A Study of community college funding

Patricia Charlton

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

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A STUDY OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE FUNDING

by

Patricia Charlton

Bachelor of Science

University of Nevada Las Vegas

1996

A professional paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Master of Public Administration Degree
Department of Public Administration
Greenspun College of Urban Affairs

Graduate College
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ABSTRACT

Community Colleges are an important segment of the postsecondary education system in the United States. As a direct result of growing financial constraints, couples with increased demands for access, sources of institutional funding has gained increased importance.

This research seeks to understand the relationships between governance structure and funding. A 50-state study using secondary data was used to examine variations in funding support for community colleges across the fifty states. The research found a significant relationship between funding levels of operating dollars per full-time equivalent and the existence of a local governing board. This analysis illustrated that having a local governing board is necessary to achieving funding sufficiency.
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<td>30</td>
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. E. Lee Bernick for his generous assistance, guidance, and support in completing this paper. I also extend my sincere appreciation to the faculty of the University of Nevada Las Vegas Public Administration Department, who shared their wisdom and expertise throughout the course of this program.

To my parents, sources of strength, love, and never-ending support, and to my family and friends who have been unstinting in their encouragement and support, I thank you.

A very special “thank you” goes to Mary Edwards. Without her encouragement, knowledge, and friendship, I would not have been able to accomplish so many of my goals and aspirations.

And the most special thanks goes to my daughter, Taylor, who has been so very patient and understanding throughout the course of this process, and who inspires me every day.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Community colleges are an essential component of postsecondary education in America. Founded on the premise of “serving the masses”, two-year institutions offer open admission, at low cost, and have the ability to provide intensive dedicated academic and support services to students.

The first community college was established in 1901 in Joliet, Illinois. Early colleges, or two-year institutions, emerged as extensions of the public high school system and provided applied vocational and technical education. Community colleges offered essential job training programs during the Depression era. While the employment boom that had resulted from the increased production of war materials declined, the financial costs of the war were being felt, sending the United States economy into a recession. The change in economic conditions along with the introduction of the GI Bill, had a significant impact on community colleges. (American Association of Community Colleges, 2003)

Colleges were called upon to meet the demand to transform a job skill market from one that accommodated military industries to one that served industries generating consumer goods and products. In 1948, the Truman Commission called for the creation of a network of low-cost community colleges to serve citizens who wanted a college education. This
paved the way for an increase in colleges to directly support, and provide educational opportunities for, the communities they serve.

As a result of growth driven by the Depression, the end of World War II, and the introduction of the G.I. Bill, as well as changes in federal financial assistance programs the number of community colleges increased substantially. Table 1 illustrates the growth for each decade of the 20th century. (American Association of Community Colleges, 2003)

Table 1 Growth in Community Colleges: 1900-2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade</th>
<th>New Colleges</th>
<th>Total Colleges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901-1910</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911-1920</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921-1930</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931-1940</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941-1950</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951-1960</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961-1970</td>
<td>497</td>
<td>909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971-1980</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>1,058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-1990</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>1,106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-2000</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>1,155</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen in Table 1, a massive growth of the community college segment came in the 1960’s as a direct result of increasing demand. The growth was generated by a number of factors including the “baby boomers” coming of age, changes in workforce needs, and economic transformation.

The latter factor, economic transformation was particularly important to community colleges. Two-year institutions focus on, and play an integral part in the development and support of their communities. Colleges have emerged as essential partners with community
business leaders and local industry. In response to demands to provide career and transfer programs, Associates degree programs, and essential workforce training, colleges are playing a vital role in employee development for local business and industry. Community colleges by design, have proven their ability to quickly adapt to business and industry needs. Additionally, these institutions have the capability to offer a broad range of basic skills preparation, technical training, traditional postsecondary education, and transfer programs. (Forde, 2002)

The community college mission addresses the critical relationship with local entities. A significant contribution and strength that colleges have and will continue to provide across the nation, are the strong relationships that they foster with community partners. The myriad of partnerships are diverse and run the gamut from those established with local K-12 public elementary and secondary education, to those forged with business leaders, Chambers of Commerce, representatives of economic and industry diversification programs, and four-year institutions. The value community colleges provide to our cities, towns, and states is unmeasurable and unequaled. A particular challenge for community college is to stay abreast of community needs. To stay current, meet community demands and sustain these collaborations, community colleges must constantly refocus on, and recommit to, the environments in which they serve. The demands on community colleges are made all the more difficult by the financial structure existing today.

The demands on community colleges are made all the more difficult by the financial situation existing today. Postsecondary education in the United States is comprised of two-year and four-year institutions and may be privately, or publicly, supported and administered. The largest segment is comprised of those institutions that are supported by
public funding. Private universities and colleges rely on donations, contributions, and high
 tuition and student fees to support their operations. Major private universities include some
 of the oldest and most prestigious institutions in the United States, such as Harvard,
 Stanford, and Princeton Universities.

There are over 1,000 public community colleges in the United States that educate
 approximately 50 percent of all postsecondary enrolled students. (National Center for
 Education Statistics, 2002) In comparison, four-year colleges receiving support through
 public funding number approximately 600 institutions. Community colleges have long
 lived in the shadow of their four-year counterparts. In fiscal year 1999-00, community
 colleges were responsible for educating nearly half of all postsecondary education students,
 and outnumbered four-year institutions 1:81:1. Yet community colleges received only 18
 percent of all higher education funding in the United States.

Fiscal Year 2002 was a turbulent time across the United States. Financial markets and
 state economies experienced significant declines in revenues, resulting in budget deficits
 for the latter. As reported by the National Governors Association, the financial condition in
 America is the worst it has been since World War II. States’ budgets are constrained by a
 slowing economy, increases in health care costs and growing pressures for Medicaid, all of
 which have led to massive budget shortfalls nationwide.

In Fiscal Year 2002, 26 states made budget cuts, utilized “rainy day” funds, laid off
 employees, and/or reorganized to save resources and dollars. In 2003, it is anticipated that
 budget cuts and reversions of state appropriations will be measures utilized by 23 states to
 balance their state operating budgets. Many of the corrective actions implemented over
 the past one and one-half years, are one-time remedies and will not provide relief in future
years. It is also important to note that most Governors have protected entitlement programs, such as Medicaid and school aid (K-12 education). In addition, states also afforded public safety programs exemption from budget cuts, given concerns for homeland security.

States’ General Fund expenditures are the primary mechanism by which elementary, secondary, and higher education, corrections, public assistance programs, transportation, and Medicaid are funded at the state level. Table 2 provides a summary of funding allocations for Fiscal Years 2000, 2001, and 2002. (National Association of State Budget Officers).

Table 2  Distribution of State Budget Expenditures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Fiscal Year 2000</th>
<th>Fiscal Year 2002</th>
<th>Percent Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary/Secondary Education</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Education</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>(2.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicaid</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>85.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrections</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Assistance</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>(14.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other Expenditures</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>(4.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.7%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the February 28, 2003 issue of Chronicle of Higher Education article, “The Disappearing State in Public Education”, support for public colleges will be slashed due to the downturn in the economy. The cuts are not unexpected since higher education is often utilized as the tool that state lawmakers use to balance budgets. This is partly due to the belief that, if necessary, institutions have the ability to raise tuition rates. This has led to a “privatization” of public higher education.

As budget reductions and spending limits are questioned, it is important to understand how state dollars impact higher education, specifically the community college system.
Postsecondary education is a large and complex system. While a great deal of research has been performed on this segment of higher education, it has primarily focused on academic programs, student enrollments, retention, and success rates.

As postsecondary education further evolves and changes in response to growing financial constraints that are coupled with increased demands for access, funding levels will continue to garner attention. Moreover, it underscores the acute need for an understanding of how institutional funding relates to governance. Does a relationship exist between funding level and organizational structure?

This work will bring together factors including institution type, governance structure, and funding, and assess the relationships that may exist as well as how institutional funding may be affected. The information provided will specifically address funding levels and governance. It appears that inadequate resource availability is a problem nationally, and more study is required to illuminate the issue. Publicly supported institutions are faced with the worst economic conditions in the last 50 years. The importance of committed and dedicated governing boards, committed to ensuring adequate monetary resources for their colleges, may be essential to institutions achieving financial adequacy.

Dollars continue to be scarce, and the competition for them will be stiff among higher education institutions. The focus of this review is to assess the extent to which advocacy impacts funding. More specifically, does a local governing board impact funding?
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

To review and assess the components that affect higher education funding requires that, at a minimum, several essential aspects of higher education be evaluated including the classification or type of institution, the public governance structure, the sources of funding, and the total level of funding.

Classification and Structure

The types of institutions in higher education are diverse. The postsecondary segment includes public and private institutions. There are community colleges, state colleges, universities, professional schools, and technical/trade schools. Baselines and efficient standards must be obtained to be able to compare and contrast institutions for the purpose of establishing effective benchmarks which is most often accomplished through a classification system.

The most commonly utilized classification system that exists today is The Carnegie Classification System. This complex system was originally developed in 1971. It has been continuously updated and modified as necessary. This system outlines a mechanism by which institutional diversity among the United States higher education community is identified. Through this system, a homogeneous method of institutional categorization is defined. This is an essential tool for researchers, institutional representatives, and
governmental entities to utilize in their assessment and analysis of institutions, faculty, students, and the higher education system in general.

The Carnegie Classification System, which defines program types, standards of support, levels of degrees, and types of programs offered, is an essential component for higher education institutions. An intensive classification outline exists for institutions that offer four-year, or advanced degrees. For more than 600 public four-year institutions, the classification system identifies six subcategories for distinction. In comparison, for the more than 1,000 public two-year institutions, only one category exists.

Table 3  2000 Carnegie Classification System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2000 Carnegie Classification System</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral/Research Universities - Extensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral/Research Universities - Intensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's Colleges and Universities – I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's Colleges and Universities – II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baccalaureate Colleges - Liberal Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baccalaureate/Associate’s Colleges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate's Colleges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialized Institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tribal Colleges and Universities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By placing all community colleges in a single classification, the differences within this unique segment of higher education are masked.

The community colleges have a commitment to open access, and comprehensive responsiveness to local needs. With 50 percent of all postsecondary students enrolled in community colleges, the need for a clearer, more distinctive classification system is necessary to adequately assess this institutional component of United States higher
education. Without a more definitive and identifiable classification, it is impossible to adequately evaluate this large and diverse segment of higher education.

In response to this need, the National Center for Educational Statistics, in its study *A Classification System for 2-Year Postsecondary Institutions* (June 2001), attempted to distinguish and highlight the differentiation of this segment of the higher education market. The Center provided an alternative method for classification that, as its foundation, centered on institutional size, using enrollment as a baseline, this was identified as the most distinguishing characteristic of public two-year institutions.

To further research and provide a framework for policy discussions, the classification hierarchy that was proposed includes the following distribution for public community/two-year institutions:

- **Community Development and Career Institutions**: This category includes institutions with unduplicated headcount of less than 2,000 students. Colleges of this size tend to provide programs that lead to awards and degrees primarily in the areas of job and career skills development, and focus on workforce development for the communities they serve.

- **Community Connector Institutions**: This category describes institutions with an unduplicated headcount of 2,000 to 9,999 students. These institutions tend to provide awards and degrees that target job and career skills development, and offer academic programs with some component of general education that can facilitate transfer to four-year institutions.

- **Community Mega-Connector Institutions**: These institutions have an unduplicated headcount of at least 10,000 students. They tend to be located in urban settings, and
confer awards and degrees that target job and career skills development. They also offer academic programs that emphasize general education and transfer programs to facilitate student transition to four-year institutions.

While this is only one method to classify community colleges, additional methodologies for classification include taxonomy of program types, degrees conferred, recognition of program types, environment served (urban or rural), transfer programs, comprehensive colleges, and an emerging segment, the community college baccalaureate-granting institutions.

Governance and Structure

The governance of higher education in the United States is an important element of the postsecondary segment. With a majority of institutions receiving public funding either through state appropriation and/or local tax revenues, as well as from federal funding sources, the need for oversight and financial accountability is critical. Within the higher education arena, the responsibility for oversight, coordination, and accountability is housed under the purview of governance and coordination systems. (ERIC Clearinghouse for Community Colleges, 1999) No one system has been applied consistently across the country. A hybrid of organizational structure exists.

Governance in the postsecondary education segment has traditionally been a balance between institutional autonomy and public accountability. Colleges and universities have struggled to ensure autonomy that provides freedom from external intervention and control. The balance applies to the relative, not absolute, concept of institutional autonomy, ensuring that the broader interests of both the public and society are provided. Governing
boards are tasked with maintaining this delicate balance between institutional autonomy and public accountability.

Each state is responsible for developing a system of governance that meet the needs required for their particular state. The authority provided to public governing boards of colleges and universities is unique for each state and their structure for higher education.

Many states have established coordinating boards that are responsible for key aspects of the state role in postsecondary education. The function of these boards may include statewide coordination of policy functions, such as planning, institutional missions, program review and approval, as well as budget development and resource allocation. In some states, coordinating boards are focused on a specific sector, such as community colleges. States that include this form of coordinating structure include Arizona, California, Illinois, Iowa, New Hampshire and North Carolina.

Those states without a coordinating place responsibility for these functions within either a State Department of Education or other governmental entity.

The responsibilities and authorities vested in governing and coordinating boards are vast and vary state to state. However, institutions that receive funding from state and/or local sources will oversight administrated through these boards. It is through this end that public accountability, and funding compliance and assurances, are accomplished. The governance structure is an integral factor in ensuring public confidence and the appropriate use of funds. To this end, authority and responsibility of these boards and/or governance structures may include:

- Appointing, setting the compensation for, and evaluating both system and institutional chief executives;
- Strategic planning, budgeting, and allocating resources between and among the institutions within the board’s authority;
- Ensuring public accountability for effective and efficient use of resources to achieve missions;
- Development and implementation of policies;
- Awarding academic degrees;
- Advocating to the legislature and governor, the needs of the institutions under the board’s jurisdiction;
- Establishing personnel policies for faculty, including awarding of tenure, and final authority of grievances;
- Focusing on state and system needs and priorities;
- Planning, primarily for the state postsecondary education system as a whole.

(McGuiness, 2001)

In the realm of community college governance responsibilities may be held at a variety of state levels such as departments of education, boards of governors, statewide and local boards of trustees, presidents and administrators. In the Policy Brief – Governance (Education Commission of the States, 2000) it is noted that “all states assign responsibility for the governance of public colleges and universities to one or more boards most often composed of a majority of lay citizens representing public interest.” Public governing boards can be categorized through one of the following systems:

- **Consolidated Governance Systems:** This category includes multiple examples, such as one board governing all public two- and four-year institutions, or, one board covers all four-year campuses with separate arrangements for two-year institutions.
- **Segmental Systems**: In this model, separate boards govern distinct types of campuses, research universities, comprehensive colleges and universities, and community colleges. They may include separate boards for postsecondary technical institutes or colleges and adult education, as well. (Education Commission of the States, 2000)

Also varied among the states is the structure for which the activities of governance are adopted. They include single districts, multi-unit independent districts, state university systems and branch colleges, and state systems.

Unique to the community colleges is the responsibility and commitment to the community or communities in which they serve. The art is in balancing the variety of needs and demands, and understanding that colleges have more than one master. This poses unique challenges and difficulties for community colleges. They struggle with supporting the community needs, meeting the demands of local business and industry leaders, while accommodating students, and addressing the needs and goals dictated at the statewide level. The challenge may be further exacerbated if the college operates under the consolidated system structure identified above, with colleges and universities governed together. Ongoing vigilance is required to ensure that recognition of all communities and segments of the population are represented fairly, adequately and equitably.

In the Education Commission of the States report, *How Does the State Coordinate or Govern Higher Education?*, state-by-state outlines of governance boards and utilization of local boards are described. Table 4 provides a summary of the structures in place in the United States.
Table 4  Community College Governance Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Structure</th>
<th>Percentage of States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent Community College System</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hybrid System</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Structure</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100% N=50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen, more than half these states have a community college system. In addition, the Community College Policy organization gathers and assesses information related to policy issues including local board structures. The following is a summary of the structures in the United States:

Table 5  Community College Local Board Utilization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Structure</th>
<th>Percentage of States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local Board</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Local Board</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100% N=50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As illustrated above, the prevalence of local boards for community colleges is widespread and common practice.

Perhaps one of the most significant roles governing and coordinating boards can play is that of advocate for the institutions that they represent or serve. Advocacy is essential in this time of competition for resources and recognition. One would expect that community colleges that are independent from universities and have their own boards would be in a position to gain support especially for funding.
Funding

Since their inception community colleges have experienced a mix of funding. As community colleges came into being at the turn of the last century, they were fully dependent upon local revenues, receiving minimal contribution from tuition and fees. Historically identified as an affordable and cost efficient mode of education, colleges have attempted to retain low costs to students while ensuring high quality of educational opportunities. With its passage through Congress, the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862 established the path for state supported institutions, and state tax-supported institutions became reality in all the states. (Education Commission of the States, 2000)

In the early years of community colleges, resources were primarily received through local support and limited tuition and fees. However, as the number of institutions flourished, their funding sources shifted from local revenues to greater levels of support from state coffers and more reliance upon student tuition and fees. As illustrated below in Table 6, in 1918 no state appropriations were funded, as opposed to the year 2000 when 50 percent of revenues were received from the state. (Education Commission of the States, 2000)

Table 6  Sources of Community College Funding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>State Support</th>
<th>Local Funding</th>
<th>Student Fees</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Education Commission of the States, 2000
The overall percentages depicted in Table 6 mask important variations across the states; community college revenues within states vary significantly. For example, while local sources make-up 21 percent of revenues only 15 states in Fiscal Year 1999-00 received local revenues in excess of this proportion. Moreover, 18 states did not receive any local revenue contribution. (National Center for Education Statistics)

Local tax revenues are obtained through city and county sales taxes, property taxes, redevelopment funds, utility taxes, timber or mineral severance taxes, and motor vehicle taxes (Education Commission of the States, 2000) Local funding is used to support overall operating budgets, workforce development programs, capital outlay, and remedial/development training. However, over the past three decades, specifically, the trend has been for states to assume a larger proportion of overall funding. The shift in financial responsibility can be primarily attributed to:

- Property tax limitations, driven mainly from efforts in California, Arizona, Colorado, Hawaii, Illinois, Oregon, and Washington (Education Commission of the States, 2000); and
- Variations in the ability of small communities to adequately support local colleges. Drastic differences in property tax valuations across a state can lead to large disparities in tuition and fee rates. Wealthier communities are better apt to support colleges through tax dollars, and poorer communities are forced to increase tuition and fees. (Education Commission of the States)

However, this trend for the state to take on more fiscal responsibility is impacted by the economy.
As dollars become scarce, sources of revenue become even more important. The demand for local dollars may again become important. The question rises to the role of local funding in community colleges and what explains these differences. Moreover, what impact does local government structure have on these funding differences.

The trend would show that as the economy decreases, the need and demand for higher education increases. While government at the state level contends that reduced appropriations are warranted based on the ability of higher education to increase tuition and fees, those very increases challenge the basic community college tenet of affordability for the masses. Tuition and fees have increased in both the public and private markets. This trend, however, cannot continue without impeding access. (Pratt, Academe, 2003)
CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To examine the relationship of funding to organization structure, data from Fiscal Year 1999-00, the year for which the most current national information was available, was used. This fiscal year was chosen for examination, since it is year for which the most current national information on higher education institutions is available.

In order to analyze the relevant factors associated with funding, various data components were collected. These factors include: the number of publicly supported institutions by type; enrollment levels; and revenues to support higher education. Given the scope of higher education and the vast number of institutions across the country receiving public support, data was collected for both two-year and four-year institutions at the state level. Information was collected by and through the following sources:

- National Center for Educational Statistics
- U.S. 2000 Census Data
- Education Commission of the States
- American Association of Community Colleges

To assess funding to structure, key variables were identified. For the purpose of this study, the dependent variable was identified as the college operating revenues per Full-Time Equivalent (FTE). Independent variables include the existence or nonexistence of local boards, governance structure, level of the population in the college attendance age group as a proportion of the total state population, and local revenues as a proportion of total funding.
The National Center for Education Statistics is responsible for collection and interpretation of educational information and data in the United States. Administered by the Institute of Educational Sciences through the United States Department of Education, this is an integrated warehousing resource of critical educational research and data.

The Department of Education mandates that institutions receiving federal financial assistance must participate in the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Through IPEDS, information is collected about institutional characteristics including finance, enrollment, student financial aid, graduation rates, faculty staffing, and compensation levels. IPEDS has evolved into a useful tool for data assessment for peer institutions. Due to IPEDS’ requirements, this is the most readily available source for data collection. This source was utilized to collect the Full-Time Equivalent enrollments for two-year and four-year institutions, as well as total current revenues by source.

Utilizing a web-based survey instrument, IPEDS information is submitted electronically. For the 1999-00 reporting cycle, 100 percent reporting collection was provided for four-year public institutions, and a 99.2 percent collection rate was achieved for two-year public institutions. The system automatically performs edit checks utilizing previously submitted data. Checks are done throughout the data entry process and are rerun prior to “locking” information for submission. In sum, the data used in this study is sound and comprehensive in scope.

Particular data extracted relative to enrollment levels, funding, and revenue distribution is ordinal, and provides a means for significant measurement and interpretation and considerable validity. (Appendix A) Additional information required in order to perform this study outlines the type of governance and board structure, if applicable, for each state.
The Education Commission of the States (ECS), through its organizational efforts, collects information, by state, of general characteristics for community colleges.

Utilizing web-based research tools, information was collected from ECS that specifically outlined the organizational structure, the type of models, hybrid or college system, and whether community colleges have a local board. The web site, www.communitycollegepolicy.org, provides a state-by-state map that specifically provides the number of institutions, total student enrollment, revenue sources, historical overview, and governance structure. This site was utilized for collection of the governance structures for each state.

**Dependent Variable:**

Once all the information was collected, the dependent variable, Operating Revenues Per Full-Time Equivalent, had to be established. The foundation for assessing Per Full-Time Equivalent levels is rooted in both the sources and level, of resources, and Full-Time Equivalent Enrollments.

Traditionally, community colleges have a full complement of part-time students. Higher education enrollments are categorized as both Full-Time Equivalent and Headcounts. Headcount identifies the number of individual students attending a given institution. For the purpose of establishing Headcount, no distinction is provided for the number of courses a student takes. To determine Unduplicated Headcount, each individual is counted only one time, irrespective of the number of courses in which the student is enrolled. The Full-Time Equivalent determines the corresponding enrollments for a Full-Time Enrolled Student Course Load. Each state is unique in the establishment of criteria
that dictates a full student workload. In community colleges, it is typically determined by
15 Instructional Units (credit hours) per semester.

In the National Center for Education Statistics annual report, *Digest of Educational
Statistics 2001*, information is provided, by state that includes enrollments and revenues for
each institutional type. While the report provides overall total revenues by state,
information was not available for specific revenue sources by institutional type (two-year
and four-year). In order to calculate the Revenues Per Full-Time Equivalent, it was
necessary to contact the Center to determine if further definition of revenues by source for
each institutional type was available. The Center provided a breakdown that outlined
revenues by state, by institutional type, by source, for each of the 50 states for fiscal year
1999-00.

The “fiscal year” is a standard baseline for financial reporting in higher education. The
typical fiscal year is the 12-month period from July 1st through June 30th. The fiscal year is
different than the “academic year”, which generally runs from August/September to May,
and encompasses a fall and spring term in a semester system, or, three, quarter-terms in a
quarter system.

Operating revenues have been identified as revenues appropriated by the state or
legislative body, and they include state resources, local revenues, and tuition and fees.
Additional institutional funds that are not utilized for the purpose of operations include
endowments, grants and contracts, restricted gifts, extended services, and auxiliary
enterprises, which normally have restrictions on use or purpose, or are required for self-
supporting enterprise operations.
In sum, the dependent variable, Operating Revenues Per Full-Time Equivalent, was calculated by dividing the Total Operating Revenues by the total reported Full-Time Equivalent Enrollments.

**Independent Variables:**

The independent variables identified were governance structure, local boards, percentage of the population in the traditional college attendance age group (15-34), and local revenues per full-time equivalent. Other variable data was collected but not used in the analysis.

Organizational structure relates to the governance model and whether the state utilizes local board oversight including also advocacy for community colleges. Governance structure was further refined using three categories:

- **Hybrid Structure:** This type of governing board has responsibility for four-year and two-year institutions.

- **College Structure:** In this model, the governing board has responsibility for two-year institutions only.

- **No Structure:** Two states, South Dakota and Vermont, do not have formal governing bodies. In these states, higher education oversight is under the auspices of the state legislature, or state Department of Education.

In the Education Commission of the States report, *How Does State Coordinate or Govern Higher Education?*, a state-by-state outline was provided of the governance models utilized for each state for postsecondary education.

The Center for Community College Policy, Education Commission of the States, coordinates information collection on concerns, trends, and fact files for community
colleges in each of the 50 states. Information relating to the utilization of coordinating and/or local boards was extracted from resources available through their website. The second variable examined the use of local boards and their prevalence in the community college segment. Board members are either elected or appointed, and support the colleges through oversight, advisory, and advocacy.

The third independent variable, college attendance age group, provides information that outlines population demographics for each state. According to the American Association of Community Colleges, the average community college student age is 29 years old. Traditionally, college attending students are perceived as recent high school graduates. The 2000 Census Report provides population breakdowns by segmented age grouping. For the purpose of this review, the proportion of the population for each state was collected for the age groupings 15-19 years old, and 21-34 years old (Appendix D). This accounted for an average of 27.8 percent of the population, in aggregate.

The final independent variable Local Revenues Per Full-Time Equivalent, the percentage of total dollars that came from local dollars. The variable used information received through the National Center for Educational Statistics and was calculated by dividing the Total Local Revenues received for each state by the Total Full-Time Equivalent Enrollments.

Local revenues are significant when evaluating the relationship of local boards to funding, in that local boards act as stewards of public funds and ensure financial accountability, as well as guide the use of dollars to meet the needs of their communities. As states strive to ensure financial viability during tough economic conditions, greater
scrutiny must be given to the dwindling support state and local governments are providing to higher education.

Bringing all the variables together provided the framework for an overall assessment of funding, governance, and the influence of local boards. It is proposed that those institutions that have local board oversight enjoy more financial support on a per student basis.

As previously noted, governance structures vary by state. Structures may include a hybrid governance body with responsibility for both two-year and four-year institutions, community college boards, or, in a limited number of states, no independent governing body exclusive of the state or legislative body.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This study focused on the identification of the relationship between organizational structure and funding levels. Upon initial review of the Funding Levels Per Full-Time Equivalent, it was determined that the state of Alaska presented uncharacteristic levels of both Full-Time Equivalent and Funding Per Full-Time Equivalent. In reviewing the Operating Revenues Per Full-Time Equivalent, it was determined that Alaska was an outlier. In July 1987, as a result of drastic funding reductions, the Alaska State Legislature combined the university and community colleges into the one overall system, the University of Alaska, with separate campus sites around the state. The individual sites have specific appropriations, yet there is no separation between the two-year and four-year institutions. Because resources supporting each Full-Time Equivalent were significantly higher, it was not possible to separate or differentiate between community colleges and universities. Thus, the State of Alaska has been excluded from this analysis.

Once data was collected, analysis was performed to look at the relevance of funding to organization structure. A one-way analysis of variance was performed to determine the relationship of Operating Funding per Full-Time Equivalent to board structure. Table 7 illustrates the results of this comparison.
Table 7  Local Board to Operating Revenues Per Full-Time Equivalent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Structure</th>
<th>Mean $ Per FTE</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Local Board</td>
<td>$6,984</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Board</td>
<td>$7,930</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$7,698</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F = 3.038  P< = .088

The variation in mean dollars per Full-Time Equivalent illustrates a strong differentiation in funding levels between states with local boards, and those without. The standard deviation of Funding Per Full-Time Equivalents for states without a local board was $1,833, as opposed to those states with a local board at $1,568.

Of the 12 states that do not have local boards, two have unique circumstances. First, Delaware does not have a local board structure, but has only one college in the state. Governance and advocacy are not as challenging when only one college is being considered since there is no competition. Advocacy is strengthened through dedicated and committed focus and attention to issues, planning, and coordination of programs.

The second anomaly is North Dakota. In reviewing the institutional make-up within North Dakota, it was determined that, of its five colleges, one is a tribal college and receives state and/or local funding support. This is abnormal in that tribal colleges typically are categorized separately from general publicly supported institutions due to the significant contributions they receive, due to their status as a sovereign nation, from Indian tribal and federal funding sources.
Given the unique issues related to both Delaware and North Dakota, and in an effort to determine the impact that these two states may contribute to the overall funding mix, a second test was conducted. A second one-way analysis excluded Delaware and North Dakota but utilized the same parameters contrasting Operating Revenues Per Full-Time Equivalent and the existence of local boards with the following results.

Table 8  Local Board to Operating Revenues Per Full-Time Equivalent (FTE), Excluding Delaware and North Dakota

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Structure</th>
<th>Mean $ Per FTE</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Local Board</td>
<td>$6,624</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Board</td>
<td>$7,930</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$7,652</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F = 5.736  P <= .021

This second test illustrated that a greater relationship exists, and the probability increased as the mean dollars per Full-Time Equivalent were reduced for those states without local boards. The deviation increased between those states with local boards versus those without. The standard deviation for the states without a local board was adjusted to $1,368, clearly illustrating the impact of the two states with extenuating circumstances.
An additional test (multiple progression) was performed to assess other independent variables role in determining college operating expenditures. Table 9 is a summary of the results of this analysis:

Table 9  Assessment of Independent Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (Constant)</td>
<td>7310.380</td>
<td>3565.858</td>
<td>2.050</td>
<td>0.047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Board</td>
<td>1136.297</td>
<td>638.560</td>
<td>0.293</td>
<td>1.779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Revenues Per FTE</td>
<td>0.210</td>
<td>0.196</td>
<td>0.173</td>
<td>1.075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>-257.977</td>
<td>496.341</td>
<td>-0.081</td>
<td>0.520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>-18.803</td>
<td>168.495</td>
<td>-0.016</td>
<td>-0.112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: College Operating Per Full-Time Equivalent

No statistical relationships exist between governance structure, proportion of the population, and the college-going age level, in explaining Operating Dollars Per Full-Time Equivalent. As can be seen in Table 9, local boards have the same level of significance as previously uncovered. This is extremely important because it highlights the role of local boards even when we controlled for other possible factors.

Controlling for these additional independent variables, and through analysis of Operating Dollars Per Full-Time Equivalent to local board structure, indicated that in the funding per state for community colleges, having a local board was beneficial to those institutions. It was illustrated that having a local board is necessary, but not in itself sufficient for adequate funding. Although community colleges with a local board are not guaranteed higher Funding Per Full-Time Equivalent, those with local governance are likely to enjoy overall higher levels of funding. In addition, in the absence of a local board, the probability that local dollars will be received is unlikely.
With the Funding Levels Per Full-Time Equivalent as a baseline for review, more detailed assessment was obtained. Tables 11 and 12, and Appendix B, illustrate the states at the lowest five levels, and the highest five levels, of Funding Per Full-Time Equivalent. The variation between the lowest and highest funded states is significant. The range of funding levels is broad, with a difference of $7,608 between high to low funding.

Table 10  States With Lowest Funding Per Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State Code</th>
<th>Governance Structure</th>
<th>Local Board</th>
<th>FTE Enrollment</th>
<th>Operating $ Per FTE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nevada</td>
<td>Hybrid Board</td>
<td>No Local Board</td>
<td>21,866</td>
<td>$5,866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>Hybrid Board</td>
<td>Local Board</td>
<td>20,259</td>
<td>$5,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermont</td>
<td>No Board</td>
<td>No Local Board</td>
<td>2,023</td>
<td>$6,014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>College Board</td>
<td>Local Board</td>
<td>28,214</td>
<td>$6,064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>College Board</td>
<td>Local Board</td>
<td>71,765</td>
<td>$6,080</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As previously illustrated, local boards are a common component of the organizational structure for community college oversight. Seventy-six percent of states utilize this structure. These bodies play a vital role in assisting colleges to fulfill their missions through community involvement and enrichment.

There are 12 states that do not have local boards: Alaska, Delaware, Hawaii, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Tennessee, Vermont, and West Virginia. On average, these states have lower financial support per Full-Time Equivalent student, which may be attributed to the lack of committed and dedicated local boards that provide focused advocacy.
The states where colleges enjoy a greater comprehensive funding per Full-Time Equivalent, are listed below in Table 12. While Delaware appears in this grouping, it is important to reiterate that only one community college exists within the state.

Table 11  States With Highest Funding Per Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State Code</th>
<th>Governance Structure</th>
<th>Local Board</th>
<th>FTE Enrollment</th>
<th>Operating $ Per FTE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maine</td>
<td>College Board</td>
<td>Local Board</td>
<td>4,832</td>
<td>$10,756</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oregon</td>
<td>College Board</td>
<td>Local Board</td>
<td>45,079</td>
<td>$10,919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delaware</td>
<td>College Board</td>
<td>No Local Board</td>
<td>7,391</td>
<td>$11,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>College Board</td>
<td>Local Board</td>
<td>57,068</td>
<td>$12,027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>Hybrid Board</td>
<td>Local Board</td>
<td>44,805</td>
<td>$13,474</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the end of the 1990s, many states began discussions related to the cost of higher education opportunities for the first two-years of college. They desired education to be universally available at little or no cost. According to the National Profile of Community Colleges 2000, between 1965 and 1996, community college enrollment increased by more than 400 percent. With high school-to-college enrollments escalating, this pressure is not expected to decrease.

These dramatic trends have sparked fierce battles in legislative bodies, due to the scarcity of higher education resources. Many university leaders are fearful, since funding support levels for all segments of higher education have become dominated by enrollments, and the tendency for the greater proportion of this migration is to enroll at the two-year
colleges. Many four-year institutions have questioned the proper balance between growth, and maintaining the quality of upper-division institutions.

While 21 percent of all community college revenue comes from local tax support, only a limited number of states have such funding available. Typically, colleges have seen the decline in state funding sources replaced by increases in the tuition and fees assessed to students. In the present weak economy, this trend cannot continue. States, and more specifically, community colleges may want to consider the role of local boards.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

These are turbulent times. Spending cuts and budget reductions are commonplace across the country. Approximately 67 percent of all states have projected budget deficits that, combined, may reach $26 Billion by June 30, 2003. (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2003)  When state lawmakers view higher education as a luxury that should be supported more by students and donations and as a source from which they can draw to balance the budget, higher education will face the growing pressure of financial constraint.

Two major conclusions can be drawn from this study. First the positive funding benefit for community colleges for having local boards. Second, there is a classification system of university and colleges that fail to recognize the differentiation in colleges and the inconsistent method of funding.

Community College Local Boards

The focus of this study was to review the relevance of local boards and their support community colleges. The principles of higher education are rooted in the foundation that an open and participatory process exists, which encourages and facilitates shared governance, responsibilities, and authority. Local boards are important partners in shaping
and guiding community colleges and fostering an inclusive environment. An inclusive climate stimulates participation in the oversight, governance, and development of the institution.

College boards have unique responsibilities and authority to evaluate and advocate for the needs of the institution. Commonly comprised of elected or appointed members, the college board is invested with the ability to forge partnerships and address local needs and demands. Boards assist in the development of strategic planning and program development to ensure that the institutional direction is driven by the needs of the community.

With funding support in a precarious position nationwide and the obligation to ensure open access and low cost tuition remaining a priority, a balance between tuition and fee levels, and state and local appropriations will need to be achieved. This study illustrates that those community colleges governed by local boards enjoy a higher level of funding per Full-Time Equivalent student.

Universal Funding and Classification Systems

For a meaningful and valid analysis of community colleges in the United States to be conducted, a method or alternative structure for classification must be developed. Given the large number of community colleges nationwide, and their significant proportion of higher education enrollment levels, a means to distinguish or highlight differences for comprehensive analysis is essential.

One alternative is based on using institutional enrollments as a base. Appendix E provides a breakdown of the number of institutions per state and corresponding Full-Time
Equivalent enrollments. This illustration shows the vast differences in the number of colleges per state, and an even greater variation in enrollment levels.

The ability to focus on segments or clusters of institutions, or states, could be achieved through combining institutions or states into meaningful groups. Specific characteristics should be identified and further study undertaken to assess similarities between institutions and/or states. Examples of unique characteristics may include:

- Institutional Size (Enrollments)
- Rural versus Urban Location
- Comprehensive Course Offerings (Transferability)
- General Education versus Occupational/Vocational Programs
- Schools Committed to Allied Health Programs

Higher education funding models are developed differently across the country. An overall review of state funding levels reflects the varied funding practices that are used. Examples of funding processes include formula-based funding, funding per student, incremental funding, and funding by programmatic type. Adding to the complexity of the problem is the lack of consistent funding resources. Many states enjoy local tax support and are less reliant on state appropriations, while others are solely dependent on state funding, tuition, and fees. Also contributing to this complexity is the great disparity in tuition and fee levels at community colleges across the country.

Legislative bodies play an important role in providing funding sources and establishing support levels. For example, in the State of Nevada, the legislature is responsible for approving tuition and fee levels on a biennium cycle. Additionally, the legislature determines final appropriation and expenditure levels to balance tuition and fee levels with
state resources. As tuition and fee levels have increased, the proportion of state general fund dollars has decreased.

Recommendations for Further Research

A majority of community college funding is provided through state resources. As postsecondary education competes with other essential entities such as elementary and secondary education, Medicaid, and Corrections, funding demands will continue to mount. The best example of this is the mounting competition from the Medicaid system, which is driven by the health requirements of an aging population. Higher education must contend with the expectation that dwindling state appropriations may be offset by an increase in tuition and fees in order to balance their budgets.

Increasing access to higher education is essential to meet our citizens’ cries for educational opportunities, as well as those demands generated by businesses needing a trained workforce so that they can grow and flourish. Moderate tuition and fee levels are important to ensuring accessibility. When the cost to students increases, participation in education decreases.

Determining the relationship between fee levels and student participation especially at the community college level is a necessary study. At what price level does participation decrease? What level does the consumer/student determine to be “too much” to pay for education? As state and local economies struggle, and public higher education becomes more “privatized”, it would be helpful to assess the fee levels at both two-year and four-year institutions.
A growing need for attentive and focused advocacy programs is necessary. As illustrated in the narrative, in those states where local boards govern, community colleges receive a greater level of funding support. Viewing higher education funding as a whole reflects that a significant source of community college revenue is provided through local sources. However, only half of all states receive any local revenues as a source for their operating funds, and the extent of this funding differs greatly by state.

In some states, local support dollars can be significant contributing as much as 57 percent of budget operating dollars. Further research could be conducted that reviews those states in which local dollars are a major influence on funding support and the extent to which other sources, such as state appropriations and tuition and fee levels are provided.

The State of Nevada is also at a crossroads. Historically, the state’s economic engine has been gaming and tourism. Following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, the state’s economy suffered from declines in travel, and lower than normal hotel room occupancy rates. As the 2003 Nevada State Legislature debates a tax initiative increase and finalizes the next biennial funding appropriations, it is critical that new revenue sources be identified.

At the close of the 2001 Legislative Session, Governor Guinn formed the Governor’s Task Force on Tax Policy in Nevada. The Committee was formed to review and evaluate strategies that would provide for a stable and efficient tax structure to accommodate the growing needs of Nevada. (University and Community College System of Nevada)

Education has been at the forefront of the Nevada’s focus. Higher education, in particular, has experienced significant enrollment growth over the past ten years and is expected to continue for the next decade. Higher education has enjoyed significant state
support historically, with funding of 18.5 percent to 20 percent of the total General Fund.

With increasing budget pressures caused by excessive growth in the state, this percentage has slowly declined over recent years. As the University and Community College System presented to the Governor’s Task force on Tax Policy in February 2002, headcount enrollment is forecasted to increase annually at a rate of 4.9 percent, taxing already limited resources.

In this presentation, the national and regional comparisons for funding alternatives were provided. Additionally, the ideal of local contribution of revenues to support the community colleges as a means of relieving state funding pressures was discussed. Should this recommendation be further explored, governance and oversight structures would need to be reevaluated and updated.

Another study, assessing the willingness of local communities to participate with and support community colleges could be performed. It would be helpful to evaluate the models used by states and communities where local revenues primarily support colleges, and assignment of appropriate levels of other sources, such as tuition and fees, and state appropriations are made.

In the research conducted for this study, it was found that in all states where local funding is provided to colleges, local oversight boards are in place. The assurance of accountability, and the linkage of the community college mission to serve and support communities can only be accomplished through local board advocacy and oversight.
APPENDIX A

Current Fund and Operating Revenues By State 1999-2000
Two-Year Institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State Code</th>
<th>FTE Enrollment</th>
<th>Current Fund Per FTE</th>
<th>Operating Per FTE</th>
<th>Current Fund Revenue</th>
<th>Operating Revenues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>3,075,520</td>
<td>9,208</td>
<td>8,188</td>
<td>28,320,453,479</td>
<td>25,183,883,637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>46,002</td>
<td>9,068</td>
<td>8,192</td>
<td>417,134,117</td>
<td>376,832,220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>86,901</td>
<td>7,681</td>
<td>6,834</td>
<td>667,447,830</td>
<td>593,839,809</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>22,291</td>
<td>8,779</td>
<td>8,066</td>
<td>195,693,302</td>
<td>179,798,737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>600,019</td>
<td>9,010</td>
<td>8,081</td>
<td>5,406,314,274</td>
<td>4,848,830,621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>41,422</td>
<td>8,471</td>
<td>7,408</td>
<td>350,873,244</td>
<td>306,843,045</td>
</tr>
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# APPENDIX B

## Community College Operating Levels
Per Full-Time Equivalent, 1999-2000
Sorted in Descending Order

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<th>State Code</th>
<th>Governance Structure</th>
<th>Local Board</th>
<th>FTE Enrollment</th>
<th>Operating$ Per FTE</th>
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APPENDIX C

Revenues Per Full-Time Equivalent
Sorted By Board Structure
Descending Order
Fiscal Year 1999-2000

Community College Revenue Per FTE
Sorted by Board Structure

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<th>Current Fund $ Per FTE</th>
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## APPENDIX D

Demographic Characteristics By State  
U.S. Census, 2000

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## APPENDIX E

Community College Distribution by State
1999-2000

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BIBLIOGRAPHY


How Does the State Coordinate or Govern Higher Education? Center for Community College Policy, Education Commission of the States. 2000.


