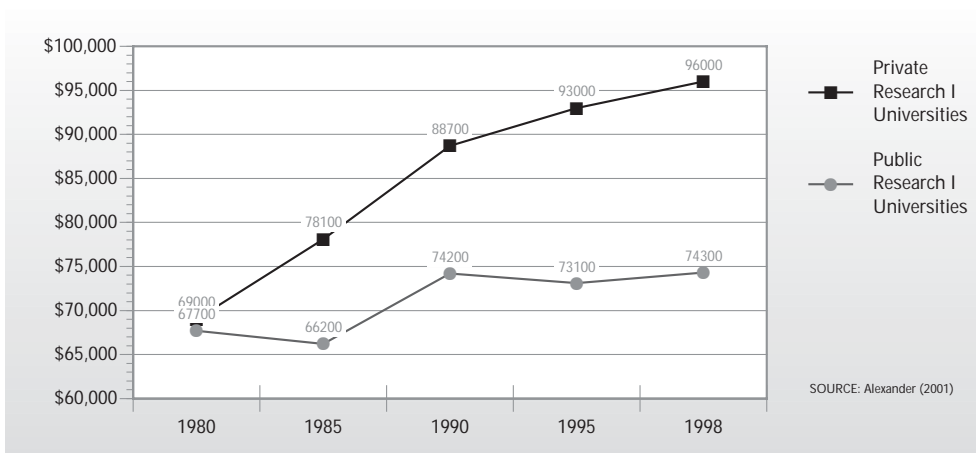


FIGURE 6: AVERAGE FACULTY SALARIES FOR FULL PROFESSORS AT PUBLIC AND PRIVATE RESEARCH I UNIVERSITIES, 1980-1988 (1988 DOLLARS)

revenue streams through a variety of mechanisms, including individual gifts, corporate and industry partnerships, and the creation of business/entrepreneurial ventures. Additionally, state legislatures have begun to provide incentives to encourage public colleges and universities to seek increased revenues outside the state appropriations process. These incentives take a variety of forms, including matching gift or endowment programs, tax breaks for corporations and individuals to contribute to colleges and universities, and financing for higher education/corporate partnerships.

of Arizona's public universities experienced dollar value losses of between \$17,500 and \$20,000 when their average full professor salaries were compared to those of private school peers.

Technology is another arena in which institutional resources will have a significant impact on higher educational quality, innovation, and growth. Technology expenditures in higher education have increased significantly but sporadically in recent years (McCollum 1999). In many ways, the potential costs of technology for higher education remain unknown. Still, the capacity to purchase the latest technology available, as well as technology support services, including training for faculty and staff, will require tremendous resource commitments in the future. Additionally, the technology advantages enjoyed by institutions with greater resources—such as Internet2 access and lower ratios between users and technology support staff—threaten to further broaden the inter-institutional disparities that already exist.

When discussing the quality-funding relationship, the delicate subjects of higher education costs and efficiency also enter into play. Higher education has not historically excelled at justifying its costs, perhaps because it has not excelled at clearly and simply defining its products or its outcomes. Therefore, the recent re-examination of public higher education expenditures resulting from budget cuts and diminishing state appropriations has unquestionably been constructive. Ultimately, however, the level of state support these institutions continue to receive will tremendously affect the quality of the efforts that public colleges and universities pursue, as well as the populations of students they serve. This is particularly true for public comprehensive institutions (e.g., aascu institutions), whose funding sources have historically been less diversified, and whose capacity to raise revenues from other sources may be more limited.

#### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT CONCERNS

As a result of the reduced public funding share, state colleges and universities are increasingly looking to the private sector for financing. These institutions are seeking to supplement their

Current examples of such efforts are listed below.

- The State of *Maryland* operates a number of university-run business incubators, and provides University System of Maryland faculty members pay incentives to engage in research for commercial interests. The state will match whatever companies pay faculty members for their research, up to \$70,000 annually (Schmidt 2000, "Public universities...").
- In December 2000, *California* Governor Gray Davis pledged \$75 million to establish three research institutes run by a partnership between the University of California System and private industry. To be eligible for start-up and continuing funding, each of the institutes must raise private funds equivalent to twice their state match (Van Der Werf 2000).
- In January 2000, *Wisconsin* Governor Tommy Thompson requested that the legislature allocate \$317 million for research centers to promote the growth of a biotechnology-industry hub in Madison, where the state's flagship institution is located (Schmidt 2000, "Public universities...").
- The *Kansas* Board of Regents is currently lobbying its legislature to create a state tax credit for corporate contributions to a new, system-wide endowment the Board is working to create. The Board plans to use funds from the endowment for higher education needs and projects that arise, so that it is not bound to go through the legislature/state appropriations process for funding (CJOnline.com 2001).
- During his campaign in *North Dakota*, newly elected Governor John Hoeven pledged to create a \$4 million fund that would be used to match federal and private grants obtained by state colleges and universities (Hebel et al. 2001).
- In *New York*, City University of New York (cuny) officials are asking the legislature to create a program that would match donations—up to \$400—by the state's college-educated employees to their alma maters (Hebel et al. 2001).

For years, raising funds from individual donors has served as an essential means of supplementing public college and university budgets, and—so long as donors are relatively flexible with their gifts—funds earned through private contributions can be used to address a broad array of institutional needs. While fundraising was once the forte of private institutions of higher education, public institutions have more recently excelled in the development arena.

An examination of the results from two fundraising incentive programs illustrates that these programs can help bolster public higher education's fundraising efforts.

- *Florida* initiated its Eminent Scholar and Major Gift Challenge Grant Programs in 1979 and 1985, respectively. Both programs channel funds into the Trust Fund for Major Gifts to fund endowments for the public universities that raise corresponding private funds. The programs have been so successful that the state has had difficulty meeting its funding obligations to institutions. For that reason, university leaders expressed a desire to tighten program regulations in 2000 (Florida Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability 1996; Hebel *et al.* 2000).
- *Kentucky's* Research Challenge and Regional University Excellence Trust Fund Endowment Programs, which were created as a part of the Postsecondary Education Improvement Act of 1997, have also been successful in spurring institutional fundraising. The Kentucky Council for Postsecondary Education (2000) reports that for the 1998-2000 funding cycle, the state's two research universities and six regional institutions raised—and therefore received from the state—\$109 million. This total represented 99 percent of the matching funds set aside for colleges and universities through these programs.

While institutional fundraising and external partnering bring obvious benefits, these endeavors also entail significant costs. According to the most recent figures available from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), higher education institutions spend approximately 16 cents to raise each private dollar (1990). Perhaps more importantly, policymakers must recognize the very real differences in capacity among public four-year institutions in this realm.

#### Differential Capacity to Garner Private Dollars

In public higher education fundraising, it appears obvious that some public colleges and universities—primarily research and doctoral institutions/flagship campuses—fare better in raising funds, from both individuals and corporations. Florida's Challenge Grant Programs provide an illustration of the disparities in institutional capacity to raise private funds (Florida Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability 1996):

- Between 1979 and 1995, Florida's ten public universities raised \$219 million in private donations as a part of the Eminent Scholar and Major Gift Challenge Grant Programs. The state provided a \$40.4 million match in funds.

- The six public universities in Florida classified as Research or Doctoral institutions (University of Florida, Florida State University, University of South Florida, Florida Atlantic University, University of Central Florida, and Florida International University) raised approximately 84 percent of the private funds received during this period, or an average of \$26.6 million each.
- Florida's four public Master's/Comprehensive institutions (Florida A&M University, University of West Florida, University of North Florida, and Florida Gulf Coast University) raised the remaining 16 percent of the funds described above, or an average of \$7.33 million each.
- Although the University of Florida alone raised 43.3 percent of the funds received through June 30, 1995, even without factoring in those dollars, Florida's Research and Doctoral institutions on average raised more than twice their Master's/Comprehensive counterparts.
- More recent program statistics bear out this pattern as well, but the divide is more marked. Between July 1, 1997 and December 31, 2000, public Research and Doctoral institutions in Florida received an average of \$78.3 million in donations detailed under the Eminent Scholars and Major Gifts programs. Master's/Comprehensive institutions raised an average of \$14.7 million during the same period. Average state payouts (gift trust fund disbursements) to Florida's public institutions through the Eminent Scholars and Major Gifts programs during this period averaged \$26.5 million at Research and Doctoral institutions and \$3.1 million at Master's/Comprehensive institutions (Staff correspondence from oppaga 2000). (See Figure 7.)

There are at least a couple of explanations for the disparities in fundraising between public Research and Doctoral and Master's/Comprehensive institutions. One is that the resource bases of Research and Doctoral institutions have historically been more diversified. Unlike Master's/Comprehensive institutions, which rely on tuition and fees as their second largest revenue source (next to state appropriations), federal research dollars formerly constituted the second largest source of revenues for research institutions. The slowing of federal research dollars and state appropriations in the late 1980s spurred a number of state institutions into more aggressively pursuing private dollars (Pulley 1999).

Staffing resources constitute a second reason for the capacity of Research and Doctoral institutions to raise more private dollars. Research and Doctoral institutions often have much larger fundraising enterprises than Master's/Comprehensive universities. This translates into a larger and more diversified approach to pursuing private resources. Increased staff size and diversity typically bring more distinct fundraising responsibilities (such as corporate relations, planned giving, and international development) and greater individual expertise. This expertise has become increasingly important as donors contribute to higher education in a variety of ways, each with its own complexities and legal contingencies.

For example, a growing number of donors are offering colleges gifts of illiquid or restricted stock (Giorgianni and Hall 2000). It takes much greater expertise to evaluate these kinds of gifts, and to decide if acceptance is worth the financial risk (Giorgianni and Hall 2000; Charities need a higher level... 2000). Venture capital funds represent another arena where significant expertise and resources are needed. Not surprisingly, it was investment in these types of funds that institutions credited

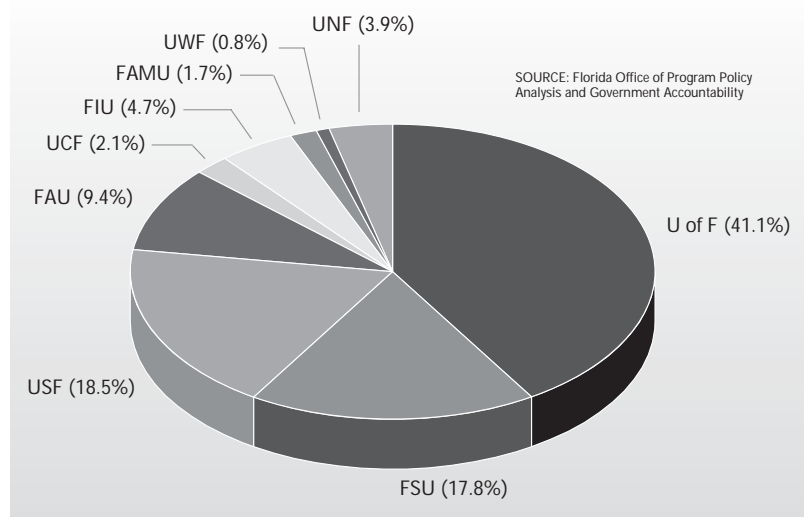


FIGURE 7: PERCENTAGE OF PAYOUTS TO INSTITUTIONS, FLORIDA CHALLENGE GRANT PROGRAM, 7/01/97 THROUGH 12/31/00

for the amazing return rates (exceeding 40 percent) on top-earning endowments in fiscal year 2000.<sup>3</sup> Due to the complexity of managing venture capital funds and the well-established connections it often requires to gain access to the best funds, it is difficult for many smaller institutions to compete in this arena (Lively and Street 2000).

What do these distinctions mean for policymakers? Should more incentive programs to raise private dollars for higher education be initiated? Do they represent poor public policy? Overall, incentive programs for public higher education fundraising are not a bad idea, and they appear to have been effective in stimulating fundraising efforts. It is extremely important, however, that policymakers recognize the distinctions between, and the varying capacity of, different public institutions to generate private funds. The assumption that institutions are on an equal playing field (*i.e.*, offering equal rewards and incentives for all types of institutions) could otherwise widen existing gaps in public institutions' revenues and relative wealth.

#### Differential Capacity to Form Corporate Partnerships

Just as Research and Doctoral institutions seem to have greater capacity to raise private funds, these institutions are often in a better position to leverage partnerships with corporations and industry. Why? Because so many of these efforts center around

research. Public Research and Doctoral institutions have been receiving funding for their research efforts for more than a half-century, largely from the federal government. Research remains a hallmark of these institutions today, and places them at a distinct advantage over their public four-year peers in competing for corporate research dollars. Much of the funding that states are providing for the development of university-corporate partnerships is going to research and flagship institutions (Schmidt 2000, "Public universities..."). Community and technical colleges' share of state funding is also on the rise. Among the various sectors of higher education, community and technical colleges have generally received the largest increases in state support for the past few years. Some of the significant increases to community college systems are the result of economic and workforce development initiatives (Schmidt 2000, "State higher-education..."). Once again, if policymakers are going to create incentive programs for public higher education to partner with the private sector, they need to consider the long-term financing implications of these programs for all the public colleges and universities in their respective states.

#### Influence of External Linkages on Public Higher Education Institutions and Their Missions

The conditions, or "strings," potentially attached to private dollars present another concern regarding the increase in the private financing of higher education. Both individuals and corporate/industry partners can place parameters on funding opportunities that constitute an ill fit with institutions' missions and/or current operations. Higher education leaders must therefore be careful to assess potential gifts and private financing opportunities to determine their fit with institutional mission and values. Sometimes, the opportunity to leverage private funds may itself present the temptation for public colleges and universities to reach outside the bounds of their present course or priorities to obtain additional financing.

- *Shift from Basic to Applied Research*—One of the concerns surrounding the growing corporate investment in higher education is that corporate dollars will leverage a shift toward applied research and away from basic research (Desruisseaux 1999; Schmidt 2000, "Public universities..."). Most corporations that invest in higher education do so for the potential practical outcomes of these collaborations, such as the products and patents that may result. In an environment in which colleges and universities become increasingly dependent on corporate dollars, will faculty members lose academic freedom—or the freedom to pursue research that advances their field or discipline—due to potentially greater fiscal returns for more applied research?
- *Balance of Public Service and Corporate/Private Interest*—What impact will increased private linkages have on the public service component of the higher education mission? Most students of American higher education are familiar

<sup>3</sup> Most of these returns were at private institutions, but two notable exceptions were the University of Michigan and the University of Virginia.

with its historical three-pronged mission of research, teaching, and public service. Although the public service component of colleges and universities is somewhat vague by definition, few would deny its historical significance for the nation as a whole. In light of state governments' diminishing responsibility for public higher education costs, what will become of the public service mission of state colleges and universities? Will these institutions continue to serve their publics in the ways that they have, or will their service roles shift to accommodate new and changing sources of financing? Also, do states' current emphasis on economic development and industry growth—evident through numerous policy incentives—presume that these interests effectively reflect state populations' primary service needs? If not, will institutions have sufficient time and resources to address other public service needs while simultaneously pursuing additional private funding sources?

- *Influence on the Curriculum*—According to Veysey (1965) and Rudolph (1962), the dual forces of education and practical training have existed at odds in academe for at least a century. However, Altbach (1998) states that the last two decades have birthed an increasing emphasis on vocationalism in higher education around the globe. Both students and employers have voiced their expectations that a university education should have relevance for and more directly prepare students for a variety of jobs. The growing link between corporations and higher education has the potential to advance this trend, as well as to place additional academic emphasis on the sciences.

In such an environment, what will happen to the liberal arts? Will they become a voluntary element of a baccalaureate degree? If so, will the arts and humanities continue to be worth the “costs” they represent for public institutions?

- *Expectations for Higher Education Leadership*—An additional ramification of higher education financing trends is the impact these realities will have on the organization of higher education institutions and the men and women who lead them. A decade ago, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* reported that colleges and universities were increasingly tapping proven fundraisers—often former advancement or development officers—as institutional CEOs (McMillan 1991). This occurrence was more frequent, however, at private institutions. Today, fundraising has become an increasingly critical skill for *all* college and university presidents. Are all public university presidents and chancellors, however, adequately prepared to meet these evolving demands? Additionally, are all public and private institutions equally well-equipped to attract and hire proven, highly successful fundraisers as their leaders?

## BROADER ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONCERNS

### Intellectual Property Issues

Intellectual property and patent issues represent another concern surrounding recent financing trends. Who will—and

should—technically own the rights to the fruits of university-industry collaborations—faculty or corporate investors? Should the institutions that house and support this research primarily benefit from its outcomes, or should these benefits inure to the state governments that provide incentives for business-higher education partnerships?

Currently, large, well-established companies hold the licenses for approximately 90 percent of the products conceived in university laboratories (Van Der Werf and Blumenstyk 2001). If institutions, however, are increasingly investing more resources into these partnerships, it seems they should generate appropriate returns. These returns should not only be reinvested in continuing collaborations but should also benefit and improve the quality of the entire educational enterprise. Regardless, the incentive and legal structures that are put in place to govern business-higher education collaborations will have a major impact on the continuing nature of these relationships, and the relative power and prosperity of faculty, colleges and universities, and corporations.

### Ramifications of a Market-driven System

Perhaps the largest concern in considering the shifting funding base for higher education is where that trend may ultimately lead. As different funding sources increase their investment in higher education, it follows that their expectations will increase also. Some critics have cited students' and families' increasing share of higher education costs as one of the reasons for their enhanced expectations. Corporations' and philanthropists' respective shares of total public higher education revenues are also growing. What will these and other groups expect in return for their investments?

In addition, how may an increased private funding base for public higher education impact states' abilities to regulate colleges and universities? Already, the growth trend in states' use of performance funding and budgeting programs seems counter-intuitive to the diminishing share of public higher education costs that they support. Will a future attenuation of state appropriations significantly lessen states' abilities to regulate public colleges and universities, or at least the most wealthy among them? If so, who will regulate America's public universities?

Finally, what will happen if a search for funds becomes the primary drive of public higher education? What will the market emphasize in higher education? Knowledge for knowledge's sake, or practical/profitable knowledge? Access for all students, or buying the best? The use of technology for convenience or for enhanced learning/learning applications? And, if the market emphasizes different things than those that higher education institutions traditionally have, will that necessarily be negative?

### The Road Ahead

While it is essential for policymakers and higher education leaders to understand recent changes in higher education finance and place them in context, perhaps more important is the question of what lies ahead for the funding of state colleges and universities. The possible ramifications of continuing privatization of these institutions, as described above, underscore the importance of addressing these issues through careful deliberation,



rather than by default. Such deliberations, however, must be informed by an awareness of the opportunities and constraints of the emerging policy environment. This environment will be shaped by the convergence of:

- States' economic and fiscal circumstances;
- Prevailing political realities; and
- Consideration of different approaches to higher education finance policy.

Simply accounting for these factors, however, will not be enough—public higher education's stakeholders must also be prepared to recognize the interplay between and among these factors.

#### ECONOMIC AND FISCAL CIRCUMSTANCES

As the preceding discussion indicates, short- and long-term fiscal challenges at the state level have contributed substantially to the ongoing financing shift at state colleges and universities. Looking ahead to the future, it does not appear that these challenges will ease; they are in fact likely to squeeze institutions and systems even harder.

The current competitive dynamics of state budgeting will continue, and will intensify in the event of a general economic slowdown. Specifically, the resurgence of health care cost increases and the concomitant rise in Medicaid spending, combined with policymaker emphasis on K-12 education and other priorities, relegates higher education to secondary focus. This scenario is already playing out in a number of states (especially in the South), where abruptly slowing revenues and greater-than-anticipated Medicaid spending have precipitated belt-tightening measures that include smaller funding increases and even cutbacks for public colleges and universities. A prime illustration of this comes from Alabama, where policymakers debated whether to cover a shortfall in the state's education trust fund by sharing the burden between K-12 and higher education or by shifting the burden to higher education. Nationally, the appropriations outlook for the year ahead is considerably less optimistic than last year's forecast and the rate of increase for tuition is again on the rise, which strongly suggests that the "balance wheel" notion is alive and well. The emerging reality supports Hovey's (1999) prediction that:

*"Given the fiscal environment predicted [here] for the next decade, the fiscal outlook for state support of higher education is not good from the perspective of advocates for increased state spending for higher education. Use of higher education as a balance wheel will continue."*

Additionally, most states face looming structural imbalances in their revenue-generating systems, especially given the changing nature of the economy and the population. As states make their way into the 21st Century, many of them are relying on tax systems firmly rooted in the economic and demographic bases of the 20th Century (and in some cases, the 19th Century). Some of the primary revenue risks for states include:

- The continuing economic shift from goods production to service/information production will adversely impact states that rely heavily on sales and use taxes, as most of

these systems exempt a broad range of goods and services that are increasingly being consumed.

- The emergence of e-commerce also places sales tax-dependent states at risk, since existing legal precedent places remote sales lacking nexus (physical presence of the vendor in a given state) beyond the reach of taxation.
- The aging of the population is likely to bring increased consumption of many goods and services not reached by sales taxes of many states (food, prescription medications, medical services, etc.). Moreover, older citizens are the principal beneficiaries of a range of tax relief programs (homestead exemptions for property taxes, "circuit breakers" for income taxes, etc.), owing to the fact that the elderly were one of the poorest segments of the population a generation ago. This is no longer the case, but political realities may make it extremely difficult for policymakers to substantially change or discontinue these programs (AASCU 1999).
- States that rely heavily on personal income taxes may have to deal with a significant amount of volatility in the collection of these revenues. A recent analysis by the Rockefeller Institute of Government found a large degree of elasticity in income tax revenues, which means that positive and negative changes in economic activity are magnified in income tax receipts. This volatility is especially pronounced in systems that are reliant on capital gains and other non-wage revenue, as evidenced by the revenue impact of recent swings in the stock market (Boyd 2000).

As a result, analysts such as Hovey (1999) have diagnosed a structural imbalance between state revenue and spending patterns, with as many as 39 states posting a structural deficit (*i.e.*, systemic imbalance between revenues and expenditures). (See Figure 8 on the following page.) The bottom line: the "balance wheel" concept for higher education funding may become even more prominent in the years ahead if states do not address the mounting disconnect between income and outlays. Accordingly, it is critical that campus and system leaders gain at least a basic level of familiarity with the potential strengths and weaknesses of their state's revenue and expenditure patterns, as such knowledge will be necessary for informed strategic planning.

#### PREVAILING POLITICAL REALITIES

Because taxing and spending decisions are inevitably made within a political context, it is therefore essential for the higher education community to have a clear sense of the constraints (real or perceived) facing their elected leaders. While the political and other ingredients of what John Kingdon, a noted political scientist, refers to as the "policy soup" vary considerably from state to state, some of the most potent are broadly shared:

##### Voter Sentiment on Budget and Tax Issues

Though nearly all states have significantly increased their overall spending over the past several years, they have also approved substantial tax cuts, ostensibly to satisfy voter demand for lower tax burdens. Additionally, there still appears to be a relatively

Figure 8: State/Local Surplus or Shortfall as Percentage of Baseline Revenues (Projections for Year 8 (2005))

Iowa	2.7%	North Carolina	-3.7%
Nebraska	1.5%	United States	-3.8%
North Dakota	0.9%	Utah	-4.3%
Ohio	0.9%	South Carolina	-4.6%
Kentucky	0.5%	Vermont	-4.6%
Connecticut	0.4%	Alabama	-4.8%
Michigan	0.4%	South Dakota	-5.0%
New York	0.3%	Indiana	-5.7%
Maine	0.1%	Montana	-5.7%
Minnesota	0.1%	Georgia	-6.5%
Massachusetts	0.0%	Washington	-6.7%
Oregon	-0.1%	Virginia	-6.8%
Illinois	-0.4%	Colorado	-7.0%
Pennsylvania	-1.3%	Maryland	-7.1%
West Virginia	-1.4%	Texas	-7.8%
Wisconsin	-1.5%	New Hampshire	-8.2%
Missouri	-1.8%	Florida	-8.8%
Kansas	-1.9%	Tennessee	-9.1%
Mississippi	-2.0%	Arizona	-10.5%
Oklahoma	-2.1%	Wyoming	-10.6%
Arkansas	-2.3%	New Mexico	-12.0%
Louisiana	-2.5%	Idaho	-13.2%
California	-2.8%	Hawaii	-15.1%
Rhode Island	-2.9%	Alaska	-16.4%
Delaware	-3.0%	Nevada	-18.3%
New Jersey	-3.3%		

SOURCE: State Policy Research, Inc.

strong anti-tax sentiment among the nation's electorate, judging from the number of "no new tax" pledges issued by congressional and statehouse candidates and the number of revenue- and expenditure-limiting measures facing voters and lawmakers in recent years. A key example of this trend and its impact on higher education emerges in Washington State, where voters decided to dramatically limit state and local revenue-raising by passing Initiative 695 in 1998 and Initiative 701 in 2000. The resulting fiscal squeeze has prompted Governor Gary Locke to offer a higher education funding plan that would allow for a tuition increase of up to 40 percent over the next six years (Ammons 2001). As the initiative and referendum movement increasingly turns its attention to fiscal issues, state higher education funding could become more vulnerable.

#### Term Limits

For states operating under term limits, fiscal policy-making can be particularly challenging. While there remains relatively little empirical evidence regarding the impact of term limits on the legislative process, anecdotal evidence from lawmakers and their staffs suggests several effects of the time caps. These include reduced efficiency in legislative deliberations and operations (with staffers remarking that "the same debates occur year after year"), a relative lack of interest in long-term issues (since those issues will outlast lawmakers' abbreviated tenures), and less

focused attention to issues stemming from increased bill volume (Mahtesian 1999; National Conference of State Legislatures 2000). In such a setting, discussions of public higher education finance may only recede further on the policy agenda.

In sum, the prevailing fiscal and political currents do not augur well for a reclamation of the public's financial stake in public higher education. While it is extremely important to note that the nation's state colleges and universities are still far from general privatization, environmental factors suggest that the gradual erosion of this public stake is likely to continue.

#### STRUCTURAL CHANGES

As this public-private financing shift has unfolded, various proposals to substantially change the current institutional financing structure have made their way onto the policy agenda. These proposals range in scale from incremental to wholesale, but all tackle the question of how—or whether—the relationship between states and their public colleges and universities should be reconfigured. A couple of the relatively recent entrants into this discussion include:

##### Charter/Compact Colleges and Universities

One of higher education's responses to the volatility of state funding in the 1990s was the development of compacts between state leaders and college/university systems. Generally speaking, a compact would guarantee a specified level of funding for the colleges and universities over a given period of time, in exchange for a pledge to hold tuition increases to a certain level, effect a given amount of management efficiencies, or reach some similar administrative target. States that have experimented with this approach include Maine and California.

The notion of the charter college or university simply expands that premise to make it a more integral and lasting part of the state's higher education funding structure. As defined by Berdahl and MacTaggart (2000) the charter college is a public institution that has been delegated substantial authority to manage its affairs under a guaranteed block grant from the state, subject to achievement of specified performance objectives. This concept has seen relatively little real-world application, with the notable exception of St. Mary's College of Maryland. In 1992, the Maryland General Assembly designated St. Mary's a "Public Honors College," granting it a lump sum budget and exemption from a range of state regulations (procurement, personnel, capital development) in exchange for a commitment to increase tuition but hold low-income students harmless through increased financial aid. Other states that have considered or are considering the charter concept (or a variant of it) include:

- *Massachusetts*—In 1997, the Chancellor of the Board of Higher Education, Stanley Koplik, offered a proposal to create "Vanguard Colleges" in the state. Under Koplik's plan, campuses accepting the Vanguard designation would agree to exceed performance benchmarks set by the Board of Higher Education and would in turn receive "greater operational freedom, fiscal autonomy, and faculty benefits." The proposal was short-lived, however, because its terms

included the replacement of faculty tenure with renewable one-, three-, and five-year contracts, and the elimination of collective bargaining (Berdahl and MacTaggart 2000).

- *Virginia*—In its final report (February 2000), the Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission on Higher Education proposed the establishment of Institutional Performance Agreements (ipas), which would be initiated by the colleges and universities, negotiated with the relevant state agencies, and ultimately approved by the General Assembly. The ipa would be six years in length, and would furnish institutions "adequate, stable, and predictable" funding and managerial and operational flexibility, in exchange for specified performance on measures developed in consultation with the institution. As recommended by the panel, the ipas could be renegotiated, but only under certain circumstances (State Council of Higher Education for Virginia 2000).
- *Colorado*—In a November 2000 report to legislators, the Northwest Education Research Center (nored) proposed a program in which qualifying institutions would enter into six-year agreements with the state, producing "more efficient and effective higher education services" (as measured by specific indicators) in exchange for stable funding and maximum regulatory relief. Additionally, institutions would be granted tuition-setting authority (within parameters set by the state), but the state would retain the power to delineate institutional role and mission.

Proponents of the charter concept argue that charter designations, appropriately made, would bring a modicum of stability to the public funding of colleges and universities, and at the same time would promote efficiency and innovation. Additionally, supporters predict that the expanded flexibility/authority will have positive effects such as the reinforcement of academic freedom, increased ability to recruit and retain quality leaders, and increased responsiveness to student needs.

Charter skeptics, however, fear that granting institutions a considerable degree of autonomy could result in a significant reduction of access (via increasing tuition or admissions standards), degree/program duplication with other institutions in the state, and increased potential for waste, fraud, and abuse stemming from reduced state oversight (Berdahl and MacTaggart 2000). Perhaps the most pressing question related to the charter concept, however, is whether it is an organic fit within the deeply embedded structures and relationships of the academy. Unlike charter schools in the K-12 world, charter colleges are not *ex nihilo* creations, which means that policies, procedures, and even worldviews may have to be changed to accommodate them. For policymakers, this means the ability to relinquish a significant amount of control and discretion in higher education decision-making. In the case of St. Mary's of Maryland, some state officials have expressed hesitation about giving up even a small amount of control over funding decisions. For institutions and systems, this could entail the rethinking of practices such as tenure and collective bargaining, as well as a general shift toward a less protected, more entrepreneurial

management approach. Thus, the more salient question on the charter college front may not be whether or not states or institutions are willing to pursue the concept, but whether or not they are ready to do so (Hebel 2000).

#### Shifting Primary State Subsidy from Institutions to Students

A more radical and market-oriented approach to public higher education finance calls for the shifting of the basic funding relationship from state-institution to state-student. In other words, the current financing pattern would be reversed—instead of institutions receiving the preponderance of funding through appropriations and students receiving the balance through financial aid, students would be given sizable grants (need-based in most formulations) to be applied at either public or private institutions in the state. Accordingly, the state's public colleges and universities would receive a relatively small operating stipend. This concept has made its way into the policy spotlight in at least a couple of states in recent years:

- *Minnesota*—*An Agenda for Reform*, published in 1995, called for the distribution of state higher education appropriations to be changed from 90 percent institutional and 10 percent student, to 30 percent institutional and 70 percent student. A 1997 report to the legislature, echoing this call, added the following context: "The assumption is that a public college or university would be driven to improve its product to attract consumers, like a business" (Larson *et al.* 1997).
- *Texas*—The Special Commission on 21st Century Colleges and Universities (2001) included in its final report a recommendation to provide all resident students a grant equal to tuition, fees, and books at a public institution to attend the state institution of their choice (instead of providing an equivalent amount to institutions in the form of a general appropriation). Moreover, the commission called for a significant degree of deregulation to accompany the new financing structure. In justifying its recommendations, the commission wrote that a deregulated, student-centered system will result in better resource allocation decisions, which will in turn provide more access for students and greater excellence in programming.

Proponents of this approach argue that several factors underscore its suitability for the emerging higher education world. One is improved responsiveness to the "student as consumer," whereby institutions would respond to competitive pressures with increased flexibility and innovation, more curricular focus, and less extraneous activity. Another is improved efficiency, relating to the fact that a broad institutional subsidy provides equal benefit to needy and non-needy students, while student subsidies awarded on the basis of need could better target expenditures and thus improve economic access to higher education. Finally, some proponents of the student subsidy model even propose expanding the subsidized student's choice to public and private colleges and universities in a given state, arguing that the "higher education as public good" argument is insufficient justification for guaranteed public subsidy for institutions. In proposing a change in the financing structure of the Oregon higher

education system, Pozdena (1997) wrote that "...it is fair to say that the empirical record only weakly supports the notion that higher education returns have a social as well as private component."

While the logic of empowering consumers and following a more market-based approach is intuitively appealing, it is also accompanied by a severe limitation in the case of colleges and universities. According to basic economic theory, information plays a pivotal role in the rise and fall of markets. One of the primary contributors to market failure, theorists maintain, is an asymmetry of information in the producer/consumer relationship. In other words, a market for a given commodity cannot be sustained if the seller cannot obtain adequate information about the behavior of the buyer, and vice versa (Katz and Rosen 1997).

Similar potential exists in the higher education market. A number of polls and studies in recent years have documented the extent to which the general public is unaware of what colleges offer, how they are funded and set their prices, and how to access financial aid (American Council on Education 1998). Moreover, this information gap is likely to grow, particularly as the number of higher education providers, modes of delivery, and consumer financing options proliferate. In such an environment, simply turning parents and students loose in the market with large subsidies could result in inefficient use of the subsidies. If such a subsidy model were to be credibly attempted in the emerging market, it would require a massive effort to equip prospective consumers with more and better information.

## Conclusion

In his valedictory address to the American Council on Education, outgoing president Stanley Ikenberry recently warned his colleagues that the rapidly growing presence of market forces throughout the higher education enterprise threatens to compromise core principles such as academic freedom and scholarly standards of excellence (Wheeler 2001). The trends discussed in this paper certainly lend credence to that warning. If recognized and managed with a respect for the delicate balance between public good and private initiative, however, these trends could represent an opportunity for unparalleled innovation and positive change for the nation's state colleges and universities. Reaching that difficult but desirable end requires two elements, both of which have little to do with dollars and cents:

## POLICYMAKER/ HIGHER EDUCATION RELATIONS

Any substantial re-negotiation of the funding base for institutions and systems will demand candid and thoughtful exchanges between higher education and political leaders. This sort of exchange is feasible only insofar as it is built on a general foundation of trust and comity between a state's elected leadership and the leadership of its colleges and universities. The prospects for lasting change or innovation are slim unless the formal and informal relationships between these entities are rooted in these values. Thus, for some states, the challenge may be two-fold—strengthening the bridges between the campus and the state-house, while exploring options to confront revenue challenges.

## POLICYMAKER/ HIGHER EDUCATION PREPAREDNESS

Provided that the general higher education/policymaker relationship can sustain a serious discussion of modifying the financing structure, the next question is whether or not all of the relevant stakeholders are equipped for major policy change. For example, are states prepared to deal with issues pertaining to deregulation, conflict of interest, intellectual property, and other questions related to public sector entrepreneurship? Are institutions and systems organizationally ready to be more entrepreneurial, to the extent of reorganizing operations and changing incentive structures?

The maturing of American public higher education as an economic and social institution is naturally accompanied by continuing questions related to its scope and purpose. As the nation industrialized in the 19th Century, the answer came in the form of the Morrill Act. In the aftermath of unparalleled world conflict in the 20th Century, the answer came in the form of the GI Bill. As we apprehend 21st Century challenges such as how to fund public colleges and universities, our answer will speak volumes about how we view our national prospects in the world that is unfolding.

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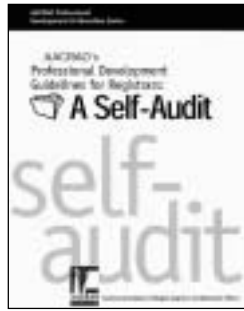
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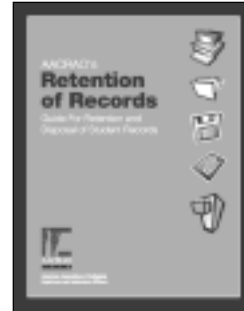
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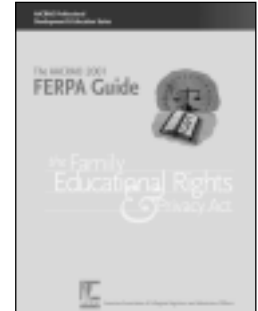
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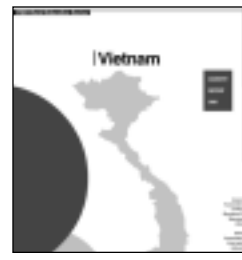
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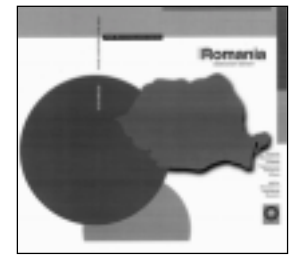
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## Why Students Can't Be Customers in the Classroom

**A**s colleges and universities continue, sometimes by sheer political force, to emulate business concepts within the once hallowed halls, the movement to call students 'customers' and to treat them accordingly is upon us. It is commonplace to read and hear about the need for colleges to change, to become more accountable, to treat students as esteemed and privileged customers of our product, higher learning.

In Flint, Michigan, there are billboards scattered around the city and suburbs that simply read as follows:

Zero students.  
17,311 satisfied customers.  
Baker College

Does this mean that students are always right? No. Does this mean that colleges should always give students what they want? No. Does this mean colleges should refrain from trying to transform students into knowledgeable people who can think and write, problem solve, and persevere? No. So what exactly does it mean?

Herein lies the problem with the student-customer analogy: the comparison works up to a point. The concept of customer-orientation is ideal for the recruitment and student service components in higher education. Institutions need to focus on the needs and desires of students when it comes to providing relevant information, applying and registering, processing financial aid, paying for tuition. In general, the crucial services that assist students in their transition to college and success in college must be customer-driven.

But most of our faculty bristle at the notion that students should be treated as 'customers' in the classroom. The relationship between teacher and student is more complex than a retail transaction. For example, when a woman buys a tennis racquet, she simply needs options. She picks one she likes, hands over the money, and the racquet is hers. To liken the tennis racquet purchase to an educational transaction, the woman would be required to play tennis before she would be 'allowed' to pur-

chase, and the quality of her racquet would be based upon her performance, determined by the salesperson. The educational process cannot be simplified to the level of an 'I purchase—you give me' transaction. In education, the student must be active and produce, not merely receive.

Students, even though they have paid dearly for a course, do not earn credit until they have satisfied the requirements of the course. Students may not want to take a comprehensive final exam. They may not want to write a six-page research paper. They may not want to attend at least twelve of the fifteen class periods to pass. They may not want to give a required speech. As customers, should the wishes of students carry more weight than the academic standards set by faculty? I think not. Can students choose to attend another college where the standards are less demanding? I think so. Is this action in the best interests of students and our society? Probably not.

Rather than treat students like customers in the classroom, it would be more appropriate to treat them like patients. The patient seeks out a doctor because of a recognized deficiency or dilemma. The doctor determines, through diagnosis, what tests to run and what strategies to follow in order to solve the problem. How well the patient performs on these tests and methods, to a large extent, determines the success in the process. In this scenario, however, the patient does not always like what the doctor says. The patient does not always follow the directions or advice of the doctor. The patient can leave to receive a second opinion. In some cases, despite the valiant attempts of both the doctor and patient, the result is dire.

Of course, there are some basic civil expectations in the patient/doctor relationship that correspond to the student/teacher relationship. Patients should be treated with

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David James works as a Dean of Academic and Student Services for Oakland Community College in Michigan. He earned his doctorate in curriculum and instruction from Wayne State University. His books of poetry include *A Heart Out of This World* and *Do Not Give Dogs What Is Holy*.

respect and dignity; they should be treated professionally and fairly. Patients should be afforded hope and support in this transaction. Patients should expect doctors to maintain a high level of competence and skill and knowledge. On the flip side, doctors should expect that patients will heed their advice, take medication as prescribed, show up for scheduled appointments, follow directions. If either side does not hold up his end of the bargain, success will be less likely.

It may be wise to back off from the 'student-as-customer' analogy in education because it does not tell the whole story. At

least the 'student-as-patient' analogy works a little better. In a broad sense, all of us are patients with certain deficiencies in the same way all of us are students of life. No one can have all the answers. No one can cure every illness. And despite our best personal efforts, sometimes we are unable to overcome adversity. Life isn't always fair or just.

The educational process cannot be watered down to the level of a business transaction. Although there are some similarities between teaching and selling, the differences far outweigh them. Ask any real teacher...

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## “Legalization”: The Apostille

**A**s an education administrator, it is likely that at some point you will be asked about the “apostille.” What is it? Do I need one? How can I get one? Is there a fee?

The U.S. State Department explains in its brochure on Document Authentication that documents issued in one country, which need to be used in another country, must be “authenticated” or “legalized” before they can be recognized as valid in the foreign country. This process involves placing various seals on the document. In the United States, the apostille is actually a sealed certificate that confirms the authority of a public official, such as a notary public, town clerk, or judge to act in a particular capacity in connection with a document that he or she has signed. Sometimes referred to as a “stamp” or a “gold seal,” the authentication certificate will verify that the named individual and his or her position are a matter of record in the Secretary of State’s Office. The certificate will only be prepared if the official has in fact executed the document properly and can only be attached to a signed original or a sealed certified copy from a public record keeper, such as a town clerk.

### Background

The Convention that created the apostille—the Hague Convention Abolishing the Requirement of Legalization for Foreign Public Documents—was adopted in 1961, and although the United States ratified this Convention 20 years ago, in 1981, the concept of apostille is still foreign to many higher education administrators. To better understand how the apostille came to be, who needs it and for what purpose, and how to get it, some background information is necessary.

### THE HAGUE CONFERENCE

The Hague Conference on Private International Law convened its first session in 1893 in the Netherlands. This intergovernmental organization undertook to “work for the progressive unification of the rules of private international law” (Article 1 of

the Statute of the Hague Conference). To achieve this goal, the Hague Conference negotiated and drafted multilateral treaties called “Conventions.”

### THE 1961 CONVENTION

In 1961, the Hague Convention Abolishing the Requirement of Legalization for Foreign Public Documents (Convention #12) was concluded. This Convention dealt specifically with the process for “legalizing” or authenticating foreign public documents for use abroad. Until that time, the process had been time-consuming, costly, and complicated. Now, documents that have the special Hague Legalization Certificate are accepted in other countries where the treaty is recognized. This Legalization Certificate is known as the “apostille.”

Documents recognized by the Hague Legalization Certificate include powers of attorney, affidavits, birth, death, and marriage records, incorporation papers, deeds, patent applications, home studies, and other legal papers. The number and type of authentication certificates needed depend on the nature of the document and whether or not the foreign country is a party to the multilateral treaty on “legalization” of documents. If your document is intended for use in a country which is a party to the Hague Convention Abolishing the Requirement of Legalization for Foreign Public Documents, obtaining a special apostille certificate is generally all that is required. However, if the country where the document will be used has not signed and ratified the Convention, you will have to begin the cumbersome, time-consuming process of obtaining a series of certifications known as the “chain authentication method.” This procedure requires multiple seals to be placed on documents, verification by individuals and bureaus at various levels of government, as well payment of numerous fees. It is literally a paper chase in which authorities will have to attest to the validity of a succession of seals beginning with your document and ending with the seal of the foreign embassy or consulate in the United States. Hague Convention #12 simplified this procedure for

member nations by eliminating many links in the “chain” (<http://travel.state.gov/authentication.html>).

The following components will appear on the apostille:

- Name of country from which the document emanates
  - The capacity in which the person signing the document has acted
  - In the case of unsigned documents, the name of the authority which has affixed the seal or stamp
  - Place of certification
  - Date of certification
  - The authority issuing the certificate
  - Number of certificate
  - Seal or stamp of authority issuing certificate
  - Signature of authority issuing certificate.
- ([www.embusa.es/hagueen.html](http://www.embusa.es/hagueen.html))

In 1981, the United States joined the ranks of many other nations that had already signed and ratified this Convention. Table 1 lists the countries and territories adhering to the 1961 Convention. Within and between these countries, documents bearing the apostille are entitled to recognition without further authentication.

#### ACADEMIC DOCUMENTS

In 1983, the Department of State and u.s. embassies and consulates abroad ceased authenticating or providing true certified copies of academic transcripts, credentials, and degrees. For those individuals wanting to enroll in primary, secondary, or postsecondary schooling in the u.s., it was decided that if they completed all or part of their education overseas, requiring such documents who was unnecessary. The Immigration and Naturalization Service (ins), likewise, determined that “legalization” of foreign academic credentials is not generally necessary for u.s. immigration purposes. However, there will be instances when foreign nationals who have been educated in the United States wish to have their academic records authenticated for use abroad. The following step-by-step process can also be found on the State Department’s Web site at <http://travel.state.gov/credentials.html>. (Detailed information about legalizing documents for use in countries

Annex to the Convention  
Model of certificate

The certificate will be in the form of a square at least 9 centimetres long.

**APOSTILLE**  
(Convention de La Haye du 5 octobre 1961)

1. Country: .....

This public document

2. has been signed by .....

.....

3. acting in the capacity of .....

4. bears the seal/stamp of .....

.....

Certified

5. at .....

6. the .....

7. by .....

8. N° .....

9. Seal/stamp: .....

10. Signature: .....

.....

that do not abide by the 1961 Hague Convention Abolishing the Requirement of Legalization for Foreign Public Documents is also located at this site.)

Colleges, Universities, and Other Postsecondary Institutions  
Hague Legalization Convention Country Method (for use in countries that have adopted the 1961 Hague Convention Abolishing the Requirement of Legalization for Foreign Public Documents):

- 1 Obtain from the registrar of the university an official true copy of the credentials, a statement attesting to the accuracy of the credentials, executed by the registrar, and have

Table 1: Countries Adhering to the 1961 Convention

Countries that have signed and ratified the Convention (applicability formally confirmed)

Andorra, Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Aruba, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bermuda, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Botswana, British Antarctic Territory, British Virgin Islands, Brunei, Bulgaria, Cayman Islands, Croatia, Cyprus, El Salvador, Falkland Islands, Fiji, Finland, France, French Guyana, French Polynesia, Guadeloupe, Germany, Gibraltar, Greece, Guernsey (Bailiwick of), Hong Kong, Hungary, Isle of Man, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jersey (Bailiwick of), Latvia, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Macao, Macedonia, Malawi, Malta, Marshall Islands, Martinique, Mauritius, Mexico, Montserrat, Netherlands, Netherlands Antilles (Curacao, Bonaire, St. Martin, St. Eustatius and Saba), New Caledonia, Norway, Panama, Portugal, Reunion, Russian Federation, St. Christopher (Kitts) and Nevis, St. Georgia and South Sandwich Islands, St. Helena, St. Lucia, St. Pierre and Miquelon, St. Vincent and The Grenadines, San Marino, Seychelles, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Suriname, Swaziland, Switzerland, Tonga, Turkey, Turks and Caicos, United Kingdom, United States, Wallis and Futuna

Countries, now independent, that previously signed and ratified the Convention (no formal confirmation of continued applicability of Convention received)

Angola, Comoros Islands (Formerly Moroni), Djibouti (formerly Affairs and Issas), Dominica, Grenada, Kiribati (formerly Gilbert Islands), Mozambique, Solomon Islands (formerly British Solomon Islands), Tuvalu (formerly Ellice Islands), Vanuatu (formerly New Hebrides)

the statement notarized before a notary public in the registrar's office, business office, or elsewhere in the university.

- 2 Take the document to the clerk of the court of the country wherein the notary was licensed or commissioned, to obtain a notarial certificate suitable for use abroad.
- 3 Send the document to the competent authority in the u.s. for the Hague Legalization Convention (usually the state Secretary of State) for the apostille certificate.

#### Primary and Secondary Schools

**Hague Legalization Convention Country Method (for use in countries that have adopted the 1961 Hague Convention Abolishing the Requirement of Legalization for Foreign Public Documents):**

- 1 Obtain a transcript from the school which bears the seal of the school and the signature of the principal.
- 2 Ask the school to send the transcript to the County Board of Education, Superintendent of Schools or other official body which can authenticate the school's seal with a superior seal. Ask that authority to send the document to the state Secretary of State's office.

rior seal. Ask that authority to send the document to the state Secretary of State's office.

- 3 Obtain authentication of the transcript from the state Secretary of State's office.  
(<http://travel.state.gov/credentials.html>)

#### WHERE DOES ONE GET THE APOSTILLE?

In the u.s., competent authorities for affixing the apostille vary from state to state. Table 2 provides not only contact information by United States state and territory, but fee information as well.

#### Sources

- Hague Conference On Private International Law: [www.hcch.net/](http://www.hcch.net/)  
 U.S. State Department Office of Authentication: <http://travel.state.gov/credentials.html>  
 American Embassy in Spain: [www.embusa.es/hagueen.html](http://www.embusa.es/hagueen.html)  
 U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs, Overseas Citizens Services: [http://travel.state.gov/hague\\_foreign\\_docs.html#states](http://travel.state.gov/hague_foreign_docs.html#states)  
 Office of the Secretary of the State of Connecticut: [www.sots.state.ct.us/RecordsLegislativeServices/authen.html](http://www.sots.state.ct.us/RecordsLegislativeServices/authen.html)

Table 2: Access to the Apostille (by state)

State	Contact Address (Web site)	Telephone	Designated Authority	Fee
Alabama	Office of the Secretary of State, State Capitol, Bainbridge St., Montgomery, AL 36130	(334) 242-7205	Secretary of State	\$5.00
Alaska	Lieutenant Governor, P.O. Box 110015, Juneau, AK 99811	(907) 465-3509	Lieutenant Governor; Attorney General; Clerk of the Supreme Court	\$2.00
Arizona	Office of the Secretary of State, Public Services Department, 7th Floor, 1700 W. Washington, Phoenix, AZ 85007 ( <a href="http://www.sos.state.az.us/">www.sos.state.az.us/</a> )	(602) 542-4086	Secretary of State; Assistant Secretary of State	\$3.00
Arkansas	Office of Secretary of State, Notary Division, State Capitol, Little Rock, AR 72201-1094	(501) 682-3409	Secretary of State; Chief Deputy Secretary of State	\$10.00
California	Office of the Secretary of State, P.O. Box 942877, Sacramento, CA 94277-0001	(916) 653-3595	Secretary of State; any Assistant Secretary of State; any Deputy Secretary of State	\$20.00
Colorado	Office of Secretary of State, 1560 Broadway, Suite 200, Denver, CO 80202	(303) 894-2680	Secretary of State; Deputy Secretary of State	\$2.00 <sup>1</sup> \$17.00 <sup>2</sup>
Connecticut	Office of the Secretary of State, Authentications, 30 Trinity St., Hartford, CT 06106	(203) 566-5273	Secretary of State; Deputy Secretary of State	\$20.00
Delaware	Office of Secretary of State, Notary Division, P.O. Box 898, Dover, DE 19903	(302) 739-3077 (302) 739-3756	Secretary of State; Acting Secretary of State	\$10.00
District of Columbia	Office of the Secretary, D.C., Notary Commissions & Authentications Section, 441 4th Street, N.W., Room 1C090, Washington, D.C. 20001	(202) 727-3117	Executive Secretary; Assistant Executive Secretary; Mayor's Special Assistant and Assistant to the Executive Secretary; Secretary of the District of Columbia	\$10.00
Florida	Department of State, Bureau of Notaries Public, The Capitol Building, Suite 1801, Tallahassee, FL 32399-0250	(904) 413-9732	Secretary of State	\$10.00
Georgia	Secretary of State, Notary Division, 2 Martin Luther King Drive, West Tower, Suite 820, Atlanta, GA 30334	(404) 656-2899	Secretary of State; Notary Public Division Director	\$3.00
Hawaii	Office of the Lieutenant Governor, Box 3226, Honolulu, HI 96802	(808) 586-0255	Lieutenant Governor of the State of Hawaii	\$1.00
Idaho	Office of Secretary of State, Box 83720, Boise, ID 83720 ( <a href="http://www.idsos.state.id.us/notary/apostill.htm">www.idsos.state.id.us/notary/apostill.htm</a> .)	(208) 334-2300	Secretary of State; Chief Deputy Secretary of State; Deputy Secretary of State; Notary Public Clerk	\$10.00
Illinois	Office of the Secretary of State, Index Department, 111 E. Monroe St., Springfield, IL 62756	(217) 782-0646	Secretary of State; Assistant Secretary of State; Deputy Secretary of State	\$2.00
Indiana	Office of Secretary of State, Statehouse, Suite 201, Indianapolis, IN 46204	(317) 232-6542	Secretary of State; Deputy Secretary of State	\$0.50
Iowa	Office of Secretary of State, Hoover Office Building, Second Floor, Des Moines, IA 50319	(515) 281-5204	Secretary of State; Deputy Secretary of State	\$5.00
Kansas	Office of Secretary of State, State Capitol, Second Floor, Topeka, KS 66612	(913) 296-2744	Secretary of State; Assistant Secretary of State; any Deputy Assistant Secretary of State	\$5.00

Table 2: Access to the Apostille (by state)

State	Contact Address (Web site)	Telephone	Designated Authority	Fee
Kentucky	Office of Secretary of State, Capitol Building, P.O. Box 718, Frankfort, KY 40602-0178 ( <a href="http://www.sos.state.ky.us/admin/apost.htm">www.sos.state.ky.us/admin/apost.htm</a> )	(502) 564-7330	Secretary of State; Assistant Secretary of State	\$5.00
Louisiana	Office of Secretary of State, P.O. Box 94125, Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9125	(504) 342-4981	Secretary of State	\$5.00
Maine	Office of Secretary of State, Bureau of Corporations, Elections and Commissions, Statehouse Station 101, Augusta, ME 04333	(207) 287-3676	Secretary of State; Deputy Secretary of State	\$10.00
Maryland	Office of Secretary of State, Statehouse, Annapolis, MD 21401	(410) 974-5520	Secretary of State	\$5.00
Massachusetts	Deputy Secretary of the Commonwealth for Public Records, Room 1719, Commissions, 1 Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108	(617) 727-2795	—	\$3.00
Michigan	Department of State, Office of the Great Seal, Lansing, MI 48918-1750	(517) 373-2531	Secretary of State; Deputy Secretary of State	\$1.00
Minnesota	Secretary of State's Office, 180 State Office Bldg., St. Paul, MN 55155	(612) 297-9102	Secretary of State; Deputy Secretary of State	\$5.00
Mississippi	Office of Secretary of State, P.O. Box 136, Jackson, MS 39205-0136	(601) 359-1615	Secretary of State; any Assistant Secretary of State	\$5.00
Missouri	Office of Secretary of State, Commission Division, P.O. Box 784, Jefferson City, MO 65102	(314) 751-2336	Secretary of State; Deputy Secretary of State	\$10.00
Montana	Office of Secretary of State, Room 225, Box 202801, State Capitol, Helena, MT 59602	(406) 444-5379	Secretary of State; Chief Deputy Secretary of State; Government Affairs Bureau Chief	\$2.00
Nebraska	Office of Secretary of State, Notary Division, Room 1303, Box 95104, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509	(402) 471-2558	Secretary of State; Deputy Secretary of State	\$10.00
Nevada	Office of Secretary of State, State Capitol Complex, Carson City, NV 89710	(702) 687-5203	Secretary of State; Chief Deputy Secretary of State; Deputy Secretary of State	\$20.00
New Hampshire	Office of Secretary of State, Statehouse, Room 204, Concord, NH 03301	(603) 271-3242	Secretary of State; Deputy Secretary of State	\$5.00
New Jersey	Department of State, Division of Commission Recording, Notary Section, CN 452, Trenton, NJ 08625	(609) 530-6421	Secretary of State; Assistant Secretary of State	\$25.00 <sup>1</sup> \$35.00 <sup>1</sup>
New Mexico	Office of the Secretary of State, State Capitol Building, Room 421, Santa Fe, NM 87503	(505) 827-3600	Secretary of State	\$3.00
New York (Upstate Counties)	Miscellaneous Records, 162 Washington Ave., Albany, NY 12231	(518) 474-4770	Secretary of State; Executive Deputy Secretary of State; any Deputy Secretary of State; any Special Deputy Secretary of State	\$10.00
New York (Down State Counties <sup>2</sup> )	New York Department of State, Certification Unit is 6th Floor, 270 Broadway, New York, New York 10007	(212) 417-5684	—	\$10.00
North Carolina	Office of Secretary of State, Authentication Division, 300 N. Salisbury Street, Raleigh, N.C. 27603-5909	(919) 733-4129	Secretary of State; Deputy Secretary of State	\$6.25
North Dakota	Office of Secretary of State, Capitol Building, Bismarck, ND 58505	(701) 328-2900	Secretary of State; Deputy Secretary of State	\$10.00
Ohio	Office of the Secretary of State, 30 East Broad St., 14th Fl., Columbus, OH 43266-0418	(614) 466-2585	Secretary of State; Assistant Secretary of State	\$5.00
Oklahoma	Office of Secretary of State, 2300 N. Lincoln, Room 101, Oklahoma City, OK 73105	(405) 521-4211	Secretary of State; Assistant Secretary of State; Budget Officer of the Secretary of State	\$25.00
Oregon	Office of Secretary of State, 255 Capitol St., Suite 151, Salem, OR 97310	(503) 986-2200	Secretary of State; Deputy Secretary of State; Acting Secretary of State; Assistant to the Secretary of State	\$10.00
Pennsylvania	Department of State, Bureau of Commissions, Elections and Legislation, North Office Building, Room 304, Harrisburg, PA 17120	(717) 787-5280	Secretary of the Commonwealth; any Deputy Secretary of the Commonwealth, Commissioner of the Bureau of Commissions, Elections and Legislation	\$15.00
Rhode Island	Office of Secretary of State, Notary Division, 100 N. Main St., Providence, RI 02903	(401) 277-1487	Secretary of State; First Deputy Secretary of State; Second Deputy Secretary of State	\$5.00
South Carolina	Office of Secretary of State, P.O. Box 11350, Columbia, SC 29211	(803) 734-2119	Secretary of State	\$2.00
South Dakota	Office of Secretary of State, 500 East Capitol, Pierre, SD 57501-5077	(605) 773-5004	Secretary of State; Deputy Secretary of State	\$2.00
Tennessee	Office of Secretary of State, James K. Polk Building, 18th Floor, Nashville, TN 37243-0306	(615) 741-3699	Secretary of State	\$2.00
Texas	Office of Secretary of State, P.O. Box 12079, Austin, TX 78711	(512) 463-5705	Secretary of State; Assistant Secretary of State	\$10.00

Table 2: Access to the Apostille (by state)

State	Contact Address (Web site)	Telephone	Designated Authority	Fee
Utah	Office of the Lieutenant Governor, State Capitol, Room 203, Salt Lake City, UT 84145-8414	(801) 538-1040	Lieutenant Governor; Deputy Lieutenant Governor; Administrative Assistant	\$10.00 <sup>6</sup> \$5.00 <sup>7</sup>
Vermont	Office of Secretary of State, 109 State St., Montpelier, VT 05609-1103	(802) 828-2308	Secretary of State; Deputy Secretary of State	\$2.00
Virginia	Office of Secretary of Commonwealth, Authentications Division, P.O. Box 2454, Richmond, VA 23219	(804) 786-2441	Secretary of the Commonwealth; Chief Clerk, Office of the Secretary of Commonwealth	\$10.00
Washington	Department of Licensing, Business and Professions Division, Notary Section, P.O. Box 9027, Olympia, WA 98507-9027	(360) 586-4575	Secretary of State; Assistant Secretary of State; Director, Department of Licensing	\$15.00
West Virginia	Office of Secretary of State, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Capitol Building, No. 157-K, Charleston, WV 25305-0770	(304) 558-6000	Secretary of State; Under Secretary of State; any Deputy Secretary of State	\$5.00
Wisconsin	Office of Secretary of State, P.O. Box 7848, Madison, WI 53707-7848	(608) 266-5503	Secretary of State; Assistant Secretary of State	\$5.00
Wyoming	Office of Secretary of State, The Capitol, Cheyenne, WY 82002-0020	(307) 777-5342	Secretary of State; Deputy Secretary of State	\$3.00
American Samoa	Office of the Governor, Pago Pago, AS 96799	011-684-633-4116	Secretary of American Samoa; Attorney General of American Samoa	—
Guam (Territory of)	Office of the Governor, P.O. Box 2950, Agana, GU 96910	011-671-472-1537	Department of Administration: Director; Acting Director; Deputy Director; Acting Deputy Director	—
Northern Mariana Islands (Commonwealth of the)	—	—	Attorney General; Acting Attorney General; Clerk of the Court, Commonwealth Trial Court; Deputy Clerk, Commonwealth Trial Court	—
Puerto Rico (Commonwealth of)	Office of the Secretary of State, Department of State, Box 3271, San Juan, PR 00902-3271	(809) 723-4334	Under Secretary of State; Assistant Secretary of State for External Affairs; Assistant Secretary of State; Chief, Certifications Office; Director, Office of Protocol	—
U.S. Virgin Islands	Office of the Lieutenant Governor, 7 & 8 King St., Christiansted, St. Croix, USVI 00802	(809) 774-2991	No authority designated; refer requests to the U.S. Department of State, Authentications Office, 2400 M St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20520, (202) 647-5002	—

<sup>1</sup> By mail

<sup>2</sup> While you wait

<sup>3</sup> Regular service

<sup>4</sup> Expedited service

<sup>5</sup> New York authorities in Albany advise that documents issued in the nine down state counties are authenticated under the Convention by the New York City office. The nine down state counties are New York, Kings, Queens, Bronx, Westchester, Nassau, Suffolk, Rockland and Richmond.

<sup>6</sup> Certifying Notary's Seal

<sup>7</sup> Apostille



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