Journal of Postsecondary Student Success 3(3)
doi: 10.33009/fsop_jpss135047

The Role of State Higher Education Policy in Student Success and Equity

Robert Kelchen*

University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Abstract

Public colleges and universities are a key driver of social and economic mobility, yet they also face increasingly challenging financial and political environments. In this essay, I discuss four key areas in which state higher education policy can influence student success and equity: the amount of funding provided, funding allocation mechanisms, tuition policies, and policies related to admissions and enrollment. I then conclude with some key policy questions going forward.

Keywords: higher education policy, student success, state policy, equity

* Contact: rkelchen@utk.edu

The Role of State Higher Education Policy in Student Success and Equity

Public higher education in the United States is at an inflection point in the mid-2020s. The challenges facing the sector that enrolls more than three in four undergraduate students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023) are numerous. A key challenge is declining enrollment across the vast majority of colleges. Overall enrollment in public higher education fell nearly 13% between 2011 and 2021 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023), placing tremendous strain on many institutions' budgets and leading to program closures and institutional consolidations. These enrollment declines are driven in part by the so-called "demographic cliff," a drop in the number of high school graduates that has already begun in some states and is expected to spread widely throughout the rest of the decade (Bransberger et al., 2020; Grawe, 2018).

Yet more of the decline in enrollment to this point comes from two potentially more concerning factors that point to other challenges facing the sector. The first is a sizable decline from 69% in 2018 to 62% in 2021 in the share of recent high school graduates attending college. Notably, the gender gap in enrollment widened from 4.5 percentage points to 14.6 percentage points in favor of women during this period (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023). The second is a decline of nearly 50% in the number of undergraduate students age 25 or older since the end of the Great Recession (author's calculations using Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System [IPEDS] data).

These declines in the potential collegegoing pool are likely a symptom of declining public trust in higher education. Between 2015 and 2023, the share of Americans who have a "great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in higher education fell from 57% to 36%. This decline was largely among self-identified Republicans, widening a partisan gap in confidence from 12 to 40 percentage points (Brenan, 2023). This decline in public trust has not yet led to widespread cuts in funding, as state appropriations reached an all-time high in Fiscal Year 2022 (Kunkle & Laderman, 2023). Yet policymakers across the political spectrum have made it clear that they will not provide additional funding without implementing provisions that hold colleges accountable for their performance (Kelchen, 2018).

The challenges facing higher education threaten to make an already inequitable system even more so. There are longstanding gaps in enrollment and completion rates by race/ethnicity and family income that have barely budged over time (e.g., Bailey & Dynarski, 2011; Voss et al., 2022). Public higher education is highly stratified, with resources concentrated among flagship universities at the expense of community colleges and regional comprehensive universities that serve the vast majority of low-income, minority, and first-generation students (Kelchen et al., 2020; Taylor & Cantwell, 2019). This trend has become more pronounced in recent years with rapid growth at many flagship public universities and declines across the rest of public higher education (Gardner, 2023).

State higher education policy plays a pivotal role in supporting (or detracting from) student success and closing gaps in college attainment rates. Barring a massive partisan realignment in Washington, it does not appear that Congress is likely to implement major changes to higher education policy in the near future. While presidents can take some steps through executive actions (Natow, 2022), the Supreme Court is likely to limit what can be done through this mechanism. Additionally, higher education policy in the states is much less partisan than in Washington, with a majority of states endorsing college completion goals (HCM Strategists, 2023) and ideas for improving student success frequently diffusing across states (e.g., Gándara et al., 2017; Lacy & Tandberg, 2014). This creates the opportunity for substantial student success innovations to occur in states even while the federal government is gridlocked.

In this essay, I draw upon my expertise as a scholar of higher education finance and policy and my work with the InformEd States team (informedstates.org) to examine some of the key mechanisms that states are exploring in an effort to help improve student success and foster equity. I first examine the theories of action that could result in state policies affecting student success before considering the effectiveness of various mechanisms. I then conclude with several key policy areas to consider in the coming years.

Theories of Action

The two most common theoretical frameworks used to explain the relationships between colleges and state policymakers are principal-agent theory (Jensen & Meckling, 1976) and resource dependence theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Under principal-agent theory, the principal (the state government) tries to influence the actions of the agent (a public college or university) by providing rewards or sanctions based on the institution's behavior. Growing accountability pressures in public higher education have led to state policymakers trying to influence a host of actions from how colleges are funded to their ability to set tuition (Kelchen, 2018).

Resource dependence theory posits that organizations will take the steps necessary for them to obtain the funding that they need to operate. In higher education, this has two major implications. The first is that public colleges and universities seek to diversify their revenue sources so they are not as dependent on state funding as their main source of revenue. Four-year universities have sought to increase out-of-state enrollment, donations, and research funding as alternative revenue sources. Research universities have been particularly successful, with state funding only making up 15% of total revenue in Fiscal Year 2021 compared to about 30% at regional comprehensives (author's calculations using IPEDS data). Community colleges have less of an ability to use these sources, but local funding (present in approximately 29 states) helps to provide a buffer (Ortagus et al., 2022). As a result, state policies may be more effective at influencing the actions of regional comprehensive universities and community colleges that do not have a backstop of local funding.

In order for either of these theories to be effective in explaining institutional behaviors, two key conditions must hold (Kelchen, 2018). The first is that institutions must be able to change their actions in ways that improve their performance. This requires colleges to have the technical and financial resources to effectively make changes, something which is often an issue for underresourced institutions (Dougherty et al., 2016). Research suggests that regional comprehensive universities are already operating closer to their efficiency frontier given available resources than are public research universities (McClure et al., 2023; Titus et al., 2017).

The second is that institutions must have some level of confidence that they will see benefits from the efforts that they take in response to pressures or incentives from state policymakers. Turnover among public college presidents has increased substantially over the last several decades (Melidona et al., 2023; Monks, 2012), making it more likely that new leadership will be in place by the time that any changes become successful. On the other hand, frequent changes in the direction of state higher education policy (often driven by changes in partisan balance) also run the risk of behaviors that used to be valued now being ignored or actively disincentivized. This is particularly true for equity-focused work given sharp disagreements between Democrats and Republicans regarding what should be allowed and rewarded. Finally, even if an incentive structure remains in place and colleges can improve their performance, the zero-sum nature of many mechanisms means that colleges that do not improve as quickly as their (often better resourced) peers are harmed (Hagood, 2019; Ortagus et al., 2023a).

Put together, the common theories of actions and the two key caveats suggest that while state higher education policies are implemented with the intention of improving student outcomes, they are unlikely to be successful unless they are large in magnitude, sustained in nature, and provide supports to institutions that need additional capacity to make changes. As discussed in the next section, common policies vary considerably in their effectiveness in improving student outcomes.

Key State Policies

State legislators, governors, and higher education agencies generally have the ability to set or influence policies in a number of areas that can influence student success. In this section, I discuss how four key policies work and research examining the relationship between each policy and student success with a focus on equity. The policies are: (a) the amount of funding, (b) funding allocation mechanisms, (c) tuition policies, and (d) admission and enrollment policies.

Amount of Funding

In Fiscal Year 2022, state governments provided approximately $105 billion to fund public higher education—the highest amount on record and substantially above

funding levels before the Great Recession. Yet per-student funding remains below Great Recession levels in approximately half of all states, suggesting notable differences in how states have prioritized higher education funding in recent years (Kunkle & Laderman, 2023). Although most research finds that states with Democratic control or liberal ideologies tend to fund public higher education at higher levels (e.g., Ortega, 2020; Tandberg, 2013), there is no clear pattern present in more recent funding changes.

Research has shown a clear relationship between higher levels of educational resources, particularly those used to provide more robust student services, and college completion rates (Chen, 2012; Pike & Robbins, 2020; Webber & Ehrenberg, 2010). This results in a positive relationship between state funding and enrollment and completion outcomes (Deming & Walters, 2017; Monarrez et al., 2021). There is a stronger association between state funding and graduation rates for Black and Hispanic students than White students (Horn et al., 2023). Chakrabarti et al. (2020) found differential effects of additional state funding between four-year and two-year institutions. They found that increased funding among four-year universities reduced tuition and helped students earn degrees more quickly, while increased funding among community colleges increased overall educational attainment without affecting tuition. Finally, Bound et al. (2019) studied the effects of state funding cuts at public universities and showed that tuition increased and completion rates decreased.

In addition to funding colleges through appropriations, states also provide financial aid to students attending public higher education. States gave out $10.2 billion in grants in Fiscal Year 2022, and this number has been rising more quickly than overall appropriations for years (Kunkle & Laderman, 2023). Grant aid can be classified into three categories: need-based aid (where financial need is the primary eligibility criterion), merit-based aid (where prior academic performance is the primary criterion), and combination aid (with both need-based and merit-based components).[1] While all of these types of state aid programs have the stated goal of increasing educational attainment, arguments for need-based aid are often focused more on equity while merit-based aid programs are typically framed around economic development and retaining top students in state.

The vast majority of state financial aid used to be primarily need-based prior to the introduction of the merit-based Georgia HOPE scholarship in 1993.[2] Since the mid-2000s, the share of state funds awarded solely based on financial need fell from nearly

1 The term "non-need-based aid" is used as a substitute for "merit-based aid" since what is actually considered to be merit instead of metrics tied to available resources is highly debatable. Nevertheless, I use the most commonly used term while recognizing its limitations.

2 In 1993 and 1994, the HOPE program had a family income cap, which was then repealed entirely in 1995 (Lee & Schneider, 2021). This program also had a large effect on the number of cars sold in Georgia in more affluent areas (Cornwell & Mustard, 2007), suggesting that some families substituted state funds for their own savings.

60% to just over 40% as states have shifted to merit or combination aid programs. The trend toward pure merit aid has been primarily driven by Southern states, but states such as California, Maryland, and Massachusetts have invested heavily in programs with need-based and merit-based components (Baker et al., 2023). Additionally, tuition-free community college programs have been adopted in states such as Tennessee and Oregon and have increased enrollment (Gurantz, 2020; Nguyen, 2020), but it is still too early to observe effects on completions.

The effectiveness of state grant aid programs on improving student outcomes varies based on program characteristics. In general, programs with need-based components are more effective than solely merit-based programs in increasing overall completion rates (e.g., Nguyen et al., 2021). Traditional need-based programs such as the Florida Student Access Grant (Castleman & Long, 2016) and combination aid programs like California's Cal Grant program (Bettinger et al., 2019) have generated increases in college completions. My team's research has shown that combination aid programs increase the number of associate and bachelor's degree completions, especially for Hispanic students (Baker et al., 2023). Bettinger et al. (2019) also found increases in long-term earnings, similar to a study examining the effects of the federal Pell Grant on Texas public college students (Denning et al., 2019).

Pure merit aid programs in states have generally been effective in keeping top students in state and increasing overall enrollment (Cornwell et al., 2006; Zhang & Ness, 2010), but effects on overall degree completions are much more modest for broader-based merit aid programs (Fitzpatrick & Jones, 2016; Gurantz & Odle, 2022; Zhang et al., 2013). These programs tend to have even smaller effects on the retention of graduates (Fitzpatrick & Jones, 2016; Sjoquist & Winters, 2013). However, there are some important nuances to emphasize. Merit aid programs with fairly modest academic criteria like the early years of the West Virginia PROMISE program and highly targeted programs such as Missouri's Bright Flight scholarship both generated long-term effects, suggesting that design characteristics may matter (Harrington et al., 2016).

Funding Allocation Mechanisms

Additional money provided to colleges or students generally improves student outcomes and can reduce completion gaps across student groups. However, there are two important items to keep in mind. The first is that given higher education's traditional role as a balancing wheel of state budgets, particularly in more conservative states (Delaney & Doyle, 2018; Taylor et al., 2023), the prospects of more funding are generally limited to good economic times. The second is that even in states with unified Democratic control, there is still a strong desire to place conditions on appropriations in order to better meet policy objectives.

The lion's share of research on state funding models has focused on performance-based funding (PBF) systems, which tie funding to outcome metrics such as student progression, credential completions, and research productivity (Ortagus et al., 2020). Yet only

about 10% of state funds are tied to performance metrics, even though approximately 30 states use PBF (Rosinger et al., 2022). Using the first-ever longitudinal dataset on the share of funds tied to performance and making distinctions between funded and unfunded PBF systems, my team found that PBF generally had null or modest effects on enrollment, institutional selectivity, completions, research productivity, and post-college student debt and earnings (Hu et al., 2022; Kelchen et al., 2022; Kelchen et al., 2023c; Ortagus et al., 2023b; Rosinger et al., 2023). Additionally, PBF also widens gaps in institutional resources between higher-resourced and lower-resourced institutions, hindering equity (Ortagus et al., 2023a). This is driven in part by states such as Florida that reward research excellence and research funding in their systems (Cornelius & Cavanaugh, 2016).

The relative ineffectiveness of PBF in improving student outcomes and the small share of funds at stake in most states led us to explore a more comprehensive typology of state funding models. In recent work (Kelchen et al., 2023a), we divided funding models into three types. The first model was traditional funding mechanisms, in which colleges have no ability to influence their funding. This included states with no clear funding mechanism or base-adjusted models that give all institutions the same percentage increase or decrease in a given year. The second model was incentive funding, in which colleges compete against each other for funds. This included enrollment-based and performance-based funding models. The third model was hybrid funding, which included an incentive funding component along with at least some funding protected by a base-adjusted model. Equity components are then layered on top of these funding models and can consist of components based on student characteristics (such as the number of minority or low-income students) or institutional characteristics (such as additional funds for small colleges or rural institutions).

In the two-year sector, hybrid funding models have been the most common model since the mid-2000s, although traditional funding models gained popularity immediately following the Great Recession. Traditional models were the most common model in the four-year sector in every year of our panel except for 2020, when hybrid models finally caught up. A growing number of states and systems adopted equity components in their funding mechanisms, although there was a decrease immediately following the Great Recession (Kelchen et al., 2023a). Similar to our work on the effects of PBF models, we found muted effects of funding model characteristics on student outcomes. While there was an increase in community college enrollment under hybrid models, this does not correspond to an increase in completions (Kelchen et al., 2023b).

Looking ahead, numerous states are considering overhauls of their higher education funding formulas in the aftermath of the pandemic. There are strong pressures from advocacy groups to continue tying more funding to student outcomes, while also recognizing the need to provide sufficient funding for colleges to successfully educate more students (e.g., Complete College America, 2023). At the same time, institutions that are currently advantaged in funding models (especially flagship universities) are trying to shape funding mechanisms in ways that protect the status quo. As a result, models

that may look transformational on paper may not do much due to the implementation of stop-loss and hold-harmless provisions that prevent funds from changing hands.

There is a long history of funding adequacy lawsuits in K-12 education that required states to provide additional funding to underresourced districts, often requiring states to redistribute resources from advantaged districts (Dishman & Redish, 2010). The subsequent reforms sharply increased spending and student achievement (Lafortune et al., 2018). While higher education is not typically viewed as a constitutional right as K-12 education is, a growing number of scholars are focusing on the issue of funding adequacy in community colleges (e.g., Kolbe & Baker, 2019; Melguizo et al., 2017) and there have been a number of successful lawsuits by historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) over underfunding compared to the predominately White land-grant universities (Douglas-Gabriel, 2023). This is an area where more legal action is possible.

Tuition Policies

Public colleges and universities are frequently pilloried for high tuition charges, and tuition and fees quadrupled in inflation-adjusted dollars at four-year universities and tripled at two-year colleges between the early 1980s and the mid-2010s (author's calculations using data from Ma & Pender, 2023). Even though some of the increase in tuition is due to per-student state funding not keeping up with inflation (Webber, 2017), there is a strong perception among the general public that public higher education is rapidly becoming unaffordable. Additionally, there is evidence that tuition increases reduce enrollment more generally (Hemelt & Marcotte, 2011) and particularly among minority students at less-selective four-year universities and community colleges (Allen & Wolniak, 2019), highlighting the need for policymakers to attempt to moderate tuition increases.

States have responded by placing limits on how much colleges can increase tuition. In Fiscal Year 2023, 19 states froze tuition at public universities and nine other states implemented caps. In the decade prior to 2013, the largest number of states with freezes was seven, showing considerable concerns about affordability in recent years (author's data collection from state policy documents). These formal tuition controls along with threats from legislators to withhold funding from colleges that increase tuition have contributed to inflation-adjusted tuition and fees returning to 2011–12 levels during the 2023–24 academic year (Ma & Pender, 2023).

Tuition control policies have indeed been effective in reducing tuition in the short term, but colleges responded by increasing tuition quickly after the cap was lifted (Deming & Walters, 2017; Miller & Park, 2022). There is evidence that colleges, particularly those with limited resources, responded to tuition controls by reducing financial aid (Miller & Park, 2022). My research concluded that colleges increased fees more quickly during a tuition cap to try to obtain additional revenue (Kelchen, 2016). I also found evidence that tuition freezes in particular resulted in increased enrollment at less-selective institutions that were willing to expand their capacity (Kelchen &

Pingel, 2023) and that those same institutions saw a decline in student debt burdens of their former students (Kelchen, 2024). There are legitimate concerns about colleges being unable to obtain resources needed to provide a quality education under a tuition freeze, but there are also clear short-term benefits to students.

A number of states and systems have attempted to reduce student charges by implementing guaranteed tuition policies that lock in a fixed tuition rate for a full-time student's typical time in college. This provides financial certainty to students and their families by preventing tuition increases, but it also limits colleges' ability to respond to financial challenges that may come up during that period. Research on a guaranteed tuition plan that existed in Illinois for more than a decade showed that the state's public universities increased tuition for first-year students far above other states and that the state also significantly cut appropriations following the passage of a guarantee (Delaney & Kearney, 2015a; Delaney & Kearney, 2015b). Analyses on plans in both Illinois and North Carolina concluded that out-of-state tuition also increased more quickly as colleges sought additional revenue sources (Delaney & Kearney, 2016; Worsham, 2023).

Finally, it is important to note that tuition charges frequently vary by year in school and/or field of study. Differential tuition policies have existed at public universities for decades, and they began spreading to community colleges following the Great Recession (Cornell Higher Education Research Institute, 2012; Friedel & Thomas, 2013; Nelson et al., 2017). They have become much more prevalent since the early 2000s at public universities as institutions seek to help recoup the costs of offering expensive majors such as engineering or nursing or look to generate additional revenue in in-demand majors such as business. My analysis of institutional websites found that between one third and one half of public universities currently have differential tuition in these three popular fields of study, roughly triple the prevalence in the early 2000s (Kelchen, 2023).

Differential tuition policies have the potential to either increase or decrease the number of students majoring in covered fields. If the additional tuition revenue is used to expand program capacity and/or provide need-based financial aid, then differential tuition could increase racial and socioeconomic diversity. On the other hand, if programs are not expanded and financial aid is not provided, price-sensitive students are likely to choose other fields of study. Analyses of Texas's tuition deregulation policy, which allowed for differential tuition but required a portion of funds to be dedicated for financial aid, found a mix of positive and negative effects (Andrews & Stange, 2019; Flores & Shepherd, 2014; Kim & Stange, 2016). A national analysis by Stange (2015) found that early adopters of differential tuition (prior to the Great Recession) saw an increase in the share of nursing degrees and a decrease in the share of engineering degrees, particularly for Black students. However, my analysis using more recent data found null effects (Kelchen, 2023).

Admission and Enrollment Policies

The final broad set of state policies that can affect student success is in the area of admission and enrollment. With declining enrollment in many states, state legislatures, higher education agencies, and individual colleges have taken steps to try to broaden the pool of students who are considering college attendance. Several states, such as Idaho, have adopted direct admissions policies that automatically admit all students to open-access colleges and admit students who meet certain benchmarks to selective institutions. These policies help to reduce the burden of applying to college and send the message to students that higher education is an option. Idaho's policy has been shown to increase enrollment in community colleges in particular (Odle & Delaney, 2022), but this did not scale across other adopting states (Odle & Delaney, 2023). At this point, it is too early to observe any effects on completions.

A growing number of states are implementing guaranteed admissions plans for their most selective public universities, in which students who graduate within a certain percentile of their high school class automatically gain admission. Texas is the most prominent example, adopting a plan in 1997 that admitted the top 10% of high school graduates into the public university of their choice. This plan, which was adopted following a court decision banning affirmative action, led students from underresourced urban and rural schools alike to attend flagships and increased racial and socioeconomic diversity (e.g., Andrews et al., 2010; Long et al., 2010). However, the popularity of the program has led to the threshold being raised to the top 6% at UT-Austin (University of Texas at Austin, 2021), and there is some evidence that students switched high schools in order to have a better chance of admission (Cullen et al., 2013). South Carolina and Tennessee adopted top 10% plans for their flagship universities in fall 2023 following the 2023 Supreme Court decision banning race-conscious admissions (Thomas, 2023), and there is interest in other conservative-leaning states.

States and systems also frequently influence out-of-state enrollment levels or set enrollment caps at public universities, particularly as the share of out-of-state students has grown at nearly every flagship university over the last two decades (Klein, 2022). Public universities have frequently turned to out-of-state students in an effort to fill budget gaps following cuts in state funding or simply to garner additional revenue (Bound et al., 2020; Jaquette & Curs, 2015), although this often comes at the expense of enrolling underrepresented minority in-state students (Jaquette et al., 2016). This can be an effective revenue generation strategy at some of the most prestigious flagship institutions (Orlova et al., 2023), even though my research published in this journal suggests this is less successful across public higher education (Kelchen, 2021).

While there is no national database of nonresident enrollment caps, examples include 10% at UT-Austin (University of Texas at Austin, 2021), between 18% and 50% in North Carolina (Perez Uribe Guinassi, 2023), and 18% in California (Burke, 2021). North Carolina notably fines universities an amount equivalent to the out-of-state tuition premium for exceeding the cap; UNC-Wilmington was levied a $4 million

penalty in 2023 for exceeding the cap in two consecutive years even though in-state enrollment increased substantially (Atkinson, 2023).

Institutional enrollment practices and policy goals often pit flagship universities against regional comprehensives and community colleges against four-year institutions. These battles often focus on approving new programs, which is generally within the purview of state higher education agencies (Venters, 2021). There have been prominent disputes in states such as Maryland over the state approving new programs at predominantly White institutions while not supporting existing programs at HBCUs (Hogan, 2023). Additionally, four-year institutions in states such as California and Idaho are pushing back over community colleges offering baccalaureate degrees (Echelman, 2023; Palmer, 2024) in spite of evidence suggesting that community colleges do not reduce enrollment at public universities (Kramer II et al., 2020).

Conclusion

Public higher education plays a key role in social and economic mobility, and the importance of a high-quality, affordable education is likely growing due to societal and technological changes. Yet the ability of colleges to offer such an education is heavily influenced by the policies of state governments and agencies that reflect increased public skepticism of the economic value and cultural values of higher education. These pressures appear unlikely to abate anytime soon as they increasingly transcend party lines.

In this essay, I discussed four areas in which state higher education policy can influence student success and enhance equity. Of these areas, the research is abundantly clear that additional state funding is most effective at achieving these goals. However, this is also the most difficult item to ask legislators for due to competing financial priorities and a general wariness to make what could be long-term financial commitments. Policies around funding models, tuition setting, and admissions and enrollment can all affect student outcomes, but the details are crucial in order to have positive effects.

I conclude this essay by offering four key areas that I am watching in the coming years, all of which have implications for policy and create research opportunities. The first is how flagship universities are prospering in many states while regional comprehensives are struggling (Gardner, 2023). The question in this case becomes whether state higher education agencies or legislatures will step in to limit the growth of flagships in order to help support other institutions. I see this as unlikely because many flagships enjoy having numerous alumni serving in the legislature and a strong brand that has developed over time (McLendon et al., 2009; Weerts, 2021), but it is possible if non-flagship institutions are situated in areas represented by powerful legislators. The threat of significant layoffs may result in changes that favor regionally-focused institutions.

Second, efforts by public colleges to seek additional revenue sources will only intensify as future state funding remains uncertain and colleges look to strengthen their

position. Being entrepreneurial is the name of the game in the 2020s, and institutions are revising their budget models to encourage units to generate additional revenue (Rutherford & Rabovsky, 2018). Tuition revenue is typically the largest revenue source outside of state funding, but caps on tuition increases and out-of-state enrollment at the undergraduate level make it challenging to increase tuition revenue. These pressures will likely lead to efforts to increase graduate enrollment and new online programs, but the return on investment for colleges is uncertain. Other revenue sources such as donations and sponsored projects are an option for only the wealthiest institutions.

Third, colleges should expect state policymakers to pay a great deal of attention to their admission and financial aid policies and practitioners given the recent Supreme Court decision on affirmative action and a general lack of deference to what used to be considered institutional decisions. Conservative state attorneys general have already demanded changes to institutional financial aid programs even though they were not explicitly included in the Supreme Court decision (Jaschik, 2023), and special recruitment efforts may also face additional scrutiny. The growth of guaranteed admissions plans help guard against political pressures, but they also limit institutions' abilities to shape their incoming classes. The effects of these pressures and changes certainly merit substantial research.

Finally, it is crucial to understand current pressures on higher education governance structures, as quality governance is a necessary condition for student success. Governors and legislators in many states are moving toward being more hands-on regarding the selection of trustees and institutional leaders and in some cases are bypassing the traditional shared governance process to appoint new leaders. It is encouraging to see a new generation of governance scholars emerge in recent years to study this topic (e.g., Morgan et al., 2021; Rubin et al., 2023), as there will be no shortage of policies to research in the future.

References

Allen, D., & Wolniak, G. C. (2019). Exploring the effects of tuition increases on racial/ethnic diversity at public colleges and universities. *Research in Higher Education*, *60*, 18–43. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-018-9502-6

Andrews, R. J., Ranchhod, V., & Sathy, V. (2010). Estimating the responsiveness of college applications to the likelihood of acceptance and financial assistance: Evidence from Texas. *Economics of Education Review*, *29*, 104–115. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2009.04.004

Andrews, R. J., & Stange, K. M. (2019). Price regulation, price discrimination, and equality of opportunity in higher education: Evidence from Texas. *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, *11*(4), 31–65. https://doi.org/10.1257/pol.20170306

Atkinson, B. (2023, November 15). UNC-Wilmington facing multimillion-dollar sanction for exceeding enrollment cap. *WUNC*. https://www.wunc.org/education/2023-11-15/unc-wilmington-facing-multimillion-dollar-sanction-exceeding-enrollment-cap

Bailey, M. J., & Dynarski, S. M. (2011). *Gains and gaps: Changing inequality in U.S. college entry and completion*. National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper 17633. https://doi.org/10.3386/w17633

Baker, D., Rosinger, K. O., Ortagus, J. C., Kelchen, R., Everett, A., Lingo, M., & Choi, J. (2023). *A national analysis of variations in state financial aid program design and student success*. InformEd States.

Bettinger, E., Gurantz, O., Kawano, L., Sacerdote, B., & Stevens, M. (2019). The long-run impacts of financial aid: Evidence from California's Cal Grant. *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, *11*(1), 64–94. https://doi.org/10.1257/pol.20170466

Bound, J., Braga, B., Khanna, G., & Turner, S. (2019). Public universities: The supply side of building a skilled workforce. *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences*, *5*(5), 43–66. https://doi.org/10.7758/RSF.2019.5.5.03

Bound, J., Braga, B., Khanna, G., & Turner, S. (2020). A passage to America: University funding and international students. *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, *12*(1), 97–126. https://doi.org/10.1257/pol.20170620

Bransberger, P., Falkenstern, C., & Lane, P. (2020). *Knocking at the college door: Projections of high school graduates*. Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education.

Brenan, M. (2023, July 11). Americans' confidence in higher education down sharply. *Gallup*. https://news.gallup.com/poll/508352/americans-confidence-higher-education-down-sharply.aspx

Burke, M. (2021, May 28). Legislators crafting deal to reduce numbers of out-of-state students at University of California. *EdSource*. https://edsource.org/2021/legislators-crafting-deal-to-reduce-numbers-of-out-of-state-students-at-university-of-california/655522

Castleman, B. L., & Long, B. T. (2016). Looking beyond enrollment: The causal effect of need-based grants on college access, persistence, and graduation. *Journal of Labor Economics*, *34*(4), 1023–1073. https://doi.org/10.1086/686643

Chakrabarti, R., Gorton, N., & Lovenheim, M. F. (2020). *State investment in higher education: Effects on human capital formation, student debt, and long-term financial outcomes of students*. National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper 27885.

Chen, R. (2012). Institutional characteristics and college student dropout risks: A multilevel event history analysis. *Research in Higher Education*, *53*, 487–505. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-011-9241-4

Complete College America. (2023). *Ending unfunded mandates in higher education: Using completion-goals funding to improve accountability and outcomes*.

Cornelius, L. M., & Cavanaugh, T. W. (2016). Grading the metrics: Performance-based funding in the Florida State University system. *Journal of Education Finance*, *42*(2), 153–187. https://www.jstor.org/stable/44162580

Cornell Higher Education Research Institute. (2012). *2011 survey of differential tuition at public higher education institutions*.

Cornwell, C., & Mustard, D. B. (2007). Merit-based college scholarships and car sales. *Education Finance and Policy*, *2*(2), 133–151. https://doi.org/10.1162/edfp.2007.2.2.133

Cornwell, C., Mustard, D. B., & Sridhar, D. J. (2006). The enrollment effects of merit-based financial aid: Evidence from Georgia's HOPE program. *Journal of Labor Economics*, *24*(4), 761–786. https://doi.org/10.1086/506485

Cullen, J. B., Long, M. C., & Reback, R. (2013). Jockeying for position: Strategic high school choice under Texas' top ten percent plan. *Journal of Public Economics*, *97*, 32–48. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2012.08.012

Delaney, J. A., & Doyle, W. R. (2018). Patterns and volatility in state funding for higher education, 1951–2006. *Teachers College Record*, *120*(6), 1–42. https://doi.org/10.1177/016146811812000605

Delaney, J. A., & Kearney, T. D. (2015a). Guaranteed tuition policies and state general appropriations for higher education: A difference-in-difference analysis. *Journal of Education Finance*, *40*(4), 359–390. https://www.jstor.org/stable/24459431

Delaney, J. A., & Kearney, T. D. (2015b). The impact of guaranteed tuition policies on postsecondary education tuition levels: A difference-in-difference approach. *Economics of Education Review*, *47*, 80–99. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2015.04.003

Delaney, J. A., & Kearney, T. D. (2016). Alternative student-based revenue streams for higher education institutions: A difference-in-difference analysis using guaranteed tuition policies. *The Journal of Higher Education*, *87*(5), 731–769. https://doi.org/10.1353/jhe.2016.0028

Deming, D. J., & Walters, C. R. (2017). *The impact of price caps and spending cuts on US postsecondary attainment*. National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper 23736. https://doi.org/10.3386/w23736

Denning, J. T., Marx, B. M., & Turner, L. J. (2019). ProPelled: The effects of grants on graduation, earnings, and welfare. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, *11*(3), 199–224. https://doi.org/10.1257/app.20180100

Dishman, M., & Redish, T. (2010). Educational adequacy litigation in the American South: 1973–2009. *Peabody Journal of Education*, *85*(1), 16–31. https://doi.org/10.1080/01619560903523664

Dougherty, K. J., Jones, S. M., Lahr, H., Natow, R. S., Pheatt, L., & Reddy, V. (2016). *Performance funding for higher education*. Johns Hopkins University Press.

Douglas-Gabriel, D. (2023, September 18). States should fix underfunding of land-grant HBCUs, Biden administration says. *The Washington Post*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2023/09/18/hbcu-land-grant-funding-disparities/

Echelman, A. (2023, September 13). Why Cal State is pushing back on community colleges' plans to offer bachelor's degrees. *CalMatters*. https://calmatters.org/education/higher-education/2023/08/bachelors-degrees/

Fitzpatrick, M. D., & Jones, D. (2016). Post-baccalaureate migration and merit-based scholarships. *Economics of Education Review*, *54*, 155–172. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2016.07.002

Flores, S. M., & Shepherd, J. C. (2014). Pricing out the disadvantaged? The effect of tuition deregulation in Texas public four-year institutions. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *655*(1), 99–122. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716214539096

Friedel, J. N., & Thomas, G. (2013). Differential tuition: A community college budgetary strategy. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, *37*(3), 147–152. https://doi.org/10.1080/10668926.2013.739504

Gándara, D., Rippner, J. A., & Ness, E. C. (2017). Exploring the 'how' in policy diffusion: National intermediary organizations' roles in facilitating the spread of performance-based funding policies in the states. *The Journal of Higher Education*, *88*(5), 701–725. https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2016.1272089

Gardner, L. (2023, February 13). Flagships prosper, while regionals suffer. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. https://www.chronicle.com/article/flagships-prosper-while-regionals-suffer

Grawe, N. D. (2018). *Demographics and the demand for higher education*. Johns Hopkins University Press.

Gurantz, O. (2020). What does free community college buy? Early impacts from the Oregon Promise. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, *39*(1), 11–35. https://doi.org/10.1002/pam.22157

Gurantz, O., & Odle, T. K. (2022). The impact of merit aid on college choice and degree attainment: Reexamining Florida's Bright Futures program. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *44*(1), 79–104. https://doi.org/10.3102/01623737211030489

Hagood, L. P. (2019). The financial benefits and burdens of performance funding in higher education. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *41*(2), 189–213. https://doi.org/10.3102/0162373719837318

Harrington, J. R., Munoz, J., Curs, B. R., & Ehlert, M. (2016). Examining the impact of a highly targeted state administered merit aid program on brain drain:

Evidence from a regression discontinuity analysis of Missouri's Bright Flight program. *Research in Higher Education*, *57*, 423–447. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-015-9392-9

HCM Strategists. (2023, January 17). *States with higher education attainment goals*. Lumina Foundation. https://www.luminafoundation.org/stronger-nation/report/static/States_with_Higher_Education_Attainment_Goals.pdf

Hemelt, S. W., & Marcotte, D. E. (2011). The impact of tuition increases on enrollment at public colleges and universities. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *33*(4), 435–457. https://doi.org/10.3102/0162373711415261

Hogan, J. (2023, August 17). Md. Commission's vote to approve Towson University program was 'of no effect,' AG office says. *The Daily Record*. https://thedailyrecord.com/2023/08/17/ags-office-commissions-vote-to-approve-towson-program-was-of-no-effect/

Horn, A. S., Horner, O. G., Tandberg, D. A., Toutkoushian, R. K., & Williams-Wyche, S. N. (2023). The effect of state appropriations on college graduation rates of diverse students. *Journal of Education Finance*, *49*(1), 26–65. https://muse.jhu.edu/pub/34/article/908610/

Hu, X., Ortagus, J. C., Voorhees, N., Rosinger, K. O., & Kelchen, R. (2022). Disparate impacts of performance funding research incentives on research expenditures and state appropriations. *AERA Open, 8*. https://doi.org/10.1177/23328584211071109

Jaquette, O., & Curs, B. R. (2015). Creating the out-of-state university: Do public universities increase nonresident freshman enrollment in response to declining state appropriations? *Research in Higher Education*, *56*, 535–565. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-015-9362-2

Jaquette, O., Curs, B. R., & Posselt, J. R. (2016). Tuition rich, mission poor: Nonresident enrollment and the changing proportions of low-income and underrepresented minority students at public research universities. *The Journal of Higher Education*, *87*(5), 635–673. https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2016.11777417

Jaschik, S. (2023, July 5). Does the Supreme Court order apply to financial aid? *Inside Higher Ed*. https://www.insidehighered.com/news/admissions/2023/07/05/missouri-attorney-general-orders-colleges-drop-minority-scholarships

Jensen, M. C., & Meckling, W. H. (1976). Theory of the firm: Managerial behavior, agency costs and ownership structure. *Journal of Financial Economics*, *3*(4), 305–360. https://doi.org/10.1016/0304-405X(76)90026-X

Kelchen, R. (2016). An analysis of student fees: The roles of states and institutions. *The Review of Higher Education*, *39*(4), 597–619. https://doi.org/10.1353/rhe.2016.0027

Kelchen, R. (2018). *Higher education accountability*. Johns Hopkins University Press.

Kelchen, R. (2021). An exploration of nonresident student enrollment and institutional finances at public universities. *Journal of Postsecondary Student Success*, *1*(1), 81–105. https://doi.org/10.33009/fsop_jpss121539

Kelchen, R. (2023). *Examining the effects of differential tuition policies on bachelor's degree completions*. Paper presented at the Association for the Study of Higher Education annual conference, Minneapolis, MN.

Kelchen, R. (2024). *Do tuition controls freeze student debt?* Working paper.

Kelchen, R., Lingo, M., Baker, D., Rosinger, K. O., Ortagus, J. C., & Wu, J. (2023a). A typology and landscape of state funding formulas for public colleges and universities from 2004 to 2021. *The Review of Higher Education*. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1353/rhe.0.a915981

Kelchen, R., Ortagus, J. C., Baker, D., & Rosinger, K. (2020). *Trends in state funding for public higher education*. InformEd States.

Kelchen, R., Ortagus, J. C., Rosinger, K. O., Baker, D., & Lingo, M. (2023b). The relationships between state higher education funding strategies and college access and success. *Educational Researcher*. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X231208964

Kelchen, R., Ortagus, J. C., Rosinger, K. O., & Cassell, A. (2022). The effects of state performance funding policies on student loan debt. *Economics of Education Review*, *91*, Article 102328. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2022.102328

Kelchen, R., Ortagus, J. C., Rosinger, K. O., & Cassell, A. (2023c). Investing in the workforce: The impact of performance-based funding on student earnings outcomes. *The Journal of Higher Education*. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2023.2171201

Kelchen, R., & Pingel, S. (2023). Examining the effects of tuition controls on student enrollment. *Research in Higher Education*. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-023-09748-5

Kim, J., & Stange, K. (2016). Pricing and university autonomy: Tuition deregulation in Texas. *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences*, *2*(1), 112–146. https://doi.org/10.7758/RSF.2016.2.1.06

Klein, A. (2022). *The great student swap*. Brookings Institution.

Kolbe, T., & Baker, B. D. (2019). Fiscal equity and America's community colleges. *The Journal of Higher Education*, *90*(1), 111–149. https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2018.1442984

Kramer II., D. A., Ortagus, J. C., & Donovan, J. (2020). Competing for bachelor's degrees: Are community colleges cutting into the market share of 4-year institutions? *American Educational Research Journal*, *58*(2), 343–385. https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831220946309

Kunkle, K., & Laderman, S. (2023). *State higher education finance: FY 2022*. State Higher Education Executive Officers Association.

Lacy, T. A., & Tandberg, D. A. (2014). Rethinking policy diffusion: The interstate spread of "finance innovations." *Research in Higher Education*, *55*, 627–649. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-014-9330-2

Lafortune, J., Rothstein, J., & Schanzenbach, D. W. (2018). School finance reform and the distribution of student achievement. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, *10*(2), 1–26. https://doi.org/10.1257/app.20160567

Lee, J., & Schneider, A. (2021, July 16). A brief history of HOPE. *George Budget & Policy Institute*. https://gbpi.org/a-brief-history-of-hope/

Long, M. C., Saenz, V., & Tienda, M. (2010). Policy transparency and college enrollment: Did the Texas top ten percent law broaden access to the public flagships? *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *627*(1), 82–105. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716209348741

Ma, J., & Pender, M. (2023). *Trends in college pricing and student aid 2023*. The College Board.

McClure, K. R., Vamosiu, A. C., Titus, M. A., & Gray, S. M. (2023). Privatization and cost inefficiency at U.S. public research universities. *Studies in Higher Education*, *48*(9), 1498–1515. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2023.2204922

McLendon, M. K., Mokher, C. G., & Doyle, W. (2009). 'Privileging' public research universities: An empirical analysis of the distribution of state appropriations across research and non-research universities. *Journal of Education Finance*, *34*(4), 372–401. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40704366

Melguizo, T., Witham, K., Fong, K., & Chi, E. (2017). Understanding the relationship between equity and efficiency: Towards a concept of funding adequacy for community colleges. *Journal of Education Finance*, *43*(2), 195–216. https://www.jstor.org/stable/45093659

Melidona, D., Cecil, B. G., Cassell, A., & Chessman, H. M. (2023). *The American college president: 2023 edition*. American Council on Education.

Miller, L., & Park, M. (2022). Making college affordable? The impact of tuition freezes and caps. *Economics of Education Review*, *89*, Article 102265. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2022.102265

Monarrez, T., Hernandez, F., & Rainer, M. (2021). *Impact of state higher education finance on attainment*. Urban Institute.

Monks, J. (2012). Job turnover among university presidents in the United States of America. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, *34*(2), 139–152. https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2012.662739

Morgan, D. L., Rall, R. M., Commodore, F., Fischer, R. A., & Bernstein, S. (2021). Hiding in plain sight: The potential of state-level governing boards in postsecondary education policy agenda-setting. *The Journal of Higher Education*, *92*(4), 570–595. https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2020.1824885

National Center for Education Statistics. (2023). *The condition of education*. U.S. Department of Education.

Natow, R. S. (2022). *Reexamining the federal role in higher education: Politics and policymaking in the postsecondary sector*. Teachers College Press.

Nelson, G., Wolniak, G. C., & George-Jackson, C. E. (2017). *Unmasking college costs: Challenges in the era of differential tuition policies*. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association annual conference, San Antonio, TX.

Nguyen, H. (2020). Free college? Assessing enrollment responses to the Tennessee Promise program. *Labor Economics*, *66*, Article 101882. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.labeco.2020.101882

Nguyen, T. D., Kramer, J. W., & Evans, B. J. (2021). The effects of grant aid on student persistence and degree attainment: A systematic review and meta-analysis of the causal evidence. *Review of Educational Research*, *89*(6), 831–874. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654319877156

Odle, T., & Delaney, J. A. (2022). You are admitted! Early evidence on enrollment from Idaho's direct admissions system. *Research in Higher Education*, *63*, 899–932. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-022-09675-x

Odle, T., & Delaney, J. A. (2023). *Experimental evidence on "direct admissions" from four states: Impacts on college application and enrollment* (EdWorkingPaper: 23–834). Annenberg Institute at Brown University. https://doi.org/10.26300/6xtn-2j84

Orlova, N., Rury, D., & Wiltshire, J. C. (2023). *Out-of-state enrollment, financial aid and academic outcomes: Evidence from Wisconsin* (EdWorkingPaper No. 23–840). Annenberg Institute at Brown University. https://doi.org/10.26300/skvw-0v45

Ortagus, J. C., Baker, D., Rosinger, K. O., Kelchen, R., Morales, O., & Lingo, M. (2022). *The revenue implications of community colleges' reliance on local funding*. InformEd States.

Ortagus, J. C., Kelchen, R., Rosinger, K. O., & Voorhees, N. (2020). Performance-based funding in American higher education: A systematic synthesis of the intended and unintended consequences. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *42*(4), 520–550. https://doi.org/10.3102/0162373720953128

Ortagus, J. C., Rosinger, K. O., Kelchen, R., Chu, G., & Lingo, M. (2023a). The unequal impacts of performance-based funding on institutional resources in higher education. *Research in Higher Education*, *64*, 705–739. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-022-09719-2

Ortagus, J. C., Rosinger, K. O., Kelchen, R., Voorhees, N., Chu, G., & Allchin, H. (2023b). A national analysis of the impact of performance-based funding on completion outcomes among underserved students. *The Review of Higher Education*. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1353/rhe.0.0188

Ortega, A. (2020). State partisanship and higher education. *Economics of Education Review*, *76*, 101977. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2020.101977

Palmer, K. (2024, January 4). Conflict over community college baccalaureate degrees lands in Idaho. *Inside Higher Ed*. https://www.insidehighered.com/news/institutions/community-colleges/2024/01/04/conflict-over-community-college-bachelors-degrees

Perez Uribe Guinassi, L. (2023, January 20). As enrollment dips, UNC opens door to more out-of-state students at five campuses. *The News & Observer*. https://www.newsobserver.com/news/state/north-carolina/article271338287.html

Pfeffer, J., & Salancik, G. R. (1978). *The external control of organizations: A resource dependence perspective*. Harper & Row.

Pike, G. R., & Robbins, K. R. (2020). Using panel data to identify the effects of institutional characteristics, cohort characteristics, and institutional actions on graduation rates. *Research in Higher Education*, *61*, 485–509. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-019-09567-7

Rosinger, K., Ortagus, J. C., Kelchen, R., Cassell, A., & Brown, L. (2022). New evidence on the evolution and landscape of performance funding for higher education. *The Journal of Higher Education*, *93*(5), 735–768. https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2022.2066269

Rosinger, K., Ortagus, J. C., Kelchen, R., & Choi, J. (2023). The impact of performance funding policy design on college access and selectivity. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *45*(4), 655–681. https://doi.org/10.3102/01623737221147905

Rubin, P. G., Billings, M. S., Hammond, L., & Gándara, D. (2023). State higher education funding decisions during COVID-19: Exploring state-level characteristics influencing financing decisions. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *67*(12), 1468–1486. https://doi.org/10.1177/00027642221118270

Rutherford, A., & Rabovsky, T. (2018). Does the motivation for market-based reform matter? The case of responsibility-centered management. *Public Administration Review*, *78*(4), 626–639. https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.12884

Sjoquist, D. L., & Winters, J. V. (2013). The effects of HOPE on post-college retention in the Georgia workforce. *Regional Science and Urban Economics*, *43*(3), 479–490. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.regsciurbeco.2013.02.003

Stange, K. (2015). Differential pricing in undergraduate education: Effects on degree production by field. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, *34*(1), 107–135. https://doi.org/10.1002/pam.21803

Tandberg, D. A. (2013). The conditioning role of state higher education governance structures. *Journal of Higher Education*, *84*(4), 506–543. https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2013.11777300

Taylor, B. J., & Cantwell, B. (2019). *Unequal higher education: Wealth, status, and student opportunity*. Rutgers University Press.

Taylor, B. J., Kunkle, K., & Watts, K. (2023). Democratic backsliding and the balance wheel hypothesis: Partisanship and state funding for higher education in the United States. *Higher Education Policy*, *36*, 781–803. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41307-022-00286-w

Thomas, K. (2023, September 8). University of Tennessee system guarantees admission for top high school seniors. *Knoxville News-Sentinel*. https://www.knoxnews

.com/story/news/education/2023/09/08/university-of-tennessee-system-will-guarantee-admissions-for-high-school-seniors/70785636007/

Titus, M. A., Vamosiu, A., & McClure, K. R. (2017). Are public master's institutions cost efficient? A stochastic frontier and spatial analysis. *Research in Higher Education*, *58*, 469–496. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-016-9434-y

University of Texas at Austin. (2021, September 21). *Automatic admissions threshold remains at 6% for UT Austin*. https://news.utexas.edu/2021/09/21/automatic-admissions-threshold-remains-at-6-for-ut-austin/.

Venters, M. (2021). *State-level program approval and review*. State Higher Education Executive Officers Association.

Voss, K., Hout, M., & George, K. (2022). Persistent inequalities in college completion, 1980–2010. *Social Problems*. https://doi.org/10.1093/socpro/spac014

Webber, D. A. (2017). State divestment and tuition and public institutions. *Economics of Education Review*, *60*, 1–4. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2017.07.007

Webber, D. A., & Ehrenberg, R. G. (2010). Do expenditures other than instructional expenditures affect graduation and persistence rates in American higher education? *Economics of Education Review*, *29*(6), 947–958. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2010.04.006

Weerts, D. J. (2021). The organizational ecology of state support for public flagship universities. *Teachers College Record*, *123*(8), 114–145. https://doi.org/10.1177/01614681211048631

Worsham, R. (2023). A differences-in-differences analysis of the impact of the North Carolina fixed tuition program on college costs. *The Journal of Higher Education*, *94*(7), 945–971. https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2023.2171214

Zhang, L., Hu, S., & Sensenig, V. (2013). The effect of Florida's Bright Futures program on college enrollment and degree production: An aggregated-level analysis. *Research in Higher Education*, *54*, 746–764. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-013-9293-8

Zhang, L., & Ness, E. C. (2010). Does state merit-based aid stem brain drain? *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *32*(2), 143–165. https://doi.org/10.3102/0162373709359683