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The States and Their Community Colleges

Every state offers two-year colleges as the first rung on the ladder of higher education. But states differ greatly in the use they make of them.

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With relatively little fanfare, community colleges have emerged in the last 40 years as an increasingly dynamic and important part of the post-secondary education system in the United States.

They enroll some 6.2 million full- and part-time students—more than four out of every 10 American undergraduates.[1] Another 5 million students of all ages attend community college for non-credit courses. Community colleges are also a relatively inexpensive option for students and taxpayers alike. Though tuition varies widely by state, in every state they cost less than four-years, and in 33 states the cost is half or less. Their total cost of operation per student is about one-third that of public four-year, graduate and research institutions.[2]

Community colleges are the first stop after high school for millions of students who want a lower-cost, close-to-home entrée into higher education. In fact, half of all those graduating with a bachelor's degree today attended community colleges first. [3]

But community colleges also produce graduates with the skills to handle a wide range of jobs that need more than a high school education, but don't necessarily require a four-year degree—nurses, police officers, EMTs, firefighters, technicians, accounting clerks, drug counselors. They operate thousands of job-training programs that don't point to a degree, but that help employers meet their staffing needs and help workers adapt to a rapidly changing job market. They are the primary way most states deliver post-secondary remedial education, as well.

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These community college responsibilities are much the same across the nation. But it turns out that the use individual states make of their community college systems varies, to a surprising degree.

A new Rockefeller Institute comparison of 50-state data has found, for example, that states vary by as much as five to one in the portion of their population that's attending a community college. The share of a state's total college-going cohort attending community college can be four times, or more, higher in some states than in others. Given the importance of community colleges in producing high educational attainment levels and in developing a competitive workforce for the nation, such wide variations call for close examination—and for follow-up studies to determine which states are doing what right, and why.

Ranking the states

As an initial step in understanding the differences in the utilization of their community college systems, the Rockefeller Institute of Government has ranked each of the states on five different ways of measuring the use and growth of the community college option that they offer their citizens:

1. Community colleges' share of all higher education enrollments in a state. This varies from over 45 percent in Washington, California and Wyoming to, for example, 12 percent in Indiana.

2. The share of a state's total population ages 18 and over that's enrolled full- or part-time in a community college. This ranges from more than 4 percent in California, Wyoming, Arizona and New Mexico, to less than 2 percent in 18 states.

3. The share of a state's total population aged 18 and over that's represented by full-time equivalent registration in community colleges. Wyoming, California and Washington rank at the top of this list; Vermont and Nevada rank at the bottom.

4. The five-year growth rate in community college enrollment. Relatively rapid growth rates are found in smaller states like West Virginia, Maine and Montana, with larger states like Kentucky, Georgia, Pennsylvania and New Jersey close behind.

5. And the amount by which growth in community college enrollments is outpacing (or lagging) the growth in public four-year college enrollments. Community college enrollments are growing faster than four-year in 35 of the 50 states.

Four states—Iowa, Mississippi, New Mexico and North Carolina—are ahead of the national rate on all five measurements. Seven others are ahead on four of the measures: Arizona, Illinois, Kansas, Maryland, Nebraska, Texas and Wyoming.

The Rockefeller Institute's analysis also ranks states by tuition and fees charged at public two-year colleges, compared to four-year costs—to help examine the role tuition levels may play in driving utilization trends.

Details, based on the most recent five-year period for which nationwide data are available from the National Center for Education Statistics, are in the six tables that follow.

Community colleges' share of all higher-ed enrollments

One basic measure of the extent to which a state and its citizens are choosing or emphasizing community colleges is their "market share," so to speak—the share of all college enrollments, on a full-time equivalent basis, that's represented by enrollment in community colleges.

Table 1: 2-year colleges' share of all full-time equivalent students at public and private post-secondary institutions, 2005

Rank by share	State	Public 2-year FTE Enrollment, Fall 2005	2-year publics' share of all enrollments	Rank by share	State	Public 2-year FTE Enrollment, Fall 2005	2-year publics' share of all enrollments
1	Wyoming	11,914	47.3%	26	Oklahoma	40,640	25.1%
2	California	756,014	46.4%	27	Arizona	101,330	24.1%
3	Washington	120,908	46.1%	28	Ohio	107,524	22.0%
4	Mississippi	53,618	41.9%	29	Tennessee	49,705	21.3%
5	New Mexico	36,232	39.9%	30	New York	193,460	20.6%
6	New Jersey	100,103	35.4%	31	Delaware	8,175	20.5%
7	Texas	314,319	35.3%	32	Connecticut	26,403	19.7%
8	Illinois	202,067	33.2%	33	Missouri	55,186	19.6%
9	North Carolina	120,991	32.6%	34	Colorado	44,001	19.6%
10	Oregon	47,788	32.0%	35	North Dakota	6,785	16.2%
11	Kansas	44,234	31.3%	36	Maine	8,062	16.1%
12	Maryland	68,582	31.0%	37	Montana	6,228	15.5%
13	Iowa	54,279	30.6%	38	Massachusetts	51,788	14.5%
14	South Carolina	50,418	30.3%	39	West Virginia	11,934	14.3%
15	Georgia	93,177	27.8%	40	Louisiana	23,174	14.0%
16	Arkansas	30,820	27.6%	41	Rhode Island	9,215	13.7%
17	Kentucky	50,916	27.4%	42	Utah	20,574	13.5%
18	Alabama	54,149	26.8%	43	Pennsylvania	75,863	13.3%
19	Michigan	123,231	26.8%	44	New Hampshire	7,348	13.2%
20	Hawaii	13,324	26.8%	45	Idaho	7,863	12.6%
21	Minnesota	73,317	26.4%	46	South Dakota	4,873	12.5%
22	Nebraska	24,784	26.2%	47	Indiana	34,737	11.9%
23	Virginia	84,570	25.7%	48	Nevada	8,065	10.7%
24	Florida	161,069	25.4%	49	Vermont	2,490	7.6%
25	Wisconsin	65,178	25.3%		Alaska[4]		N.A.
	United States		27.7%				

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *2007 Digest of Education Statistics*, Table 211. Underscores in columns represent the demarcation between the states that are above, and below, the national average on this criterion.

The share of the population that's attending community colleges

A second key measure is the share of the population that attends community college in a state. Tables 2 and 3 portray this in two ways—first, below, based on total enrollment, taken as a share of the population 18 and over, and second, on the next page, adjusted to full-time equivalent enrollments.

Table 2: Share of 2005 population 18 and over that is represented by full- and part-time enrollment in public 2-year colleges, Fall 2005

Rank	State	Share	Rank	State	Share
1	California	5.29%	26	Arkansas	2.27%
2	Wyoming	4.93%	27	Alabama	2.26%
3	Arizona	4.61%	28	Delaware	2.16%
4	New Mexico	4.46%	29	Georgia	2.15%
5	Washington	3.96%	30	Utah	2.07%
6	Illinois	3.71%	31	Florida	2.02%
7	Kansas	3.59%	32	Ohio	2.00%
8	Iowa	3.58%	33	Missouri	1.96%
9	Texas	3.29%	34	Rhode Island	1.93%
10	North Carolina	3.06%	35	New York	1.84%
11	Mississippi	3.05%	36	North Dakota	1.84%
12	Nebraska	3.03%	37	Connecticut	1.73%
13	Oregon	2.88%	38	Massachusetts	1.70%
14	Maryland	2.84%	39	Tennessee	1.64%
15	Michigan	2.84%	40	New Hampshire	1.37%
16	Minnesota	2.83%	41	Pennsylvania	1.29%
17	Wisconsin	2.72%	42	Indiana	1.28%
18	Virginia	2.70%	43	Montana	1.25%
19	Kentucky	2.65%	44	West Virginia	1.24%
20	Alaska	2.47%	45	Maine	1.19%
21	South Carolina	2.44%	46	Idaho	1.14%
22	Oklahoma	2.44%	47	Vermont	1.12%
23	New Jersey	2.32%	48	Louisiana	0.99%
24	Colorado	2.29%	49	South Dakota	0.93%
25	Hawaii	2.29%	50	Nevada	0.91%
	United States		2.77%		

SOURCES: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *2007 Digest of Educational Statistics*, Table 111. U.S. Census Bureau population estimates by state for July 2005. Underscores in columns represent the demarcation between the states that are above, and below, the national average on this criterion.

Table 3 presents the share of population (18 and over) enrolled on a full-time-equivalent basis. For analytical purposes it also displays the tuition burden in each state (tuition measured as a share of median family income in the state). The tuition burden is below average in the five states with the largest share of population enrolled—but it's also below average in numerous states with relatively low enrollment shares.

Table 3: Share of 2005 population 18 and over represented by full-time equivalent enrollment in public 2-year colleges; tuition burden

Rank	State	Share	Tuition Burden	Rank	State	Share	Tuition Burden
1	Wyoming	3.02%	2.7%	26	Hawaii	1.37%	1.5%
2	California	2.86%	1.1%	27	North Dakota	1.36%	4.9%
3	New Mexico	2.52%	2.3%	28	New York	1.32%	4.5%
4	Washington	2.52%	3.4%	29	Colorado	1.26%	2.8%
5	Mississippi	2.47%	3.0%	30	Delaware	1.26%	2.9%
6	Iowa	2.36%	4.6%	31	Missouri	1.25%	3.4%
7	Arizona	2.32%	2.1%	32	Ohio	1.24%	4.8%
8	Kansas	2.14%	3.2%	33	Utah	1.19%	3.6%
9	Illinois	2.12%	2.8%	34	Florida	1.17%	2.9%
10	Texas	1.90%	2.2%	35	Rhode Island	1.11%	3.3%
11	Minnesota	1.88%	5.2%	36	Tennessee	1.09%	4.0%
12	Nebraska	1.87%	3.0%	37	Massachusetts	1.05%	3.3%
13	North Carolina	1.85%	2.3%	38	Connecticut	0.99%	2.7%
14	Oregon	1.71%	4.3%	39	Montana	0.85%	5.0%
15	Maryland	1.63%	3.3%	40	West Virginia	0.83%	6.0%
16	Michigan	1.62%	2.8%	41	South Dakota	0.83%	4.8%
17	Kentucky	1.59%	4.7%	42	Pennsylvania	0.79%	4.1%
18	South Carolina	1.56%	4.7%	43	Maine	0.77%	4.4%
19	Alabama	1.56%	5.0%	44	Idaho	0.75%	3.2%
20	Wisconsin	1.54%	4.1%	45	Indiana	0.74%	4.1%
21	New Jersey	1.53%	2.9%	46	New Hampshire	0.73%	6.5%
22	Oklahoma	1.51%	3.4%	47	Louisiana	0.69%	2.8%
23	Virginia	1.47%	2.7%	48	Vermont	0.51%	5.8%
24	Arkansas	1.47%	3.4%	49	Nevada	0.45%	2.8%
25	Georgia	1.39%	2.5%		Alaska	N.A.	2.5%
	United States	1.64%	3.6% *				

* This is the average of all states, not the national average.
SOURCES: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2000 through 2005 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2001 through Spring 2006. U.S. Census Bureau population estimates by state for July 2005. Tuition burden is defined as the percentage of the state's median family income represented by tuition; figures from the American Association of Community Colleges. Calculations by the Rockefeller Institute. Underscores in columns represent the demarcation between the states that are above, and below, the national average on this criterion. The level of tuition burden in states charging more than the average state is highlighted.

Growth in community college enrollment

Community college enrollment is growing in almost every state, as illustrated below. It is notable that some of the fastest-growing states in terms of enrollment are those with lower-than-average current enrollment shares, as illustrated above in Tables 2 and 3—for example, Maine, Montana, Pennsylvania, Vermont and West Virginia.

Table 4: 2000-'05 change in FTEs in public 2-year colleges, by state, ranked

Rank	State	Change	Rank	State	Change
1	West Virginia	+ 66.7%	26	Oklahoma	+ 13.9%
2	Maine	+ 40.5%	27	Virginia	+ 13.8%
3	Montana	+ 37.4%	28	Wisconsin	+ 13.8%
4	Kentucky	+ 36.7%	29	Ohio	+ 13.7%
5	Arkansas	+ 30.2%	30	Idaho	+ 13.4%
6	Georgia	+ 28.6%	31	New York	+ 12.7%
7	New Hampshire	+ 25.9%	32	Mississippi	+ 11.9%
8	Vermont	+ 25.9%	33	Wyoming	+ 11.1%
9	Pennsylvania	+ 22.5%	34	Minnesota	+ 11.1%
10	New Jersey	+ 20.7%	35	Kansas	+ 10.8%
11	Connecticut	+ 20.7%	36	Alabama	+ 10.3%
12	Utah	+ 20.0%	37	Illinois	+ 7.7%
13	North Carolina	+ 19.8%	38	Massachusetts	+ 7.4%
14	Indiana	+ 19.0%	39	California	+ 6.4%
15	New Mexico	+ 18.5%	40	Rhode Island	+ 6.1%
16	Iowa	+ 17.6%	41	Colorado	+ 6.1%
17	Michigan	+ 17.4%	42	Washington	+ 5.1%
18	South Carolina	+ 17.1%	43	North Dakota	+ 4.0%
19	Maryland	+ 16.4%	44	Oregon	+ 3.5%
20	Nebraska	+ 16.0%	45	Tennessee	-6.9%
21	Arizona	+ 15.3%	46	Florida	-7.7%
22	Missouri	+ 15.2%	47	Hawaii	-12.5%
23	Delaware	+ 15.1%	48	Louisiana	-17.1%
24	Texas	+ 14.7%		Alaska	N.A.
25	South Dakota	+ 14.0%		Nevada[5]	N.A.
	United States		+ 11.5%		

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *2007 Digest of Educational Statistics*, Table 111.

Are community colleges growing faster than four-years—and how much?

Finally, our review of the data found that although average nationwide enrollment in community colleges is growing slightly slower than enrollment in four-year public colleges, the growth rate for community colleges has an edge in quite a number of states, including such large states as Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Georgia, Michigan, Wisconsin, Connecticut and New York.

Table 5: Percentage points by which 2000-05 % growth in FTEs in public 2-years exceeds (or falls below) growth in FTEs in public 4-years

Rank	State	Points ahead (or behind)	Rank	State	Points ahead (or behind)
1	West Virginia	66.1	26	Mississippi	3.3
2	Montana	32.5	27	Virginia	3.1
3	Maine	32 .1	28	Ohio	3.0
4	Kentucky	24.1	29	Wyoming	2.8
5	Iowa	20.5	30	North Carolina	2.2
6	Arkansas	16.0	31	Idaho	2.2
7	New Hampshire	14.9	32	Illinois	2.1
8	Pennsylvania	14.4	33	Alabama	1.5
9	Nebraska	13.9	34	Arizona	1.1
10	New Jersey	12.2	35	Massachusetts	0.9
11	Georgia	10.9	36	Minnesota	(0.3)
12	Vermont	10.0	37	Oklahoma	(2.1)
13	Michigan	9.2	38	Rhode Island	(2.4)
14	Indiana	9.1	39	Texas	(3.7)
15	Wisconsin	8.2	40	California	(5.0)
16	Connecticut	7.9	41	Colorado	(5.1)
17	South Dakota	7.5	42	Washington	(7.2)
18	Missouri	7.2	43	Oregon	(10.8)
19	New Mexico	6.2	44	North Dakota	(11.4)
20	Delaware	6.0	45	Tennessee	(15.1)
21	Utah	5.7	46	Louisiana	(18.0)
22	South Carolina	5.5	47	Hawaii	(37.2)
23	New York	5.3	48	Florida	(41.6)
24	Maryland	4.4		Alaska	N.A.
25	Kansas	4.2		Nevada	N.A.
	United States		(1.0)		

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *2007 Digest of Educational Statistics*, Table 111. For example, Alabama's enrollment in two-years grew 10.3 percent, while enrollment in four-years grew 8.8 percent; that's an edge of 1.5 percentage points. West Virginia's enrollment in two-years rose 66.7%, while enrollment in four-years rose only 0.6 percent—so that's an edge of 66.1 percentage points. Florida's four-years grew 33.9 percent while enrollment in two-years declined by 7.7 percent—so that's an edge of a negative 41.6 percentage points.

Looking for the lessons

Those, then, are some of the key differences between and among the states, with respect to their utilization of community colleges. Do the differences matter?

A working hypothesis is that they do matter—that states with strong community college systems offer a cost-effective way to help more of their citizens eventually earn four-year degrees; will enable more of their citizens to move up from low-wage jobs and find high-skill, well-paid careers; will bolster economic development by meeting employer needs for qualified workers; and will help high-school graduates with weak skills catch up.

Our basic measurements don't tell the whole story, of course. A high enrollment rate, for example, may not necessarily translate into a high success rate; that will depend also on the quality of instruction, the range of programs available, and the financial and other supports available for students who struggle to pay the bills long enough to complete their degree requirements. Identifying the best practices in state community college systems is a realm of inquiry that is only beginning to be explored—and numbers alone will not provide the answer.

Nonetheless, this data comparison does suggest some opportunities for further research.

The role of tuition

A natural assumption would be that the level of tuition has an impact on enrollment and utilization. The data appear to back up that assumption—to a certain extent.

As displayed in Table 6 on the following page, community college tuition levels vary widely around the country. The nationwide average for school year 2006-07 was $2,017 a year for an in-state student, and most states were in the $2,000 to $3,000 range. But annual tuition was as low as $674 in California or $1,245 in New Mexico—and as high as $5,614 in New Hampshire, or $4,204 in Vermont.[6] New Hampshire and Vermont have relatively low enrollment levels, while New Mexico and California have much higher enrollment rates.[7]

But as noted on page 5 and displayed in Table 3, numerous states with relatively low tuition rates (measured in terms of ability to pay—that is, the portion of the state's median family income needed to pay community college tuition) still have relatively low enrollment rates. Georgia, for example, ranks well below average in tuition burden, but only 25th in FTE enrollment as a share of the population 18 and over.

California is an outlier for low tuition costs at community colleges, and for high enrollment rates as well. But even when we remove California from the picture, there is a suggestion that tuition has an impact.

Matching enrollment rates with the tuition burden in the next 10 largest states after California, we calculate a correlation of about 0.65 between tuition and enrollment. In smaller states, however, the relationship appears to be much lower. In fact, calculating the relationship across all 50 states, we found a correlation of only 0.342.

Table 6: Average tuition and fees for public 2-year colleges, 2006-07—with comparison to tuition and fees at 4-year public colleges

Rank	State	2-years' tuition and fees	% of 4-years'	Rank	State	2-years' tuition and fees	% of 4-years'
1	New Hampshire	$ 5,614	62%	26	Tennessee	2,474	49%
2	Minnesota	4,359	59%	27	Delaware	2,364	32%
3	Vermont	4,204	43%	28	Virginia	2,362	37%
4	South Dakota	3,495	69%	29	Utah	2,339	62%
5	North Dakota	3,462	63%	30	Missouri	2,284	36%
6	New York	3,287	65%	31	Oklahoma	2,263	54%
7	Ohio	3,248	36%	32	Illinois	2,252	28%
8	Wisconsin	3,163	52%	33	Michigan	2,103	28%
9	Iowa	3,139	52%	34	Colorado	2,037	44%
10	South Carolina	3,100	39%	35	Idaho	2,005	48%
11	Pennsylvania	3,093	34%	36	Nebraska	1,991	38%
12	Maine	3,058	47%	37	Florida	1,979	65%
13	Massachusetts	2,983	39%	38	Kansas	1,942	39%
14	Maryland	2,945	41%	39	Arkansas	1,890	38%
15	New Jersey	2,910	31%	40	Wyoming	1,817	62%
16	Oregon	2,834	51%	41	Georgia	1,724	45%
17	Montana	2,814	52%	42	Mississippi	1,709	38%
18	Alabama	2,795	59%	43	Nevada	1,695	60%
19	Alaska	2,756	62%	44	Louisiana	1,493	40%
20	Indiana	2,713	43%	45	Arizona	1,456	31%
21	Rhode Island	2,686	40%	46	Hawaii	1,395	35%
22	West Virginia	2,676	66%	47	Texas	1,370	27%
23	Connecticut	2,672	37%	48	North Carolina	1,300	32%
24	Washington	2,671	47%	49	New Mexico	1,245	32%
25	Kentucky	2,633	45%	50	California	674	15%
United States		$2,017	35%				

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *2007 Digest of Educational Statistics*, Table 321.

So clearly, tuition is involved, but there are other factors as well. Since tuition is only the "list price," and states may vary widely in the financial aid made available to full- and part-time community college students, a productive area for further research would be to identify those systems of financial aid that have the most impact in bringing community college education within reach of the most people.

A reasonable supposition might be that the *gap* between tuition levels for public four-years, and public two-years, could account for some of the enrollment differences—on the assumption that community colleges would attract more students in states where two-year tuition levels offer the most savings in comparison to four-year tuitions. But we found a correlation there of only 0.22.

Economic and demographic conditions

Other factors that might be thought to have an impact on enrollment are the condition of the state's economy, and population trends.

College administrators commonly say that enrollments tend to edge up a bit when and where the economy is slow—since education can be both a good way to pass time during a weak job market, and a good way to increase one's employability and potential income.

It might also seem logical to assume that rapidly growing population would tend to increase enrollment trends in two-year colleges, if for no other reason than that rising population would make alternative placements in four-year college harder to come by.

However, the 50-state data show no strong connection to any of these factors. There is only a weak correlation (0.254) between population growth and the share of the 18-and-over population enrolling in community college—and even less of a correlation with a state's job growth over 10 years, or with its 10-year growth in per capita personal income.

A challenge for policymakers

So the differences in the use that states make of their community colleges are clear—but the causes are not. And because these differences matter, there is a clear challenge for community college leaders, policymakers and researchers to dig deep enough to explain the differences, and to help states make better use of this dynamic and growing force in education.

Further research could profitably explore these issues, among others:

- The degree to which the states' community colleges vary by *outcome* measurements. For example, successful advancements to four-year colleges, employment in the specialty(ies) studied, impacts on the attraction and retention of local employers, and the number of learners who start out behind but are remediated to the point of successfully advancing into academic programs.
- The impact on access of the interplay between tuition policies, and financial aid policies. For example, what's more effective—low "list price" tuition, or generous financial aid? Which states

limit aid to full-time students, and what's the outcome of that? Which states offer aid to part-time students, how do their policies differ, and what's the impact?

- What share of the resources of community college systems in the various states is devoted to credit courses, what share to non-credit courses, and what share to remedial education? What balance seems to work best, and why?
- How smooth is the path from two-year to four-year colleges, by state? Some states have, or are working toward, uniform articulation agreements that allow easy transfer of credits from two-year to four-year colleges. Others work on a case-by-case basis. What works best?
- What about geographic access? Some states operate networks of relatively numerous, relatively small community colleges that are therefore closer to their potential users; others operate relatively fewer, larger colleges that may be harder to commute to, but that may have more courses and programs to offer. What works best?
- Are there other factors pertaining to the access to four-year colleges (which in this sense compete with two-year colleges for student enrollment) that tend to reduce, or increase, the use of the community college system?
- What governance, finance and administration systems seem to be working best? Some states have community colleges run by the state, some by localities, some jointly. Some rely on more local financing than others. Some have a community college system incorporated within a larger statewide higher education system that includes four-year colleges; others have a separate system for community colleges. Some states have more of a community college "system" than others; some have only a loose network of two-year colleges, or operate them as adjuncts to individual four-year colleges and universities. What's working, and why?

The data indicate that the differences are real, and important. What remains to be learned is what explains them. And that's worth exploring. Community colleges are increasingly important to the education and career prospects of the people they serve. Which makes their success increasingly important to policymakers in the 50 states, as well.

Endnotes

[1] National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics 2007*, Table 177. As of Fall 2005, 14,963,964 full- and part-time students were enrolled in undergraduate programs at degree-granting institutions of higher education—of which 6,184,229, or 41.3 percent, were enrolled in public two-year colleges. Adjusting for full-time

equivalent enrollment (relatively more community college students attend part-time), and counting students in graduate and professional education, community colleges accounted for 27.7 percent of all FTE college enrollments as of Fall 2005—as reflected in Table 1. National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics 2007*, Tables 211 and 208. Accessible via http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/2007menu_tables.asp.

[2] As of school year 2004-05, nationwide average operating costs per full-time equivalent student were $10,481 at public two-year institutions, versus $31,882 at public four-year institutions. National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics 2007*, Table 348.

[3] Data on enrollment on non-credit courses, and on previous community college experience of four-year graduates, from College Board, *Winning The Skills Race and Strengthening America's Middle Class*, Report of The National Commission on Community Colleges, January 2008, p. 5.

[4] NCES data do not present comparable full-time equivalent data on Alaska—only its total "headcount" enrollment of both full- and part-time students.

[5] Data for Nevada appear to have been assembled on a different basis for 2000, ruling out this comparison, as well as the comparison in Table 5.

[6] Statewide average in-state tuition levels for public 2-year colleges, school year 2006-07, from Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics 2007*, Table 321.

[7] The California system was a key focus of a Rockefeller Institute forum on June 27, 2007, which featured a presentation by Steven Bruckman, Executive Vice Chancellor, California Community Colleges. See http://www.rockinst.org/WorkArea/showcontent.aspx?id=14116, beginning on page 22.