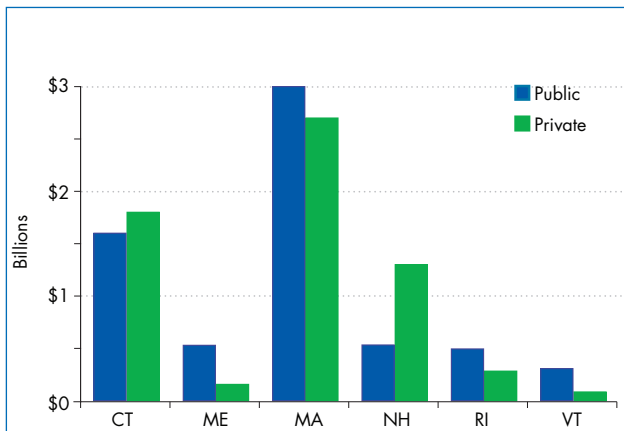
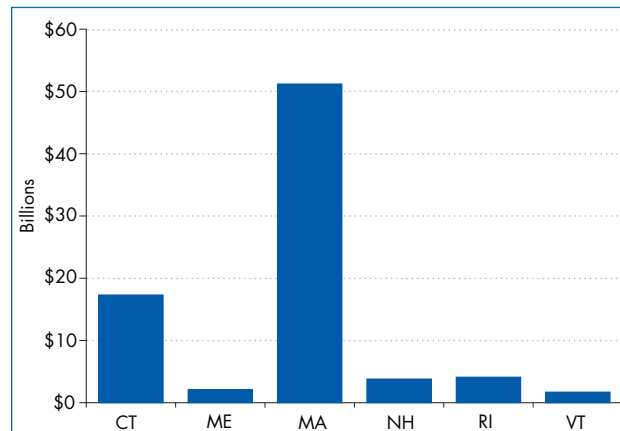


**Economic Impact of Accredited K-12 Schools by State, Academic Year 2003-2004**



**Economic Impact of Accredited Higher Education Institutions by State, Academic Year 2003-2004**



Clearly, the economic impact of the region's education community is significant and growing. At a time when districts, states and the nation are considering how best to align pre-K-12 and higher education institutions, organizations such as NEASC and the New England Board of Higher Education should help the pre-K-16 sector in examining, compiling and disseminating credible information on education's impact. Greater appreciation of the

significance of the pre-K-12 education sector's economic impact as part of the broader picture will be good for the region's entire education enterprise.

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## Foundations and Higher Education: Whose Agenda?

JOHN C. SCHNEIDER

A little over 15 years ago, I went with my university's provost to visit the higher education program director at a major foundation. The two had a lively exchange and we were invited to submit a proposal that was the brainchild of a creative young assistant professor of engineering. We got the grant, providing several years of support for a wonderfully innovative curriculum that in turn seeded a process that would culminate in revised pre-college teaching standards throughout Massachusetts.

After the grant ended, I took the faculty member to the foundation to report on the extraordinary success and impact of the project—the sort of thing foundations say they love to hear. The program officer who had reluctantly agreed to meet with us was polite but disinterested, and she ushered us out before we could even complete our presentation. As it turned out, we

had been caught in a critical moment of change at this foundation similar to what was happening at many other foundations. Grant programs that had been relatively open-ended were now tightly drawn, grounded in the foundations' own carefully articulated take on issues and receptive only to proposals that responded appropriately. Initiative and creativity had shifted heavily from prospective grantee to grantor. Our funded project, whatever its merits, was now out of step with what this foundation wanted quite specifically to accomplish in its education program.

As foundations embraced this funding-by-agenda, it burdened their relationship with colleges and universities, who still preferred to bring their own ideas to the table. Some cut back or completely eliminated their programs in higher education teaching and learning. They also turned increasingly to pre-college education, funding for which in absolute dollars increased twice as fast as that for colleges and universities between 1990 and 2004. Much of this actually went to intermediary organizations,

usually nonprofits focusing on school systems or young people. These organizations were more receptive to taking their cue from foundations. Indeed, a similar pattern characterized other program funding, where foundations looked increasingly to think tanks, independent research centers and national policy and action organizations to help fulfill their agendas.

## **In the mating dance that often passes for substantive engagement, Bacchetti warns, foundations over-expect, universities over-promise, and both over-claim.**

Ray Bacchetti, former education program director at the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and an astute observer of these trends, and his colleague Thomas Ehrlich at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, recently co-edited a collection of essays—their own and others’—on *Reconnecting Education and Foundations: Turning Good Intentions into Educational Capital*. Bacchetti, who was a Stanford University administrator before moving to Hewlett, sees the disconnect between foundations and higher education as the product of deep-seated attributes. Universities are too set in their ways and inward-looking, while foundations are insular and shortsighted. In the mating dance that often passes for substantive engagement, Bacchetti warns, foundations over-expect, universities over-promise, and both over-claim. At base, they are too much alike. “While self-absorption is in the culture of colleges and universities,” he writes, “in foundations, it is in the genes.”

Bacchetti and Ehrlich want to reinvigorate the relationship where it has most deteriorated, around teaching and learning, through “educational capital” amassed by more collaboration among colleges and universities and by foundations sharing information among themselves and prospective grantees. This vision resonates with others. Lucy Bernholz, a California-based philanthropy consultant, called for knowledge-sharing and alliances among foundations in her 2004 book, *Creating Philanthropic Capital Markets*. In a more scholarly treatise last year, Helmut Anheier and Diana Leat encouraged foundations to engage in “creative philanthropy” that is daring, data-driven and cross-cutting. And now Joel Fleishman, a Duke University scholar and former foundation executive, has come forward with a book that implores foundations to cast aside their overly secretive and arrogant style and become more transparent and evaluative in their work.

It remains to be seen if foundations will respond to these urgings. Their missions can be generations old and their way of doing things deeply ingrained. Their limited accountability inhibits change imposed from beyond their own boardrooms. To help build educational capital they would need to set aside high-profile grant

dollars in support of back-office information-gathering and disseminating. And despite a history of little mutual cooperation, they would have to group themselves around a set of shared goals and commit to a sustained longitudinal effort—a pedagogical version of the Framingham Heart Study. Critics accuse foundations of myopia and too frequently abandoning programs. Foundation officials, however, prefer to talk about “nimbleness” and the ability to move quickly and address new issues, something they will be loath to give up.

Universities, for their part, are not built to produce the quick results foundations often look for. They are complex places with sometimes contentious sources of decision-making and initiative, including tenured faculty, entrenched departments, deans, top executives, trustees and alumni groups. The pace can be slow, calling to mind Woodrow Wilson’s *bon mot* when he was Princeton’s president that one could move a cemetery more easily than the mindset of a college faculty. Universities also harbor a greater range of thinking than is usually represented in foundations’ narrow, proprietary programs. Indeed, as the author of one of the articles in the Bacchetti-Ehrlich volume quips, faculty might want to ask “by what hanging chads” foundations were chosen to set the education agenda. If nothing else, with institutions ranging from large research universities to small liberal arts colleges and from highly selective to open-admission ones, higher education may in the end simply be too diverse for any integrated approach to teaching and learning.

Many truly creative and deeply committed teachers populate our nation’s campuses and do see themselves engaged in the common effort to improve teaching and learning through dialogue and shared ideas. But colleges and universities also operate in a highly competitive environment, something foreign to the world of foundations. They try to establish their own brands built variously around their roles as key fixtures in local and regional economies, as fonts of discovery, new technology and entrepreneurship, as champions of civic and community engagement and not least as providers to students of both profound learning and marketable skills. Every institution sees itself distinctively through the prism of its own resources and character—and pursues that image in mission statements, promotional materials and fundraising campaigns that appeal to alumni whose giving potential and receptivity to university appeals far exceed that of foundations. Pedagogy is but one feature of this campus portrait, and restrictive education programs at foundations might be bypassed anyway for others that support research and programs better aligned with the broad spectrum of university priorities.

Indeed, the interaction between foundations and higher education has always been mostly about things other than pedagogy. As philanthropy expert Charles T. Clotfelter of Duke University documents in his contribution to *Reconnecting Education and Foundations*, over half of key foundation grants to higher education

in 2003 went for research, undergraduate scholarships, graduate and postdoctoral fellowships and faculty leaves and salary support.

With Bacchetti and Ehrlich we can hope that foundations and higher education can improve their relationship, even around the thorny issue of teaching and learning. If the conversation does perk up, let me suggest that foundations might also look to broader curricular issues. Careerism on campus is eroding liberal education. Conservative foundations have addressed this from their own traditionalist, if not reactionary, perspective, while the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has a longstanding interest in the humanities and the Teagle Foundation has for years supported small liberal arts colleges. But elsewhere on the foundation landscape, one sees little reference to issues embedded in what used to be called a “well-rounded education.”

The former president of the American Council of Learned Societies, Stanley Katz, wondered several years ago where the “learned foundations” have gone that encouraged open, disinterested inquiry and scholarship rather than short-term policy research—scholarship that probed basic social and scientific questions to develop the “essential knowledge upon which ameliorative strategies could be based.” The big questions that humanists ask do not translate well to action-oriented

foundation programs. But as the University of Washington’s David P. Barash has noted, the more science advances and overshadows the humanities, the more its frontiers such as genetic engineering, robotics and cloning raise questions that beg for humanistic wisdom. Meanwhile on campus, the decline of liberal education continues. Students graduating from four-year colleges in New England with majors in the humanities, for example, dropped from almost 12,000 in 1971 to less than 5,000 in 2004. The humanities disciplines, to be sure, have brought some of this on themselves with theoretical squabbling and impenetrable jargon. Robert Weisbuch, then at the Woodrow Wilson Fellowship Foundation and now president of Drew University, said in 2005 that “it is not the world that has refused the humanities; it is the humanities that have refused the world.” To help these disciplines find a more relevant voice and re-enter the larger public discourse, foundations could encourage proposals that bring humanists together with scientists in public sessions or “town meetings” around issues like genetic engineering; or provide support to university presses that publish book series in the humanities that target a broad audience through more accessible writing.

So, whither the relationship between foundations and higher education? It is true that over the past

15 years, the Pew Charitable Trusts, Atlantic Philanthropies and Hewlett and W. K. Kellogg foundations and others have sharply reduced or eliminated their support of higher education teaching and learning. During roughly the same period, however, new foundations with programs aimed specifically at higher education have appeared on the scene, among them the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, Lumina Foundation, Wallace Coulter Foundation, Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, and here in New England, the Davis Educational Foundation. Meanwhile, the Mellon Foundation, W.M. Keck Foundation, Alfred P. Sloan Foundation and others show no sign of abandoning their longstanding support of college and university research and other activities.

From many of these foundations will come, for sure, more strategic and assessment-driven programming, and foundation representatives will still be

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irritated, as Bacchetti confirms they so often have been, when colleges and universities show up on their doorstep intent on substituting their own agenda for that of the foundation. I would imagine, however, that

this happens less and less these days as those on campuses seeking to exploit fundraising opportunities have learned to orient their institutions' academic priorities to the well-honed concerns of foundations.

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## Warning Lights

### New Dashboard Reports Help Institutions Gauge their Performance

LAWRENCE M. BUTLER

The annual "Trends & Indicators" issue of CONNECTION paints a statistical picture of the social, demographic and educational landscape that New England colleges and universities inhabit. We can even glimpse in these data some of the forces shaping the terrain in the years ahead. But how well do New England's college presidents and trustees navigate that landscape? How well are their "vehicles" performing? In addition to the external view, shouldn't they have their own internal "Trends & Indicators" issue—their own sets of institutional metrics to gauge progress toward student enrollment and retention goals, for example, or to alert key decision-makers to pending problems in fundraising or academic quality.

So-called dashboard reports—like an automobile's instrument panel—present quick, comprehensible overviews of the institution's status and direction. Instead of speed, RPM and engine temperature, dashboard reports display comparable measures of organizational performance and mission effectiveness. These key performance indicators (KPIs) are presented in consistent formats that enable institutional leaders to readily spot significant changes and trends. Like an automobile dashboard, these reports often display the equivalent of warning lights that flash on only when there is an impending problem or when certain variables stray outside of predetermined limits. In this way, the dashboard can serve as an early warning device alerting the board and senior administration when it might be important to dig deeper for greater insight.

#### Dashboard Styles

Among styles of dashboard reporting, the "scorecard dashboard," which first gained currency in the for-profit sector, has become increasingly common in nonprofits, including colleges and universities. Figure 1 is an example of one college's scorecard style of dashboard.

On a single page, 29 KPIs are listed along with their current values and their lowest and highest values during the previous five years. The direction of change of the current value for each KPI in relation to the most recent, previously reported value is indicated by an up or down arrow icon or a square for no change. The importance of that change (from a strategic, financial or mission perspective) is expressed as better, worse or neutral and indicated by the color of the icon (red, green, or gray respectively). This scorecard dashboard sits on top of a set of pages that briefly discuss each of the 29 indicators, adding detail as required.

Figure 1

