

This is a Final Accepted Manuscript of Chapter One in *The State Higher Education Executive Officer and the Public Good*, published by Teachers' College Press available at:
<https://www.tcpres.com/the-state-higher-education-executive-officer-and-the-public-good-9780807759349>

The Origins and Evolving Roles of State Higher Education Executives in American Higher Education

Paul E. Lingenfelter

At the end of the twentieth century the system of postsecondary education in the United States was widely, perhaps universally acknowledged as the best in the world. From time to time some higher education leaders, apparently seeking to minimize governmental steering and involvement, have opined that the source of higher education's greatness in the United States is that "it is *not* a system!"

Despite aversions to "system-ness," to suggest there is no system of higher education in the United States is to deny the reality and the impact of intentional and massively consequential governmental actions to create higher education institutions and policies to meet state and national needs. Institutional diversity and support for both public and independent institutions have been integral to the system's design, within broad parameters and employing various mechanisms to achieve responsiveness to public needs. This chapter will present a brief history of those public actions and the particular role of state higher education executives in creating and nurturing the nation's system of higher education.

The role of state higher education executives was most prominent in the latter half of the twentieth century when the U.S. system of higher education achieved unprecedented growth in size and in the depth and breadth of its contributions. State higher education leaders played a significant role in establishing the parameters and goals of this national expansion. In many states, they were leaders in developing the specific policies and actions that shaped it. To understand why and how the expansion of the late twentieth century happened, it is useful to review what preceded it.

The Origins of the Profession

Government and U.S. Higher Education Before the Mid-Twentieth Century

Thomas Jefferson planted a seed for the idea of a state education executive when he published *Notes on the State of Virginia* in 1785 (Jefferson, 1832). Jefferson advocated a comprehensive system of public education providing universal (for White males) education for three years, followed by one or two more years of free education in one of 20 grammar schools for the “boy of best genius” in each local school. The “best genius” in these grammar schools (20 boys) would be given six more years of free education. Through the plan, Jefferson wrote, “twenty of the best geniuses will be raked from the rubbish annually” (p. 167). True to his meritocratic convictions, Jefferson then proposed that after six years the best 10 of these 20 students should be given a three-year scholarship to William and Mary, the oldest public university, founded in 1693.

As the first planner for the Virginia system of education, Jefferson advanced the idea of universal opportunity (within the constricted definition of his era), a system of schools with diversified missions, and financial assistance to enable able low-income students pay for higher education. Implicitly this system would run parallel with the existing system of privately provided education (up to and including the university level) for those who could afford it. His plan for the University of Virginia came later.

Other seeds were planted in Georgia (1785), North Carolina (1789), Vermont (1791), and Tennessee (1794) which founded state-chartered and state supported institutions before 1800 (Rudolph, 1962). During the colonial era and the early days of the republic, colonial governments and states also provided significant support for “private” colleges. They sometimes intervened or attempted to intervene in internal college affairs, temporarily taking over Columbia and the University of Pennsylvania, and placing members on the boards of Harvard, Yale, and William and Mary. According to Frederick Rudolph, “public hostility to denominational education” was a factor in state involvement in higher education, moderating excessive liberalism at Harvard and excessive conservatism at Yale.

A struggle for power between Dartmouth College President John Wheelock (the son of Dartmouth's founder Eleazar Wheelock) and his Board of Trustees led to a landmark Supreme Court decision that established the inviolability of contracts and incidentally erected a boundary between public and private institutions of higher education (Rudolph, 1962). The legislature of New Hampshire, at the instigation of the President, transferred to the state the ownership of the charter previously granted to the Dartmouth board of trustees. The trustees' appeal of this action to the U.S. Supreme Court, famously argued by Daniel Webster, was successful. The Court decision established the principle that a charter granted by the state is an irrevocable contract, which cannot be withdrawn by subsequent state action. The implications of this decision for contracts of all kinds extended far beyond its application to higher education, but it clearly facilitated the establishment of independent colleges by churches and communities throughout the young nation.

During the entire nineteenth century higher education in the U.S. was delivered predominately by private colleges (Rudolph, 1962). These were frequently labeled "rich man's" colleges, and vigorous opposition by the affluent to the creation of public colleges sometimes justified the claim. In 1873, arguing against the establishment of a tax-supported national university, President Eliot of Harvard said, "our ancestors well understood the principle that to make a people free and self-reliant, it is necessary to let them take care of themselves..." (Rudolph, 1962, p.185).¹

So in the nineteenth century the idea of public purposes for higher education was frequently overshadowed by aversion to expanding the role of government and the celebration of rugged individualism, a philosophy identified with Jefferson, (depending on the issue) and more emphatically with Andrew Jackson. Despite such views, the seeds of public higher education were being planted by "Hamiltonian" public leaders who had a broader view of the role of government. Many other states soon created public universities, South Carolina (1801), Ohio (1802), Virginia (1816), Indiana (1820), Michigan (chartered in 1817, opened in 1845), Wisconsin (1848), and Minnesota (1851) (Rudolph, 1962). The first "normal school" to

¹ Frederick Rudolph (1962) wryly notes that Harvard received more than one hundred appropriations from the General Court of Massachusetts before 1789. If our ancestors had left Harvard to take care of itself the university may not have been there for Eliot to lead.

train public school teachers was created in Massachusetts in 1839. In 1857 another “normal school”, later Illinois State University, became the state’s first public institution of higher education.

In 1862, President Lincoln and his Republican Congress passed the Morrill Act, which granted federal lands to the states for the purpose of establishing land grant universities (Rudolph, 1962). This law established higher education as a national priority. It deliberately expanded the scope of higher education “to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions of life” (p. ??). The Homestead Act and the Pacific Railroad Act of 1862 complemented the Morrill Act. All three initiatives were designed to enhance opportunity and the lives of ordinary people by expanding access to education and land (capital) and by public investments in infrastructure (McPherson, 1988).²

College enrollments and the roles of the states and the federal government in higher education grew throughout the nineteenth century, but the growth was gradual and relatively slow. In 1869-1870 there were 563 institutions of higher education in the nation with a total enrollment of 52,000, only 0.14 percent of the U.S. population. Most of the institutions were private, and although there were exceptions, both public and private institutions tended to have an elitist aura (Lingenfelter, 2008). But attitudes were changing. In *The Emergence of the American University* Laurence Veysey (1965) writes, “The claims of democracy reinforced those of patriotic and institutional pride. By 1910 practically no one was left who would turn away the rising surge of ordinary youth which sought degrees” (p. 439). By 1920, enrollments had grown to more than 600,000, representing 0.57 percent of the national population (Lingenfelter, 2008). Still higher education remained essentially an elite enterprise, and enrollments in private institutions continued to exceed those in public institutions.

The move toward more widespread higher education gained momentum around the turn of the century and especially after World War I. William Rainey Harper (University of Chicago) and David Starr Jordan (Stanford University) advocated the creation of junior colleges, and Harper collaborated in the creation of Joliet Junior College in 1901. Although the

² A second Morrill Act in 1890 required states to create separate land grant universities for people of color if the original land grant universities restricted admissions to Whites.

motives for advocating junior colleges may have been partly or largely to enable universities to focus more rigorously on “higher learning,”(Gray, 1915) (Erdman and Ogden, 2000) (Ratcliff, 1986), the effect was to provide better and more affordable pathways to higher education, as well as expanded opportunities in postsecondary education. In the 1920s education scholars (notably among them John Dale Russell, a young professor at the University of Chicago) began writing and speaking about the need for universal opportunity in higher education and strategies for increasing educational attainment.³

By 1939, the U.S. had 1,708 institutions, enrolling 1.5 million students, slightly more than one percent of the population (Lingenfelter, 2008). Most of the institutions were still private, but for the first time in U.S. history public institutions accounted for more than 50 percent of higher education enrollments.

Although fundamental changes in American society resulted from the hard fought political battles of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s first two terms, neither a working political consensus nor full economic recovery had been achieved by 1940. World War II advanced both, although the political “consensus” proved temporary. The war galvanized the country, created a sense of common purpose unusual in the history of the republic, and resulted in an industrial mobilization that eventually proved decisive in the conflict (Kennedy, 1999). The public debate about the role of government in higher education was not transformed by war, but the war directly and indirectly led to public investments that dramatically changed the scope and function of higher education in America.

³ Despite primitive tools, Russell and one of his students performed a labor intensive and stunningly sophisticated analysis of trends in private and public, in-state and out-of-state, tuition and fees from 1860 to 1932 (Russell, 1933). The study controlled for inflation both in prices and in salaries. Russell also was involved in studies documenting the academic success of junior college students who later enrolled at Stanford and the University of Chicago. He credited their success in part to the close alignment of their high school preparation with the junior college curriculum. (Russell, 1933)

The GI Bill and the Truman Commission: The Advent of Mass Higher Education in the Mid-Twentieth Century

The most direct, and perhaps the most consequential effect of World War II on higher education was the passage of the Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944, commonly called the G.I. Bill. It received bi-partisan support, partially because the treatment of World War I veterans had been a contentious, difficult political issue (Mettler, 2005). Educational benefits (funds for tuition and living expenses) were just one part of a package that included low-interest housing and business loans, unemployment insurance cash payments, and numerous other benefits (Social Security Administration, 1944). The educational benefits offered to 11 million veterans proved most consequential. They changed the face of higher education and eventually the face of the nation.

The G.I. Bill made higher education financially accessible to millions of young people who otherwise would not likely have enrolled. In effect, it substantially increased the participation rate in higher education and the capabilities of the American workforce.⁴ It also increased the next generation's motivation and aspirations for higher education.

Although foreign policy and war occupied much of his time, President Truman was determined to advance and extend FDR's active government policies to address social problems and expand opportunity through his "Fair Deal." The "Truman Commission," appointed by the President in 1946, generated a six-volume report which analyzed national needs for higher education and recommended a course of action to meet them. In many respects, the release of the report in 1947 and 1948 was a victory for those who advocated for more expansive educational opportunity over the previous century. Its published summary says:

⁴ In 1939-40, before World War II began, 1,708 institutions enrolled 1.5 million students, a participation rate of 1.1 percent of the U.S. population. In 1959-60, before the baby boom generation graduated from high school, 2,004 institutions enrolled 3.6 million students, for a participation rate of 2.0 percent. By the end of the subsequent decade, 1969-70, the baby boom generation and growing participation doubled enrollments to 8.0 million and the national participation rate to 3.9 percent of the population. (Sources: Digest of Education Statistics, National Center for Education Statistics, and U.S. Census Bureau.

The report proposes sweeping changes in higher education. Specific recommendations include the abandonment of European concepts of education and the development of a curriculum attuned to the needs of a democracy; the doubling of college attendance by 1960; the integration of vocational and liberal education; the extension of free public education through the first 2 years of college for all youth who can profit from such education; the elimination of racial and religious discrimination; revision of the goals of graduate and professional school education to make them effective in training well-rounded persons as well as research specialists and technicians; and the expansion of Federal support for higher education through scholarships, fellowships, and general aid.

In conclusion the report urges establishment of community colleges; the expansion of adult education programs; and the distribution of Federal aid to education in such a manner that the poorer States can bring their educational systems closer to the quality of the wealthier States. (Truman, 1947, para. 6-7)

John Dale Russell, who had left his professorship at the University of Chicago to become Director of the Division of Higher Education in the U.S. Office of Education, became the chief spokesperson for the Truman administration advocating the implementation of the report's recommendations. In the April 1949 issue of the *Journal of Educational Sociology* he published his argument supporting its recommendations (Russell, 1949a).

Excerpts from the Commission report cited by Russell included:

American colleges and universities....can no longer consider themselves merely the instrument for producing intellectual elite; they must become the means by which every citizen, youth, and adult is enabled and encouraged to carry his education, formal and informal, as far as his native capacities permit. (President's Commission on Higher Education, 1947, p. 101)

If the position is taken that the national economy is fixed and that expenditures for higher education are expenditures for consumption purposes only, then the view that America cannot afford the cost of

the proposed program might appear justified. But such a position cannot be justified. Higher education is an investment, not a cost. It is an investment in free men. It is an investment in social welfare, better living standards, better health, and less crime. It is an investment in higher production, increased income, and greater efficiency in agriculture, industry, and government. It is an investment in a bulwark against garbled information, half-truths, and untruths; against ignorance and intolerance. It is an investment in human talent, better human relationships, democracy, and peace. (President's Commission on Higher Education, 1947, pp. 26-28)

Russell concluded his case for the Commission saying:

The President's Commission on Higher Education undertook the most far reaching evaluation of American higher education that has ever been attempted. Its conclusions have been startling to a great many people. Too often its recommendations have been reviewed outside the context of the arguments from which they arise. Stated thus baldly, the recommendations have seemed to many people to be idealistic and impossible of attainment. Read in the context of the report itself, the recommendations appear to be almost invariably the conclusions of a thoroughly rational analysis. To put these recommendations into effect will challenge the best efforts of American educators and statesmen. (Russell, 1949a, p. 508)

Russell's passionate advocacy was not entirely persuasive. Companion articles written by private college presidents Paul Swain Havens of Wilson College and Allan P. Farrell of the University of Detroit in the April 1949 issue of the journal vigorously questioned both the practical and philosophical merits of the Commission's report. They doubted the nation needed or could afford so much higher education. And they warned of governmental control and the loss of intellectual freedom. Although the report garnered some favorable reviews, the report of the Truman Commission was clearly ahead of its time.⁵

⁵ More information on Russell and his role can be found in Lingenfelter (2013) and Lingenfelter, and Mingle (2014).

But its time was coming. A surge in the post-war birth rate from 1946 to 1964, compounded by the greater visibility given higher education opportunity by the G.I. Bill, created irresistible demand for the expansion of higher education.

State Higher Education Executives in the 1950s: The Founding of SHEEO

A handful of states had statewide governing or coordinating boards in 1950. Their powers, practices, and influence varied, and it was difficult to identify a common mission. The national agenda envisioned by the Truman Commission, however, required state action, and John Dale Russell began working to nurture the state leadership needed to realize that agenda.

In May 1949, Russell published an article in *State Government: The Magazine of State Affairs* entitled "The States in Higher Education" (Russell, 1949b). He outlined the various roles states have played in higher education and concluded by arguing that states should provide "equalization of opportunity for education for young people in accordance with their capabilities." He added that this role is

...perhaps not yet fully accepted. It is closely related to the needs of the democratic state for a supply of well educated persons and for a supply of well trained workers in all occupations [generally accepted state roles], but it approaches the problem, not from the point of view of the needs of society, but from that of the obligations of society to the individuals composing it. (Russell, 1949b)

On December 11, 1951, Russell gave a talk on "Patterns of Coordinated State Control Over Higher Education" (Russell, 1951). In this talk he outlined purposes and functions of state coordination, which anticipated virtually every purpose and approach for state coordination and governance that has been proposed or attempted in the United States since 1951. He concluded with two overarching observations:

A. The agency charged with responsibility for coordination should represent the interests of the state as a whole, rather than those of the individual institutions.

B. The arrangement should leave the maximum of autonomy to the individual institutions in managing their day to day operations.

In 1952, after leaving the Truman administration, Russell became Chancellor and Executive Secretary of the State Board of Educational Finance for New Mexico. In 1954, he invited state executives from Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Kansas, Mississippi, New York, North Dakota, Oklahoma, and Oregon to Santa Fe to a "Conference of Executive Officers of State-wide Boards of Higher Education." Only the leader from New York declined the invitation, due to European travel plans.

The formal and informal responsibilities and powers of the state leaders invited to New Mexico varied, but they clearly were concerned with a common set of issues. The main discussion topics on the agenda for the meeting included:

- 1) Coordination of instructional programs.
- 2) Coordination of capital outlay programs.
- 3) Coordination of other phases of institutional operation (Personnel policies, admissions, tuition fees, board and room costs, state scholarships, purchasing, educational TV, etc.).
- 4) Administrative relationships (among institutions, the central board, state level executives, state agencies, and the legislature).
- 5) Budgetary procedures.

Within these broad categories they discussed issues such as the allocation of programs to institutions (working to distinguish between appropriate and unnecessary duplication), the challenges of planning for enrollment expansion and allocating resources for capital facilities, approaches for achieving voluntary coordination and collaboration, achieving equity in funding institutions, unit cost accounting, and "locating of responsibility for obtaining adequate support for the State's program of higher education."

The discussion, extending over two days, was captured in 75 pages of "Unofficial Proceedings," prepared by Russell and his assistant James Doi. At the conclusion of the meeting the members agreed to continue annual summer meetings, rotating responsibility for planning future meetings

among the members (Lingenfelter & Mingle, 2014). The members of SHEEO have met annually without interruption from 1954 to the present.

Public Policy Thought Leaders in the Mid-Twentieth Century

John Dale Russell did not work in isolation; he was member of a community of thought leaders pursuing public policies for higher education that would expand opportunity and attainment. A full account of all those making important contributions is far beyond the scope of this chapter, but a few notable examples may suggest the breadth of the national conversation.

T.R. McConnell, then a Dean at the University of Minnesota, joined Russell in writing a supportive review of the Truman Commission in the previously cited 1949 issue of the *Journal of Educational Sociology*. While Chancellor of the University of Buffalo, in 1953 McConnell was charged with leading a “re-study” of the Strayer Report, a postwar planning study seeking to mitigate and manage competition between the University of California and California State Colleges (Douglas, 2000). Later in 1956 McConnell became the founding director of the Center for the Study of Higher Education at the University of California-Berkeley.⁶ Clark Kerr, then Chancellor of the Berkeley campus was involved in the decision, and John Gardner, then president of the Carnegie Corporation, provided support and encouragement for the Center.

At the time, Carnegie also supported the founding of two other Centers for the Study of Higher Education, one at the University of Michigan led by Algo Henderson, and one at Columbia, headed by Earl McGrath. Henderson had been president of Antioch College, had served on the Truman Commission, and on a New York Commission on the Need for a State University (Cain, 2007). McGrath, like Russell a University of Chicago professor, had been Commissioner of Education in the Truman Administration and an important figure in the report of the Truman Commission. While each of the centers took somewhat different directions, state policy became an important part of the work at both Berkeley and Michigan, led by James L. “Jerry” Miller, Jr. at Michigan and Lyman Glenny at Berkeley.

⁶ <http://www.cshe.berkeley.edu/brief-history-cshe>

T. R. McConnell had recruited Glenny, a political science/government faculty member at Sacramento State University, to be a researcher in his Center. Glenny did a twelve-state study of statewide boards of higher education, both governing boards and coordinating boards. He had clear ideas of what state planning *should* be, and in his oral history commented that “the coordinating boards were really doing fairly superficial jobs—mostly budgeting kind of work. Very little planning for the development of new institutions, which were being created almost ad hoc without planning...[based on the power of particular legislators who would site new institutions] in their own districts” (Rabineau, 1990, p. 26).

Glenny’s book, *Autonomy of Public Colleges: The Challenge of Coordination*, was the first significant study of state planning and coordination (Douglass & Cummins, 2001). For three years during his long career, he served as Executive Director of the Illinois Board of Higher Education, and led the development of its first Master Plan, which shaped the governance and coordination of higher education for thirty years from 1965 to the mid-1990s. The plan included the development of a state-wide community college system, the creation of upper-division universities to expand transfer opportunities for community college students, need-based financial assistance for students attending public and private institutions, and the expansion of all existing four-year institutions to serve growing enrollments (Scott, 2008).

John D. Millett, a highly regarded professor of public administration at Columbia University, served as Executive Director of the Commission on the Financing of Higher Education, organized in 1949 by the Association of American Universities, and financed by the Carnegie Corporation and the Rockefeller Foundation. His book, *Financing Higher Education in the United States*, considered virtually every aspect of higher education and influenced the field for decades (Millett, 1952). In the concluding pages of this massive volume, Millett argued for rational planning and effective choices, while urging decision-makers “to cultivate and promote competing centers of power, to avoid any centralized or single power, and to learn how to live successfully amid the complexities of diversity” (p. 481). Millett’s counsel may have influenced Glenny’s design of the “system of systems” (four

multi-campus university governing boards and a community college coordinating board) for the coordination of higher education in Illinois.

Millett served as president of Miami University in Ohio from 1953 to 1964 and then served as the first Chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents from 1964 to 1972. As Chancellor, he led the creation or expansion of public universities in every urban region of Ohio and the creation of the state's community college system. He continued his scholarship in higher education, writing *The Liberating Arts* (1957), *The Academic Community* (1962), and *Politics and Higher Education* (1974) (John D. Millett, n.d.).

Clark Kerr, Chancellor of the University of California – Berkeley from 1952 to 1958 and President of the University of California system from 1958 to 1967, was widely credited as the “author” of the California Master Plan, passed by the legislature in 1960 (Douglass, 2000).⁷ Kerr's priorities and political skills certainly played a central role in the design and final adoption of the California Master Plan, but the plan itself emerged from a long history of expansive educational aspirations and intense, political competition among sectors of higher education in the state of California (Douglass, 2000). The well-known plan sought to provide universal, low or no cost opportunity through three systems – community colleges, four-year state colleges, and research universities—with progressively selective admission requirements, sharply defined missions, and the assurance that academically successful students initially admitted to community colleges could transfer to four-year institutions.

The sharp boundaries between the missions of the California systems appeared to minimize the need for active, continuous state-level coordination and planning that Russell and Glenny envisioned. Kerr's own assessment of the plan was that it “met the tests of that time and that place” A half century later, Patrick Callan, a Kerr admirer, concluded that “[the Plan's] rigidities in the face of changes in the state context over 50-plus years have resulted in a growing mismatch between institutional priorities and the needs of the state.... [The Master Plan] is not the plan for California in the twenty-first century” (Callan, 2012, p. 82).

⁷ *Time Magazine* put Kerr on the cover on October 17, 1960 in an article describing the California strategy for achieving widespread access to higher education while preserving the primacy of its research universities in research and graduate education.

Because he later chaired the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education and became an influential voice in federal policy deliberations, Kerr's leadership extended well beyond the California Master Plan (Douglass, 2005). The full range of his contributions is conveyed in Sheldon Rothblatt's edited volume, *Clark Kerr's World of Higher Education Reaches the 21st Century*. The California Master Plan's strategies for dealing with access and mission differentiation, however widely known, were not implemented in other states. Instead each state found its own pathway for expanding higher education opportunities, shaped by its own political culture and the influence of higher education institutions (Breneman & Lingenfelter, 2012).

From 1954 to 1970 the profession of state policy leadership became reasonably well established, with 26 state coordinating boards, 19 governing/coordinating boards, and only five states with neither (Lingenfelter & Mingle, 2014). Robert O. Berdahl's 1970 book *Statewide Coordination of Higher Education* exhaustively analyzed the issues, debates, and practices in this relatively new field, reflected the thinking of its leaders, and guided those beginning careers in state policy for higher education.

The Evolution of the Profession: 1954 to 2016

A changing array of higher education public policy issues and changing political dynamics in the states have shaped the profession of state policy leadership from the founding of the SHEEO association in 1954 to the early twenty-first century. Before turning to the history of changing policy objectives and dynamics, it will be useful to consider what has been constant—state policy leadership for higher education is contested territory.

State Policy Leadership for Higher Education: Contested Territory

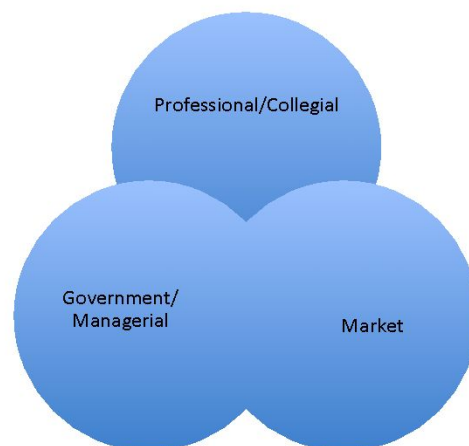
The oldest claim for authority in higher education is that of the faculty. The idea of institutional autonomy based on scholarly expertise was born in 1088 when scholars organized themselves to deliver instruction in Bologna, Italy. It has persisted to this day—academic expertise is naturally a legitimate claim for authority. But the legitimacy of expertise is not absolute. In Bologna, the faculty depended on the market, the willingness of students to pay for instruction. Also, the university in Bologna needed the

approbation of the state's political authority in order to function. As higher education evolved over time, in virtually every nation the state has also become an important source of financial support to higher education.

Burton Clark's 1983 book on international higher governance identified these three sources of authority which compete and interact with each other (Clark, 1983). Figure 1, created to illustrate Clark's concept, depicts the independent standing of each source of authority and their interactions and interdependence.

Figure 1.

Clark's triangle of governance



State higher education executives work in the government/managerial space defined by three somewhat independent, yet interdependent actors—institutional leaders, legislators, and governors. The motivations, dispositions, and political resources of each of these actors shape the policy agenda, what can be done, and how it can be done. State policy leadership is the art of working with and sometimes in opposition to these influential actors to achieve public purposes.

Institutional leaders. In important respects campus presidents are politicians with constituents, political resources, ambitions, and political needs. Without exception, they need to be perceived on their campus as effective in acquiring resources and promoting the stature and reputation of the institution. They naturally form alliances with local legislators, and they seek the favor of legislative leaders and governors. Institutions naturally compete with other institutions for resources, students, and influence. When times are tough or new opportunities for gaining (or losing) relative advantage appear, competitive instincts grow stronger.

“Flagship” universities typically cultivate strong, direct relationships with political leaders and view the creation of statewide coordinating or governing boards as a loss of power, flexibility, and prestige. At times, some universities and community colleges have seen statewide coordination and governance as an ally in gaining resources, but eventually any entity standing between individual institutions and political leaders is likely to become or be perceived to be an impediment to the ability of each institution to freely pursue its own status and success. Competition among institutions is unavoidable and, to some extent, beneficial. Accommodating and somehow managing competition is an intrinsic part of the work of statewide policy leadership, but the role may not be appreciated. One campus president advised his state executive, New Jersey’s Ted Hollander, to look in the mirror each morning and say, “I am an unnecessary evil.” Hollander agreed to say “I am a necessary evil” while shaving.

An effective state higher education executive will be both an advocate for higher education and an advocate for the public interest in higher education, recognizing that these roles may be in tension. To succeed, higher education policy leaders need to balance advocacy for higher education with responsiveness to public priorities and those of elected officials. Rarely is either constituency fully satisfied.

The legislature. While it must contend with the powers of the executive branch, the legislature has ultimate authority over state policy. Legislative power and influence is strongest when its members are able to agree, and when its leadership is stable.

Individual legislators manage a dual loyalty—to the particular interests of the communities and constituents that they represent and to their convictions about what serves the broader public interest. Legislators whose districts include one or more colleges and universities of substantial size naturally tend to support both higher education and the institution(s) in their districts.

State higher education executives need to establish positive relationships with individual legislators in order to promote general support for higher education and to manage those situations when a statewide perspective collides with local interests. It is especially important for them to gain the trust and support of legislative leaders.

Governors. Dick Wagner, a very long serving SHEEO humorously attributed his successful tenure to the fact that “I chose my governors wisely!” The joke emphasizes the point that in most states the governor is by far the most influential actor in determining the shape of public policy. Legislatures can keep a governor from achieving his or her agenda, but without the support of the governor not much can happen.

A state higher education executive that does not have a good working relationship with the governor will find it difficult to be a consequential leader on either significant policies or routine matters. Governors have frequently played a visible role in the enacting of significant higher education policy initiatives, and it is difficult to find examples of important actions that have occurred in spite of the opposition of a governor.

Although a strong working relationship with the governor is crucial to the effectiveness and influence of a state higher education executive, the influence of a SHEEO, and their usefulness to a governor, are diminished when the SHEEO is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the governor. Under these circumstances the SHEEO is essentially considered another member of the governor’s staff. Turnover tends to be more frequent, and it becomes more difficult for the SHEEO to build trusting relationships as an honest broker with legislators and institutions (Lingenfelter, Novak, & Legon, 2008).

Each of these actors—institutional leaders, legislators, and governors—has a political base of support, constituents to serve, and political resources. State higher education executives (especially those heading coordinating boards) stand in the middle, without an independent base of political resources. Their effectiveness depends on their ability to establish working relationships with all those who have political resources. Because institutional leaders, legislators, and governors have both conflicting and common interests, a considerable amount of skill is required to do this work well.

The Catalyst for State Leadership: Enrollment Demand in the 1960s

The profession of state higher education policy leadership emerged in response to unprecedented enrollment demand in the 1960s.⁸

Even in the mid-1940s bills began to be introduced in state legislatures around the country to create new institutions to meet the impending demand. In every state some variation of these elements appeared:

- Established public institutions sought to expand and they opposed the creation of new institutions.
- If one public university was predominant in the state, it frequently sought to create branch campuses in geographical regions likely to call for more convenient access to higher education.
- If two or more public universities existed, they competed for additional resources and branch campuses through their legislative patrons.
- Public universities with limited missions in research and graduate/professional education sought to acquire and expand such programs.
- If no community colleges existed, the public universities sought to prevent their creation, sometimes by creating two year instructional centers in various locations.
- If community colleges existed, their missions and their expansion in numbers and size were contentiously debated.
- Private institutions worried that the growing availability of lower cost public higher education would lead to their demise. They lobbied to

⁸ The launching of the Russian satellite Sputnik in 1957 intensified the salience of higher education. Within a year the National Defense Education Act was passed, providing federal funding to education at every level, including financial assistance to students through loans.

limit the growth of the public sector and sought public financial support through scholarships and more direct means.

● Competition within higher education for public support is as old as the republic, but in the mid-twentieth century the prospect of substantially greater resources and enrollments added unprecedented intensity. States handled these issues in different ways. As shown on Table 2, fifteen states with more than one state university had established a statewide coordinating or governing entity with a chief executive before 1960. Most of these states had governing boards, and it is reasonable to assume that these boards, acting in tandem with the governor and legislature, were engaged in discussions about managing growth. The remaining states invented their own ways of coping.

Table 2.
<i>Statewide coordinating and governing boards with a chief executive⁹</i>
State governing or coordinating (*) boards established before 1960
Alaska, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Hawai'i, Kansas, Mississippi, New Mexico*, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma*, Oregon, South Dakota, University of Vermont, Virginia*, University of Wyoming
State governing or coordinating (*) boards established 1960 to 1970
Alabama*, Arkansas*, Colorado*, Connecticut*, Idaho, Illinois*, Iowa, Kentucky*, Louisiana*, Maine, Minnesota*, Nevada, New Jersey*, Ohio*, South Carolina*, Tennessee*, Texas*, Utah, Vermont State Colleges, Washington*, West Virginia*
State governing or coordinating (*) boards established after 1970

⁹ Lingenfelter and Mingle (2014), pp. 33-39. It is often difficult to identify precisely the date various state boards (or their predecessors) were established. Table 1 provides a summary of their initiation based on the history of past chief executives provided by current state agencies to SHEEO.

Alaska*, California*, Delaware*, Indiana*, Maryland*, Massachusetts*, Missouri*, Montana, Nebraska*, New Hampshire, Puerto Rico*, Rhode Island, Wisconsin, Wyoming Community Colleges*

In California, the extensive negotiations that led to the 1960 Master Plan produced a “solution” for managing competition among sectors that initially established no continuing role for state policy leadership.

Fifteen states created coordinating boards for higher education between 1960 and 1970. The stories behind the creation of three of these boards illustrate the politics in play. In Illinois, legislative patrons of the University of Illinois and Southern Illinois University dominated the politics of higher education. Eventually a commission recommended the creation of the Illinois Board of Higher Education to give the governor and legislature advice on planning and budgeting for higher education. The Board was created in 1961.

In 1963 the Ohio Board of Regents was created, with the legislation guided somewhat by the Illinois statute. In the case of Ohio, conflicts between Ohio State University and Ohio University over new programs were a catalyst. In 1965 the Coordinating Board for the Texas College and University System was created. Governor John Connally’s charge to the Board captured the essential thinking behind the creation of these boards. In his charge he said:

The greatest risk you face is an institutionalized system, with each college or university grasping for its own ends without regard to the needs of the people of the whole state, and perhaps without being aware of those needs. I don't say this critically of any college president or any institution, but this is human nature. There is nothing wrong with being competitive....

I assure you that you were not appointed to represent any institution; you were named to represent the State of Texas in the coordination of all higher education under state authority.

Neither were you appointed to represent the geographical area where you were born, attended college, or where you now live. Texas,

the entire state, the youth of this state, is your constituency, and to that constituency you owe your loyalty and allegiance.

It is your responsibility to determine educational questions according to educational measures and standards. You should leave politics to the politicians and administration to the administrators....

You have been given the power to add planning, imagination, and coordination to supplement the taxpayers' dollars in higher education. I trust you will use them wisely. (Connally, 1965, para. 14-44)

Governor Connally's charge did not presume state coordination would eliminate politics in higher education. Instead he expected the board to *add* an independent voice to the political process focused on public needs and the public's interest in higher education. This requirement typically led the boards created during this period to seek chief executives who had credibility as an educational leader plus the ability to take a broad statewide perspective, working effectively with political leaders. The early SHEEOs were rarely appointed by the governor, but it was understood that they needed to be able to work with the governor, with legislators, and with institutional leaders to be successful. Their responsibility as state higher education policy leaders was to identify, articulate, and advocate the public interest in higher education, to persuade institutions, legislators, and governors to pursue it, and to help them create the means of realizing it.

The Contributions of Coordination and Planning: 1954 to 1975

The public interest in higher education has many facets, instruction, research, the application of knowledge, and public service. A large part of the challenge of planning is to identify and achieve a proper balance among them. From 1960 until the end of the century public investment permitted every facet of the mission to prosper. Research universities grew in enrollment, the breadth of their instructional programs, in the production of undergraduate, graduate, and professional degrees, and in the depth and breadth of their research. Federal direct support for researchers, research assistants, and equipment was buttressed by state support for core faculty and facilities. Virtually all four-year universities grew, and when justified by capability and need many states universities were able to create graduate and professional programs with the blessing of the state coordinating or

governing board. Perhaps most significantly, systems of community colleges were established in nearly every state, providing access at lower expense to many previously un-served students. Despite the fears of independent colleges and universities, the expansion of the public sector did not result in the contraction of the independent sector. Independent higher education also participated in the growth, in many cases benefiting from both federal and state student assistance programs.

Naturally, states differed in what they did and how they did it during this period, but all of them were driven by the same core objective: expanding access to a growing population and increasing the participation rate in higher education while enhancing graduate/professional education and research. In California, the Master Plan established the radical principle of very low cost, universal access to instruction. This was accompanied by negotiated, sharply bounded institutional missions established to control costs and pursue excellence in research and graduate education. No other state precisely emulated the means employed in California, but eventually nearly every state established community colleges and found a way to differentiate missions in order to meet the full range of these objectives (Breneman & Lingenfelter, 2012).

In many states new coordinating boards and their staffs played a key role in this process. They developed studies of operating costs and space requirements to plan for the creation of new institutions. They created budget formulas or other analytical approaches for achieving equity in funding among institutions with different instructional programs. They developed need based financial assistance programs, often including strategies for providing support for students who chose private institutions. And they developed "master plans" for meeting emerging public needs. The "planning imperative" and these policy innovations and tools spread to every state, regardless of the structure employed or even the absence of such a structure. John Dale Russell, for example, had significant consulting assignments in 14 states, including extensive work on a plan to expand higher education with the creation of community colleges adopted by the Michigan legislature, a state which had and still has no statewide coordinating or governing board.

In states with a coordinating or governing board leader who worked effectively with the governor and legislature, plans seemed to be implemented more quickly and the tools for analysis, planning, and budgeting became more sophisticated. But every state made significant changes in the delivery of higher education during the period 1950 to 1975. John Millett in Ohio, Lyman Glenny in Illinois, John Folger in Tennessee, Jim Furman in Ohio, Washington, and later Illinois, Jack K. Williams and Bevington Reed in Texas, and Frank Abbott in Colorado were among the leaders of that era who laid the philosophical and analytical foundation for the profession, planned the creation of new and the expansion of established institutions, and created the capacity that enabled higher education enrollments to grow from 3.6 million in 1959-1960 to 8.0 million in 1969-1970.

The rapid growth of higher education enrollments continued, although at a slightly reduced pace, during the 1970s, reaching 11.6 million by 1979-1980. The success of planned growth in the 1960s likely inspired 1972 amendments to Higher Education Act of 1965, which provided incentives for states to establish "1202 commissions" to consider state needs in planning and coordinating postsecondary education. In some respects the 1202 commissions broadened the responsibilities of state facilities planning agencies required in order to receive federal grants authorized by the Higher Education Facilities Act of 1963 (P.L. 88-204.) It was not, however, a new federal mandate, as much as a recognition and potential reinforcement of the state level planning and coordinating efforts that had already occurred.

As shown on Table 2, thirty-eight state coordinating or governing boards were established before 1970, and fourteen were established after 1970. A few of these fourteen were newly created 1202 Commissions in states with no statewide agency. Most states, however, assigned 1202 responsibilities to existing agencies or commissions, augmented an existing body, or created a new commission alongside an existing state level board to handle regulatory matters for non-public institutions. (McGuinness, McKinney, & Millard, 1975)

While it did not materially increase state coordination and planning, the creation of 1202 Commissions did, however, shape the process of state planning. The act promoted an expanded purview of planning to include

community colleges and vocational education, as well as the concerns of non-profit and proprietary independent institutions. It implicitly recognized the inevitability of competition among sectors and sought to cultivate common purposes and reduce unproductive conflict. And in a parallel action, it created through section 1203 a mechanism for the federal government to provide financial support for state planning efforts.

The federal debate creating the 1202 Commissions and the subsequent history of federal actions around state planning and coordination for postsecondary education illustrate the enduring tensions around educational “turf” in the states and the nation as a whole. Federal support for state planning and coordination was opposed by institutional interests in the 1970s, in the 1990s, and twenty years later in 2009. The overlapping responsibilities for vocational/occupational education between elementary/secondary education and postsecondary community colleges and vocational schools continue to be an issue today just as they were in the 1970s.

Stability After Growth: Improving System Effectiveness 1975 to 2000

By 1975 planning for extraordinary growth was no longer an urgent priority. Enrollments were still growing and new buildings were still required, but the pace of growth was slower. Inflation, energy shortages, and recessions constrained state governments. The work of program review, program approval, and budgeting became more salient than planning. The staffs of state higher education governing and coordinating boards began to refine the tools that emerged in the previous decades—tools for space allocation, maintenance and planning, tools for cost analysis and for program review, budget formulas, and data systems to guide public policy.

When planning for massive growth was no longer the highest priority, attention turned to policy issues that shape system effectiveness. What should tuition policy be? How much student assistance is needed, and on what basis should it be provided? Are state appropriations equitably and appropriately distributed among institutions and purposes? What kinds of data systems are needed to guide public policy? Can institutions become

more efficient and effective by reallocating resources from lower to higher priorities? Who, using what kind of process, should identify lower and higher campus priorities? To what extent should performance indicators be the basis for state budget allocations? How and where should new programs be created, and how should existing programs be evaluated, improved, or eliminated if no longer justified by need or student demand?

From 1975 to 2000 a number of state leaders distinguished themselves by both their contributions and the duration of their service. In one or sometimes in two states the following leaders served more than ten (in several cases more than twenty) years as a SHEEO. In descending length of service they are: R. Wayne Richie (Iowa), William Friday (North Carolina), James McCormick (Pennsylvania and Minnesota), Gordon Davies (Virginia and Kentucky), Ken Ashworth (Texas), Edward Hollander (New York and New Jersey), Clyde Ingle (Minnesota and Indiana), Stanley Koplik (Kansas and Massachusetts), Richard Wagner (Illinois), Hans Brisch (Oklahoma), William Arceneaux (Louisiana), Patrick Callan (Washington and California), Henry Hector (Alabama), Wayne Brown (Tennessee), Norma Glasgow (Connecticut), Arliss Roaden (Tennessee), and David Longanecker (Minnesota and Colorado).

Although it is not possible to list the individual contributions of these leaders without serious omissions, in various states their long tenures enabled them to play critical roles in:

- establishing need-based student financial assistance programs to increase both access and choice;
- improving access to professional education for disadvantaged populations;
- developing novel approaches to budgeting and resource reallocation to more effectively address public and institutional priorities;
- assessing and improving student learning;
- improving preparation for college in K-12 education;
- increasing educational opportunities for returning adults;
- developing data and management systems to enhance the capabilities of both policy makers and institutional leaders; and

- sustaining (much of the time at least!) positive relationships between higher education and state policy makers and achieving the funding required to serve growing enrollments.

In the closing years of the century, however, the momentum supporting state policy leadership slowed in many states. From 1990 to 2000 public higher education enrollments grew at an annual rate of only 0.8 percent, compared with an annual growth rate of 2.4 percent between 1970 and 1990. A strong economy combined with stable enrollments permitted relatively generous support for higher education, and perhaps contributed to complacency about the need for policy leadership.

Then in 1992 an abortive federal initiative, the State Postsecondary Review Entity, sought to solve problems of fraud and abuse of federal student aid programs by turning to state higher education agencies to provide accountability oversight over all public and private institutions. The initiative was widely considered an intrusive, regulatory over-reach and was eventually repealed by Congress after the Department of Education suspended its implementation. Perhaps in combination with good economic times and planning fatigue, it had a negative impact on the idea that state policy leadership is needed in higher education.

In the mid-1990s two states, New Jersey and Minnesota, which previously had had very strong coordinating agencies, significantly reduced the role and responsibilities of these agencies. In a third state, Illinois, two multi-campus governing boards, the Board of Regents and the Board of Governors, were eliminated in favor of giving six universities their own individual board. "Decentralization" in higher education gained traction. In 2001-2002 the Association for the Study of Higher Education awarded its dissertation of the year award to Michael K. McLendon for a study entitled "Setting the Agenda for State Decentralization of Higher Education." Two years later Dr. Toni Larson received the award for a massive study entitled "Decentralization in U.S. Public Higher Education: A Comparative Study of New Jersey, Illinois, and Arkansas." In the minds of many, the advantages of institutional autonomy trumped the need for state policy leadership. Although some have always doubted its importance, by the turn of the twenty-first century, growing numbers seemed to believe state policy leadership had outlived its usefulness.

State Policy Leadership in the Early Twenty-First Century: An Emerging Crisis

From Jefferson to John Dale Russell and those who followed them, the primary purpose of state policy leadership in higher education has been to achieve public purposes, not to constrain or regulate institutions.

Empowering institutions to address public needs and *empowering* students to become educated have been and remain the principal objectives of higher education public policy.¹⁰ But the sum of self-perceived institutional interests does not equal the public interest. Moreover, it is not possible to empower institutions to address public needs without articulating those needs and considering what policy actions and institutional practices might meet them. Although some will argue that the marketplace can naturally meet society's need for higher education, in the past two centuries no nation has successfully met its educational needs without intervening in the market. The only debatable questions are: what should governments do? and how should they do it?

At the beginning of the twenty-first century it became increasingly evident that the standard of educational success achieved by the United States in the late twentieth century was no longer good enough in the emerging global economy. While the rate of postsecondary educational attainment in the U.S. in the first decade of the century remained relatively stable at about 40 percent of the adult population, more than a dozen other countries exceeded the 40 percent rate of attainment for adults in the 25-34 year old age group. Also in response to changing economic conditions, the employment market in the U.S. has shifted strongly in favor of those holding some postsecondary credential. By 2008 only 41 percent of the jobs in the U.S. were held by people with a high school diploma or less; in 1964 high school graduates or non-graduates held more than 80 percent of U.S. jobs. Adults without postsecondary education earn less and suffer higher unemployment rates.

No doubt because students read the signals in the labor market, postsecondary enrollment demand in the US suddenly increased. From 2000 to 2010 public FTE enrollment grew from 8.6 million to 11.6 million, an

¹⁰ Assuring quality and protecting against fraud and abuse are corollary purposes.

average annual increase of three percent, faster than the average from 1970 to 1990.

Concerned about policy complacency in view of these trends, Pat Callan, former SHEEO in California, obtained foundation support to create the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education. The Center developed the *Measuring Up* project, which graded the states every two years from 2000 to 2008 on five dimensions relevant to higher education: Preparation, Participation, Affordability, Completion, and Benefits. The Center also articulated issues and highlighted notable state achievements through its publication, *Crosstalk*, it developed a strong position paper entitled "The Need for State Policy Leadership," (National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2005) and it awarded promising young leaders a year-long fellowship of professional development through its Associates program.

As they approached and entered the twenty-first century a few states, traditional underachievers in postsecondary attainment, launched reforms with the active engagement of their governors and SHEEOs. Indiana and Kentucky, which had not yet established viable community college systems, did so. Kentucky's Postsecondary Improvement Act of 1997 strengthened its Council on Postsecondary Education and under the leadership of Gordon Davies launched strategies for improvement based on goals for the state that have now been sustained for nearly 20 years (Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, 2016). Louisiana created a generous student assistance program, worked to improve teacher preparation, increased state support, and worked to strengthen the quality of every dimension of higher education in the state.

But the timing for a new burst of state policy leadership in higher education was inauspicious. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and a recession that same year distracted most national and state policy makers from focusing on higher education. States such as California, Illinois, Minnesota, New Jersey, and Ohio, which had produced higher education success stories in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, failed to sustain their achievements in affordability, participation, and completion. Virtually every state struggled to maintain the support necessary for strong systems

of higher education, and several severely reduced support for public higher education.

For three years, 2002, 2003, and 2004, state and local support for higher education was stable at \$69 billion while enrollments grew by 11.8 percent and inflation by 10.3 percent. State and local support recovered to increase to \$89 billion by 2008, but then the “great recession” of 2008 produced decline in state and local funding that, even with temporary federal assistance, persisted for seven years. Only in 2015 did state and local funding again reach \$89 billion. FTE enrollment stabilized around 11.0 million after 2013, still substantially (13 percent) higher than in 2005 (State Higher Education Executive Officers, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015).

The net effect of these trends has been to shift the burden of paying for public higher education from the state to students and their families. Constant dollar total educational expenditures per FTE student has been \$12,000 plus or minus \$900 for the past 25 years, but students have paid a constantly growing share of the cost; in 2015 students paid 46.5 percent of that cost, compared to 25.0 percent in 1990. In constant 2015 dollars net tuition was \$2,896 in 1990, compared to \$6,006 in 2015.

The growing financial burden on the states from pensions and health care is partly responsible for the failure of the states to keep pace with enrollment growth and inflation in higher education, but it is likely not the only factor at play. Some question whether higher levels of educational attainment are required for a large fraction of the population or argue that broad, “liberal” education is not needed by most people. And in an era of increasingly polarized politics, higher education as a social institution of is increasingly identified with the left side of the polarity, even though its graduates fully populate the leadership of both sides.

The obvious erosion of financial support for higher education has been accompanied by a more subtle erosion of confidence in the leadership of higher education and of education generally (Lingenfelter, 2016). The loss of confidence is evident in the decisions governors and boards have made about state policy and institutional leaders, and in growing turnover in leadership positions. Higher rates of turnover are especially evident in state

level K-12 executives (where the median tenure of chief state school officers was 14 months in November 2015), but increasingly short tenure in office is also occurring among SHEEO ranks.

Would a Renewal of State Policy Leadership Help? What Would it Look Like?

The substantive and political challenges facing American higher education in the twenty-first century are not the same as they were in the last half of the twentieth century. In many respects, they are more difficult. These circumstances are likely to require state policy leaders to focus on different priorities, cultivate different skills, and establish a new basis for their relationships with governors, legislatures, and institutional leaders.

Different practices and priorities in policy leadership will be to no avail, however, without a supportive political climate and the willingness of governors and legislatures to employ professional leadership in meeting the policy challenges of higher education. The following briefly summarizes and comments on the challenges facing the field.

Mission Creep vs. Mission Expansion

Maintaining mission differentiation in order to control costs was a principal focus of state policy leadership from 1950 to 2000. "Mission creep" is still a concern, but it is not the main problem. The principal need in the twenty-first century is to expand the mission of postsecondary education to serve a larger fraction of the population, especially the people left behind for reasons of poverty, discrimination, and inadequate preparation. This is consistent with the goals motivating state policy leaders in the mid-twentieth century, but it will require more than simply the expansion of places in institutions offering traditional instruction.

Historically, sorting and selecting those students most likely to succeed has been the focus of institutional admission practices, and a driver of "mission creep," along with ambitions for offering professional and graduate

education. In the twenty-first century the public does not need better ways to sort and select. Instead it needs postsecondary institutions to improve instruction and student supports so a higher percentage of potential students enroll and complete valuable credentials and develop the knowledge and skill required for responsible citizenship and a fulfilling life. And it needs K-12 education to improve the percentage of students prepared for college and careers, which requires better approaches for educating teachers and school leaders. These objectives must become high priorities for state policy leaders.

To some mission “expansion” in postsecondary education seems to mean broadening the scope of postsecondary degrees and certificates to include fields and competencies that have not traditionally been considered “higher” education and de-emphasizing less “practical” fields traditionally included in the liberal arts. The experience of the Morrill Act suggests that broadening the scope of postsecondary education is likely to be salutary, but not if it occurs at the expense of cultivating the critical thinking, communications, and problem-solving abilities associated with higher education. It will not serve students or the public well if the objective of more wide-spread attainment is met by substituting pedestrian outcomes for authentic, twenty-first century knowledge and skill.

Funding Equity, Funding Adequacy, Funding Effectiveness

At the dawn of the profession Lyman Glenny criticized coordinating boards for focusing on “superficial jobs, mostly budgeting kind of work” (Rabineau, 1990, p. 26). He wanted them to focus on planning—what kinds of institutions, in what places, and governed by what means—would meet public needs? Despite Glenny’s critique, budgeting has always been and will always be a central and essential policy tool for meeting the public’s need for higher education. But the focus of budgeting has often been on peripheral matters—equity among institutions within the state and parity with institutional competitors.

In an effort make budgeting less peripheral to core objectives, policy leaders have periodically experimented with “performance budgeting,” basing components of funding formulas on the achievement of public priorities such as higher rates of graduation. Although budget formulas

should avoid perverse incentives for institutions to enroll students they are ill-prepared to serve, providing incentives for better performance is inadequate if institutions lack the know-how and resources to meet public goals.

Performance funding relies on the ability of budgetary incentives to improve institutional performance, but it works on the margins of budgetary allocations that are inherently biased against the success of economically and educationally disadvantaged students. The institutions enrolling students most likely to succeed tend to have resources well above other institutions, limited incentives to control costs, and incentives to increase tuition and recruit out of state and international students as a means of offsetting decreased in public support.

The institutions that enroll students most needing better instruction and support typically have fewer resources and fewer options for increasing their resources through private giving or recruiting out-of-state students. In addition, their students often enroll part time due to inadequate financial assistance, a practice highly correlated with failure to complete. It is important to have incentives aligned with student success, but incentives without adequate resources are not enough. The United States cannot achieve widespread educational attainment without designing, financing, and implementing the policies and systems necessary to achieve the goal.

Budgeting among and especially within institutions must become more sophisticated in order to achieve higher educational attainment. Some aspects of budgeting (such as measuring workloads, need for financial aid, and financing price and salary increases) are unavoidably formulaic, but the most important budgetary questions demand deeper thought. Well-informed analysis and sound professional and policy judgments are required to identify high priorities, to distinguish them from lower priorities, and to support them adequately. What objectives are most important? What capabilities must be developed, what resources must be supplied, what obstacles must be overcome, what behaviors must change in order to reach those objectives?

State and national policy leaders need to ask these questions and make sound judgments when allocating resources in the public policy

domain, but policy should focus on broad scale investments rather than fine-grained, prescriptive decisions about objectives, priorities, and strategies. Neither an economy nor a system of higher education can thrive under highly prescriptive top-down regulation. Excessive regulation risks creating perverse incentives and cultivates a compliance mentality, rather than a performance mentality. Public policy should focus on the big picture.

Fine-grained decisions about objectives, priorities, and strategies are more successfully taken at the institutional level. After an extensive study of the implementation of state level performance budgeting in the 1990s, Joseph C. Burke concluded that performance funding should occur at the institutional level, with the performance results reported to policy makers to inform broad scale policies at intervals of five years (Burke, 2005). As an example, the Priorities, Quality, and Productivity (P*Q*P) initiative of the Illinois Board of Higher Education in the early 1990s resulted in \$241.7 million in reallocations from lower to higher priorities aligned with shared state and institutional goals. The Board of Higher Education established the broad parameters of the program, but institutions retained decision-making authority. And the state, in response, increased its support (Wallhaus, 1996).

Polarized, Political Turmoil vs. A Working Consensus on Educational Goals

It has never been easy to obtain agreement on higher education policy, but at times it has been possible. At those times—the Morrill Act, the G.I. bill, the National Defense in Education Act, the Higher Education Act of 1965, and when governors and state legislatures expanded access to higher education in the past century—educational attainment and the prosperity and quality of life in American communities advanced.

Over the past quarter century, while improving education became a more urgent public priority, the ability of political leaders to agree on policy has degenerated. Rather than a working consensus emerging from debate, competing initiatives have been advanced, sometimes implemented, and then abandoned when failure becomes obvious or when a new administration takes office. Corrosive rhetoric and hardened ideological

positions on a range of policy issues have made collaboration and compromise to achieve shared objectives too rare.

In some respects, institutional practices have contributed to the difficulty of developing a working consensus on higher education public policy. The natural tendency for institutions to compete with each other for standing, whether in academics or athletics, often seems to take priority over public purposes, especially when considering tuition and fee increases or recruiting out of state students. Also in polarized times, college and university communities sometimes find it difficult to avoid entanglement in ideological and partisan disputes, directly or indirectly. Both visible commitments to public priorities and efforts to assure and demonstrate non-partisanship help build public support.

The Roles of SHEEOs and Institutional Leaders in the Twenty-First Century

Supportive public policies are an essential foundation for successful system of postsecondary education. The complex challenges described above call for SHEEOs who relentlessly maintain their focus on the goals of advancing educational attainment and the expansion of knowledge and creatively inspire institutional and political leaders to play their respective roles in achieving educational progress. Positive change requires vision, initiative, and collaboration. Citing a few examples, effective state policy leaders in the twenty-first century have worked:

- to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning in K-12 education, in order to advance preparation for postsecondary education;
- to assess learning and use the results to improve instruction in postsecondary education;
- to mobilize broad-based public support for increasing attainment;
- to develop creative, competency-based pathways for adults who have dropped out of college to complete degrees and credentials;
- to strengthen access to financial assistance for academically motivated low-income students;
- to improve remedial/developmental education;

- to increase state support and reduce the need for increases in tuition and fee;
- to help students avoid accumulating unnecessary credits and reduce the amount of time required to complete degrees and credentials; and
- to reduce regulatory barriers to educational innovation while working to improve quality and quality assurance.

More information on these and other current examples of state policy leadership can be found at the SHEEO website <http://www.sheeo.org>.

Although supportive state policies are essential for improving educational attainment, they can only complement, not substitute for, effective educational practices, institutional initiative, and engagement. Faculty members in every classroom and every institution of postsecondary education, from vocational schools to flagship universities have essential roles to play in advancing educational attainment. Postsecondary education cannot thrive if individual institutional interests outweigh the common interests shared by institutions and the public alike.

Conclusion

For nearly 250 years, educational leaders in collaboration with state and national policy makers have created the United States system of postsecondary education. In the last half of the twentieth century, state higher education executives, policy leaders with educational expertise and credibility, played especially influential roles in expanding the scope of the system and improving its quality.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, both the roles of the states and of state policy leaders in higher education show signs of deteriorating. To say the least, this is poor timing when the world economy is increasingly based on the utilization of knowledge and skill.

Frequently educators have been blamed for failing to respond quickly and effectively to the higher expectations of the twenty-first century, with little recognition that fundamental, and time-consuming changes in policy and practice are necessary to achieve significantly higher levels of educational attainment. Whether justified or not, the loss of confidence in

educators has led to revolving doors in policy leadership positions and efforts to “fix” education by recruiting leaders from business, the military, or government. Some exceptional leaders have come from non-traditional sources, but on the whole policy instability has been more evident than educational progress.

It is pointless to criticize political leaders for losing confidence in educators—confidence is not a right, it must be earned. But the slow pace of educational progress and growing financial problems in higher education have caused both educators and political leaders to lose public confidence. Things will not get better until things change. A new vision of public priorities for higher education and of state policy leadership is needed. And a renewed partnership between educators and policy makers is needed to achieve educational progress.¹¹

The partnership between educators and policy makers will be strengthened by better use of evidence to improve policy and practice. Research cannot and will not discover “silver bullets” (such as appointing a brilliant SHEEO, implementing a particular strategy of governance, or a “killer app”) that will improve higher education. But research and analysis can help guide the decisions of policy makers and practitioners as they work to improve performance and solve complex educational problems. Faculty members and institutional leaders need to know whether students are gaining the knowledge and skill life requires, and they need to use that knowledge continuously to improve teaching and learning. Policy makers need to monitor key indicators related to educational attainment (preparation, participation, affordability, and completion) and then they need to focus their attention on providing the policy tools and the financial and educational resources necessary to make progress.

Greater wealth and educational endowments give some states advantages over others. The characteristics and approaches of state policy and educational leaders vary, and states have employed different strategies for governing and coordinating higher education. Despite natural variation

¹¹ A more extensive treatment of this issue can be found in Lingenfelter’s 2016 book *“Proof,” Policy, and Practice: Understanding the Role of Evidence in Improving Education*.

in endowments and approach, policy and practice in every state can become more effective and more efficient through the wise use of evidence.

Strong, visionary professional state policy leadership in higher education is required to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. Although the necessary leadership approach will differ in important respects from that of the twentieth century, it will be fundamentally the same—not based on dictatorial powers, but rather on professional expertise and the ability to work effectively and collaboratively with governors, legislators, and institutional leaders. Such leadership depends on mutual trust and respect—the SHEEO must be able to cultivate reciprocal trust and respect, and the governor, legislators, and institutional leaders must be willing to grant it, because they recognize it is in their collective best interests.

Finally, although I have suggested the profession generally has lost some of the influence it held in the twentieth century, in some states strong SHEEOs have established the credibility necessary to bridge gubernatorial terms of office, and they are working on the issues most relevant to our time. If their example inspires other states to strengthen state policy leadership the national system of higher education and the nation will benefit.

References

- Berdahl, R. O. (1970). *Statewide coordination of higher education*. Washington, DC: American Council on Education.
- Breneman, D. W., & Lingenfelter, P. E. (2012). The California Master Plan: Influential beyond state borders? In S. Rothblatt (Ed.), *Clark Kerr's world of higher education reaches the 21st century* (pp. 85-106). New York: Springer.
- Burke, J. C. (2005). Reinventing accountability: From bureaucratic rules to performance results. In J. C. Burke (Ed.), *Achieving accountability in higher education: Balancing public, academic, and market demands* (pp. 216-245). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Cain, T. R. (2007). *Advancing the field: Fifty years of the Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education at the University of Michigan*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education.
- Callan, P. M. (2012). The perils of success: Clark Kerr and the Master Plan for Higher Education. In S. Rothblatt (Ed.), *Clark Kerr's world of higher education reaches the 21st century* (pp. 61-84). New York: Springer.
- Clark, B. (1983). *The higher education system: Academic organizations in cross-national perspective*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Connally, J. (1965). Charge to the Coordinating Board Texas College and University System. Austin: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Retrieved from www.thecb.state.tx.us/reports/Docfetch.cfm?Docid=0002&Format=DOC
- Douglass, J. A. (2000). *The California Idea and American Higher Education: 1850 to the Master Plan*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Douglass, J. A. (2005). *The Carnegie Commission and Council on Higher Education: A retrospective*. Berkeley: Center for Studies in Higher Education.
- Douglass, J. A., & Cummins, J. (2001). In memoriam, Lyman Glenny, Professor of Higher Education Emeritus. Oakland, CA: University of California Academic Senate. Retrieved from <http://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/inmemoriam/LymanGlenny.htm>

- Erdman, H. and Ogden, W. R. (2000) Reconsidering William Rainey Harper as "father of the junior college." *College Student Journal*, Volume 34, Issue 3
- Gray, A.A. (1915) The Junior College in California
Source: *The School Review*, Vol. 23, No. 7 (Sep., 1915), pp. 465-473
Published by: The University of Chicago Press
Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1076876>
Accessed: 31-10-2017 17:46 UTC
- Jefferson, T. (1832). *Notes on the state of Virginia*. Boston: Lilly and Wait.
[Online Text] Retrieved from The Federalist Papers Project,
<http://www.thefederalistpapers.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Thomas-Jefferson-Notes-On-The-State-Of-Virginia.pdf>
- John D. Millet. (n.d.). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved June 13, 2016, from
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_D_Millet
- Kennedy, D. M. (1999). *Freedom from fear: The American people in depression and war, 1929-1945*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education. (2016). Stronger by degrees. Frankfort, KY: Author. Retrieved from
<http://cpe.ky.gov/ourwork/documents/201621strategicagenda.pdf>
- Lingenfelter, P. E. (2008). The financing of public colleges and universities in the United States. In H F. Ladd and E. D. Fiske (Eds.), *Handbook of research in education finance and policy* (pp. 651-653). New York: Routledge.
- Lingenfelter, P. E. (2013). State policy leadership for higher education: A summary of the origins and continuing evolution of a profession. *State Higher Education Executive Officers*. Retrieved from
http://www.sheeo.org/sites/default/files/publications/STATE%20POLICY%20LEADERSHIP%20FOR%20HIGHER%20EDUCATION_0.pdf
- Lingenfelter, P. E. (2016). Rebuilding confidence in educational leaders through evidence-based practice and policy. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, 48(3), 48-53.
- Lingenfelter, P. E., & Mingle, J. R. (2014). *Public policy for higher education in the United States: A brief history of state leadership*. Boulder: State Higher Education Executive Officers. Retrieved from
http://www.sheeo.org/sites/default/files/History_Web.pdf

- Lingenfelter, P., Novak, R., & Legon, R. (2008). *Excellence at scale—What is required of public leadership and governance in higher education?* Washington, DC: Association of Governing Boards.
- McGuinness, A. C., McKinney, T.H., & Millard, R.M. (1975) *State Postsecondary Education Commissions (1202): Their origin, development, and current status*. Report No. 66. Denver: Education Commission of the States
- McPherson, J. M. (1988). *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*. New York: Ballentine Books.
- Mettler, S. (2005). *Soldiers to citizens: The GI bill and the making of the greatest generation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Millett, J. D. (1952). *Financing higher education in the United States*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education. (2005). *The need for state policy leadership*. San Jose, California: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.highereducation.org/crosstalk/ct0305/news0305-insert.pdf>
- President's Commission on Higher Education. (1947). *Higher education for American democracy*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Retrieved from <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015046793876;view=1up;seq=15>
- Rabineau, L. (1990). *Oral history of Dr. Lyman Glenny, Professor Emeritus, University of California, Berkeley*. Unpublished manuscript, State Higher Education Executive Officers, Boulder, CO.
- Ratcliff, J. L. (1986) Should we forget William Rainey Harper? *Community College Review*, Volume 13, Issue 4.
- Rothblatt, S. (Ed.). (2012). *Clark Kerr's world of higher education reaches the 21st century*. New York: Springer.
- Rudolph, F. (1962) *The American college and university: A history*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Russell, J. D. (1933). Student fees as a source of support. (Box 1). John D. Russell Papers, Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, MO.
- Russell, J. D. (1949a). Basic conclusions and recommendations of the President's Commission on Higher Education. *Journal of Educational Sociology*, 22(8), pp. 493-508.
- Russell, J. D. (1949b). The states in higher education. *State Government: The Magazine of State Affairs*, XXII(5), pp. ??.

- (Box 14). John D. Russell Papers, Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, MO.
- Russell, J. D. (1951). Patterns of coordinated state control over higher education. (Box 18). John D. Russell Papers, Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, MO.
- Scott, D. W. (2008). The transformation of higher education in the 1960s: Master plans, community colleges, and emerging universities. *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, 101(2), pp. 177-192.
- Social Security Administration. (1944). *Social Security bulletin*. (Volume 7, Number 7). Washington, DC: Office of Research, Evaluation, and Statistics. Retrieved from <https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/ssb/v7n7/v7n7p3.pdf>
- State Higher Education Executive Officers. (2003). *State higher education finance*. Boulder, CO: Author.
- State Higher Education Executive Officers. (2004). *State higher education finance*. Boulder, CO: Author.
- State Higher Education Executive Officers. (2005). *State higher education finance*. Boulder, CO: Author.
- State Higher Education Executive Officers. (2005). *State higher education finance*. Boulder, CO: Author.
- State Higher Education Executive Officers. (2006). *State higher education finance*. Boulder, CO: Author.
- State Higher Education Executive Officers. (2007). *State higher education finance*. Boulder, CO: Author.
- State Higher Education Executive Officers. (2008). *State higher education finance*. Boulder, CO: Author.
- State Higher Education Executive Officers. (2009). *State higher education finance*. Boulder, CO: Author.
- State Higher Education Executive Officers. (2010). *State higher education finance*. Boulder, CO: Author.
- State Higher Education Executive Officers. (2011). *State higher education finance*. Boulder, CO: Author.
- State Higher Education Executive Officers. (2012). *State higher education finance*. Boulder, CO: Author.
- State Higher Education Executive Officers. (2013). *State higher education finance*. Boulder, CO: Author.
- State Higher Education Executive Officers. (2014). *State higher education finance*. Boulder, CO: Author.

State Higher Education Executive Officers. (2015). *State higher education finance*. Boulder, CO: Author.

Truman, H. (1947). *Statement by the President making public a report of the Commission on Higher Education*. Retrieved from <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=12802>.

Veysey, L. R. (1965). *The Emergence of the American University*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wallhaus, R. A. (1996). *Priorities, quality, and productivity in higher education: The Illinois P*Q*P Initiative*. Denver: Education Commission of the States.

NOTES