

Texas State Environmental Scan 2004-2009*

2006 Update

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Introduction

The external environmental scan below is a collection of information obtained from major written reports, electronic media, and major publications. In order to complete the external scan, materials were gathered from numerous sources, including print material, electronic media, and human sources. The information is contained in four categories, following the traditional STEP research model. The four categories include *social*, *technological*, *economic* and *political* impacts. Sources were reviewed and summarized into brief bullets. This material was gathered for the purpose of identifying external trends that serve as possible opportunities and/or threats that may affect Texas State.

1. SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Faculty

The American Association of University Professors is proposing a new set of guidelines for evaluating non-tenure track and adjunct professors. This proposal includes three primary provisions. First, all adjunct faculty should be able to expect written term contracts and “the right to a hearing in case of dismissal before the end of a term.” Second, adjuncts who have served for three or four terms within a three-year period should be provided with reappointment or non-appointment notifications by no later than one month before the term ends. For those non-reappointments, written notice should be provided regarding reasons for non-rehire, with the right to appeal. Finally, for those adjuncts that have taught for at least seven years, with at least 12 courses, entitlement to a comprehensive review for the possibility of continuing service or non-reappointment. (*insidehighered.com, September 13, 2006*)

A growing trend among faculty regarding retirement expectations indicate that more faculty do not expect to retire at 62 years of age. According to the findings from the Retirement Confidence Survey of College and University Faculty sponsored by the TIAA-CREF Institute, more faculty expect to work past age 65, especially male faculty. Figures indicate that 11 percent of faculty plan to retire at under 62 years old; 13 percent at 62 to 64 years old; 27 percent at 65 years old; 18 percent at 66 to 69 years old; 24 percent at 70 years or older; and 4 percent never plan to retire. Further indications are that more male faculty (49%) expect to retire after age 65 than female faculty (35%). The most common reason cited for this delay in retiring was because they enjoy their work (62%). (*TIAA-CREF Institute Trends and Issues, October 2005*)

Curriculum

Some higher education institutions are considering changing their general education requirements to be more flexible. For example, Ohio State University and the University of Texas at Austin suggest “creating large, interdisciplinary courses that all freshmen take, while making distribution requirements more flexible, so that a student can pursue areas of particular interest.” Ohio State also plans on establishing a “cluster” system of team-taught interdisciplinary sequences focused on different themes. These clusters would be taught by senior faculty and involve three-quarter sequences to fulfill most of the non-major requirements. UT-Austin, on the other hand, proposed “signature courses.” Similar to clusters, they are large, full-time faculty taught, interdisciplinary courses with discussion sections that students are required to take in their first two years of college. Both “cluster” courses and “signature” courses would be designed around themes such as “ethics and leadership,” “global cultures,” and “the democratic experience.” (*insidehighered.com, January 27, 2006*)

Academic advising in higher education has historically been highly decentralized from program to program. Some campuses have academic advisors embedded within their academic departments, while others have faculty members who fulfill this obligation as part of their jobs. There is very little interaction or communication among this group, which usually results in very different information being disseminated to students. One university, Oregon State, is pushing to rectify this problem by “creating a group made up of head advisors from each college, who together developed a best practices list.” Others are beginning to follow suit to bring their advising offices closer together to fulfill their mission. The National Academic Advising Association is promoting the concept that “developing a strong (student-adviser) relationship is key to the idea of student engagement, which numerous studies have shown is tied to retention rates.” (*insidehighered.com, July 27, 2006*)

The Associated Press reports that there is an increasing demand for trained interpreters in the medical field across the United States. With the boom in Hispanic population, the demand for Spanish speaking translators has escalated. But, there is also a shortage in the supply of speakers of other languages as well. “In Albuquerque, Navajo and Vietnamese are in high demand. In Seattle, Russian, Vietnamese, Cantonese and Cambodian are needed. Boston has more of a use for Portuguese, while parts of Florida get requests for Haitian Creole interpreters.” It is to the point now that many hospitals and clinics are offering incentive pay to workers that speak another language. (*news8austin.com, June 25, 2006*)

The Association of American Medical Colleges reported a record number of students enrolled in American medical schools. In 2005-06, the entering class increased by 2.1% to a record 17,000. The number of applications has also grown by 4.6% over the previous year. The Association had recently called for an increase in medical school enrollments because of an anticipated shortage of physicians for the rapidly growing population in the nation. (*The Chronicle of Higher Education, November 4, 2005, p. A46*)

Business leaders expressed concern about the United States' "declining prominence in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, and call for the nation to double the number of college graduates in those fields by 2015." At a Business Roundtable discussion, fifteen business groups referred to increased foreign competition in these fields which leaves our nation lagging behind. In fact, the president of the Business Roundtable said that this situation "threatens to undermine our standard of living at home and our leadership in the world." Further, the federal government, together with states, industry, and higher education, must work to improve the number of graduates in these fields by offering incentives, financial support, and scholarships to incoming students. (*The Chronicle of Higher Education, August 5, 2005, p. A21*)

In his state of the Union address, President Bush discussed his plan, "The American Competitiveness Initiative." This plan proposes earmarking billions of dollars over the next decade on science research, mathematics, and science education. While the majority of the educational focus is on elementary and secondary education, there are some benefits targeted indirectly for colleges and universities. "Those include programs to train 70,000 teachers to lead Advanced Placement math and science classes in high school, and to prepare 30,000 math and science professionals to teach." The President was quoted as saying, "Our great advantage in the world has always been our educated, hard-working, ambitious people – and we are going to keep that edge." (*The Chronicle of Higher Education, February 10, 2006, P. A22*)

There is a growing trend in the engineering field that has professionals and educators in this field concerned. With the increasing dominance of foreign students filling spots in engineering programs in the United States, the number of local talent is shrinking considerably. When these foreign students complete their education, they normally return to their home countries. For example, the engineering program at the University of Texas is composed of 80 percent of students from outside the United States. This effect is forcing American industry to look overseas when hiring talented engineers. In order to reverse this trend, industry recruiters indicate that this field needs to be emphasized more in the K-12 arena, which ultimately determines who pursues this field in higher education. (*news8austin.com, November 14, 2005*)

Students

The Associated Press reports that the gender gap among college students is widening. "The story is largely one of progress for women, stagnation for men." Women are excelling in fields that have been traditionally dominated by men. Women now account for about 50 percent of the enrollment in professional programs such as law, medicine, and optometry, up from 22 percent a generation ago. Women now outnumber men on college campuses by at least 2 million and this number is growing. Conversely, women are underrepresented in full-time faculty jobs, particularly in fields such as physical sciences, engineering and math. (*CNN.com, June 2, 2006*)

The Pew Hispanic Center, in its 2005 report, studied Hispanic first-time, full-time freshmen enrollment in the U.S.'s most heavily Hispanic states. The results indicate that

Hispanic enrollment in these states has risen by an average of 24 percent between 1996 and 2001. In Texas, the figure was 32 percent. Even though more Hispanics are enrolling in colleges, they are still not necessarily as successful as white students. The report indicated that Hispanics continue to trail behind white students in completing their bachelor's degrees. Reported reasons for this lag include educational preparation and family backgrounds. Research for this report was gathered using IPEDS data. (*University Business, December 2005, p. 16*)

For years, college administrators have focused heavily on providing more access to potential college students. But recent trends indicate that getting them in to college is not where the problem ends. Government figures indicate that only "...54 percent of students entering four-year colleges in 1997 had a degree six years later – and even fewer Hispanics and blacks did, ..." This demonstrates great racial gaps. Federal figures report "57 percent of white students finish their degree, compared with 44 percent of Hispanics and 39 percent of blacks." Research shows that graduation rates have been stagnating over the years even though more students are entering college. Some of the reasons for this may include the rising cost of tuition and little academic support for students. (*washingtonpost.com, November 15, 2005*)

One new trend that appears to be occurring in higher education involves revising the definition of a "new" typical student. Statistics indicate that 43% of today's students are 24 years of age or older; 27% have dependents; 80% are employed; while 39% are employed in full-time jobs in addition to attending school full-time. As a result, services and amenities provided by universities will need to change as well to accommodate these "new" students. (*College Planning & Management, January 2005, p. 6*)

USA Today reports that the majority of adults today are encouraging young people to go to college, even students that fall into the poor and minority categories. In fact, "from 1990 to 2002, the percentage of 10th graders aspiring to college rose 21 percentage points, to 80%." But the reality is, according to new research, that there is a huge gap between "aspiring" and actualization, especially for students falling into this category. Research indicates that "only 6% of low-income students can expect to earn a bachelor's degree by age 24. For wealthy students it's 51.3%..." The reason given for this widening gap is that these students are not given the tools and support needed for them to be able to succeed. High schools are not adequately preparing students for the rigors and intricacies of higher education. They, in fact, are not being honest with them. Some research goes so far as to show that "states with graduation exams tend to 'push out,' or encourage students to drop out or transfer, so they won't bring down the overall pass rates." (*usatoday.com, February 2, 2005*)

A new program developed at Kansas University, Mi Familia, is aimed toward the Hispanic and Latino population. Its purpose is to deliver a message about higher education opportunities available, regardless of where students choose to attend. The unique thing about this particular program is that it is delivered "entirely in Spanish to Spanish speaking students and their families." The program intentionally includes the families of these prospective students in an effort to help them understand about what is

involved in applying to and attending college. (*The University Daily Kansan, September 13, 2006*)

A literacy study conducted by the Pew Charitable Trusts indicated that most college students are lacking in literacy skills. This study examined college students that were nearing the end of their degree programs. Results demonstrated that “more than half of students at four-year colleges and at least 75 percent at two-year colleges lack the literacy to handle complex, real-life tasks such as understanding credit card offers...” These results were consistent regardless of what their field of study was. The three types of literacy studied included: “analyzing news stories and other prose, understanding documents and having math skills needed for checkbooks or restaurant tips.” Despite these results, the report indicates that overall, college students have a greater average literacy than most adults across the nation. (*abcnews.go.com, January 20, 2006*)

The *Washington Post* reports that more students across the United States are taking some “time off” before entering college after high school. The reasons for doing this vary from traveling, reflecting, and participating in community services activities to working to pay for college. Whatever the reason, many educators are encouraging students to do just that. College administrators report that they “see more and more kids showing up in college who are just not ready to learn...they are showing up with all sorts of stress-related disorders – cutting, eating, and others.” Students in this generation have been “pushed from birth” and need to take some time to decompress and mature before entering college. Students who actually do take time off report that this time actually helped them to appreciate school more and all of the benefits a college degree can provide. In fact, a poll conducted by the Princeton Review reported that “of 350 students surveyed, 55 percent of those who had taken time off said the experience improved their grades when they returned to school.” (*washingtonpost.com, October 11, 2005, p. A06*)

According to a report conducted by The College Board, the number of students taking and passing advanced placement (AP) courses in high school has increased across the entire United States since 2000. In 2005, more than 1.2 million students participated in the AP program in high school. “Among public school students, 14.1% in the class of 2005 earned a passing grade in at least one AP exam, up from 13.2% of seniors a year before and 10.2% in 2000...” In Texas, the percentage increased from 9.9 in 2000 to 13.7% in 2005. Despite this increase, the number of minority (Black, Latino, and Native American) students in the class of 2005 continued to demonstrate “below-average performances” on AP exams. (*usatoday.com, February 7, 2006*)

The National Association for College Admission Counseling reports that “institutions are increasingly admitting students before they ever take their first class of their senior year of high school.” This growth of the “early” early admissions process is of great concern to counseling and education experts. Students are making commitments to universities before they even have an opportunity to weigh all of their options. (*insidehighered.com, August 8, 2006*)

USA Today reports that the number of college applications being received has surged dramatically to include double-digit increases in some areas. This increase in applications in turn, causes a decrease in the number of high school seniors accepted under early admissions. With so many applications to review and select from, many admissions offices are turning away more students. As a result, students then panic and begin submitting applications to many other institutions in the hope of being accepted somewhere. Thus, the number of regular college applications increases, as well. “Data compiled by the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA shows that the proportion of high school seniors applying to six or more colleges increased by 41% from 1994 to 2004.” (*usatoday.com, February 13, 2006*)

A study conducted by the Tomas Rivera Policy Institute of 400 Hispanic students ages 18 through 25 indicated that Hispanic students are greatly under-informed about college financial aid. This lack of knowledge included eligibility for grants and the requirements necessary for applying for financial aid. “While almost all of the respondents, 98 percent, said they thought a college education was important, only 62 percent said they thought the benefits of a college education outweigh the costs.” (*dailytexanonline.com, July 25, 2006*)

A study released by the National Research Council found that “getting the children of Spanish-speaking immigrants to finish high school and go to college is crucial to the economy as much of the nation’s workforce edges toward retirement...” The report indicated that by the year 2030, roughly 25 percent of white Americans will be at or over retirement age in comparison to only 10 percent of Hispanics. With the demand for a better educated workforce, coupled with Hispanics having the highest high school drop out rate, our nation could be in trouble. The report warns that “failure to close Hispanics’ education and language gap risks compromising their ability to both contribute and share in our national prosperity.” The report calls for a greater investment in social programs and education for Hispanics because “how Latinos fare academically will shape the nation’s future...” (*usatoday.com, March 6, 2006*)

The term “adulthood” is changing for today’s college students. Parents of the baby boomer generation are becoming “over-involved” in their children’s educations. The term used for these parents today is “helicopter parents” and they are proving to be a challenge for college faculty and administrators. They are calling and e-mailing professors when their kids “can’t get into the classes they want.” They are even logging on to their children’s personal accounts to check their grades. Some of these parents, termed “Black Hawks” even do unethical things such as write term papers for their kids or sit in on job interviews with their children. “...across the nation, college administrators are struggling with what they say is a growing phenomenon, a product of the unique relationship between many boomer parents and their millennial-generation children.” Administrators realize that the attention can be healthy and supportive, but sometimes it has the reverse effect and can actually “stunt student development”. (*St. Petersburg Times Online, June 19, 2006*)

Although the Americans with Disabilities Act was passed over 16 years ago, many colleges and universities are still dealing with issues of accessibility for disabled students. The Justice Department has begun investigating colleges and universities regarding enforcement of the ADA. This increased attention to universities by the government stems from the fact that “many are old – and complex, due to the number of buildings.” (*ledger-enquirer.com, September 6, 2006*)

2. TECHNOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT

In support of a more centralized academic advising process, the University of Louisville has created an online advising program. The program consists of “six modules that intends to give incoming students consistent information – and advice – about how to handle the first year of college. Topics include technology, general education and faculty-student interaction.” With these modules, students have to score at least 70 percent on each before they are able to sign up for classes for their subsequent semester. Other institutions are also researching ways of creating more unified methods of academic advising that are consistent across all disciplines. (*insidehighered.com, July 27, 2006*)

With the technological advances available today, the method of classroom teaching is significantly changing. In a recent study conducted for InfoComm International, it was reported that, “...in the next five years, half of all higher-education classrooms will be equipped with AV technology.” This increasing demand for technology advances is due to the changing education methods being utilized today. There has been a growing use of “collaborative techniques and project-based assignments” by faculty. In fact, the “technology infrastructure is increasing its flexibility and is being fully integrated into every aspect of higher education.” (*College Planning & Management, August 2006, p. 31*)

The Society for College and University Planning reports that the amount of money allocated for information technology in higher education is beginning to decline, but is still a healthy \$5 billion plus. Public institutions can expect a decrease of about 13 percent, while private institutions’ spending could increase by as much as 28 percent. In the public higher education arena, trends indicate that the number of distance education programs are slowly decreasing from 67 percent last year to roughly 64 percent this year. (*SCUP Trends, March 2005, p. 9*)

Another related trend reported by the Society for College and University Planning involves wireless access on college and university campuses. “Seventy-nine percent of colleges surveyed recently reported having wireless networks, up from only 45 percent in 2002.” This growing trend will change students’ expectations towards accessibility to their professors. In fact, “they will expect professors to be as flexible and adept at electronic communication as they are, no matter where they are located.” (*SCUP Trends, March 2005, p. 9*)

In a report compiled for the Pew Internet & American Life project, indications are that the Internet use among teenagers has skyrocketed. In fact, “nearly nine out of 10 young

people, ages 12 through 17, have online access – up from about three-quarters of young people in 2000.” This is a drastic difference from the 66 percent of American adults who use the Internet. Similarly, 75 percent of the teens surveyed reported using instant messaging regularly, compared to 42 percent of adults overall. (*apnews.myway.com, July 27, 2005*)

Changing Our World, Inc., a fundraising and philanthropy consulting firm, reports that the Internet, e-mail, and other technological tools will become fundamental to how we perform our jobs in higher education. From a fundraising perspective, utilizing these tools is still in the early stages and will never completely replace the face-to-face contact with major donors. However, their philosophy is “...colleges and universities would be well advised to spend considerable time reviewing their electronic communication and how it can assist them in the future. One thing is for certain, e-Philanthropy is like a freight train coming at us at full speed. We either get out of the way, get on board, or get left behind.” (*Business Officer, July/August 2006, p. 16*)

One trend that is quickly emerging and is destined to impact campus operations across the nation involves a new “customer-service” expectation that today’s students bring to campuses. “Thanks to consumer Internet sites that track and respond to personal preferences, process transactions quickly, and securely store and retrieve personal information, everyone arriving on campus expects the institution to do the same.” Because of these rising expectations, institutions must take them into consideration when developing future plans. (*Business Officer, July/August 2006, p. 57*)

In today’s economy, more and more students are pursuing their degrees online. In fact, some of them never actually set foot on a college campus. “Online enrollment jumped from 1.98 million in 2003 to 2.35 million the following year, accounting for 7 percent of postsecondary education.” With the recent law passed by Congress in March 2006, the numbers could increase exponentially. This new law does away with “the requirement that colleges offer at least half their courses face to face to receive federal student aid.” According to Eduventures, a Boston firm that studies trends in education, one out of every ten students will be registered in an online degree program by 2008. (*detnews.com, June 22, 2006*)

In the 2006 edition of the Horizon Report, “social computing” is reported to be one of the fastest growing trends in higher education. “Social computing is essentially the application of computer technology to facilitate collaboration and working in groups.” Online meetings and conferences are becoming an everyday norm for some professionals. In fact, even distance learning courses are being designed to fit this “virtual” format. Tools such as blogs, wikis, and other groupware tools can be used across disciplines to aid in teaching, learning, and collaborative research. (*The Horizon Report 2006, p. 8-9*)

Personal broadcasting, another fast-growing electronic medium, is paving the way for easy and convenient access to students. “Podcasting,” “Webcasting,” and “Vlogging” are the new norm for sharing information with potential and current students. Podcasting involves dispersing audio messages via the popular iPod, while webcasting is a “video

counterpart to podcasting.” Vlogging is “a form of blogging where the main content is in the form of video clips and text entries serve as annotations...” These forms of personal broadcasting present unlimited opportunities for educators. Students can obtain information from classes, while they can also submit class assignments. College recruiters and marketers can share information with potential students. (*The Horizon Report 2006, p. 11-12*)

3. ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

The Census Bureau reports that the population in the United States is expected to be at 300 million by fall 2006. This is due to immigration and an increased number of births in the nation. In fact, “...there is one birth every eight seconds and one death every 13 seconds.” According to the Bureau, the Latino population in the United States is now comprised of nearly 43 million of that total. (*news8austin.com, June 26, 2006*)

A new national study, entitled Degrees of Opportunity, reported that “more than half of American adults ages 25 to 60 would like to pursue additional education – the equivalent of more than 70 million adult Americans.” Additionally, 89 percent of those surveyed indicated that the benefits of a degree are equal to or greater than the amount of time, money, or energy they would need to invest. Despite these high numbers, only 33% stated that they would actually pursue it. Reasons given include affordability and time management. (*Yahoo! Finance, August 22, 2006*)

The number of students interested in studying “abroad” has been drastically increasing. “During the past 20 years, it has nearly tripled, to about 175,000 in the 2003-04 academic year...” With today’s economy becoming so global and the increase in international business and education, studying overseas is almost becoming an expectation for students and more and more of them are jumping on board. (*washingtonpost.com, August 7, 2006*)

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, “more than 6.8 million in the 2000 Census of the United States picked more than one racial or ethnic category in which to place themselves. And 40 percent of them were under the age of 18, suggesting that millions will be arriving on campuses where the standard ‘pick one box’ approach to race and ethnicity may no longer work.” As a result, the U.S. Education Department has released “draft guidance” for colleges and universities on how to collect and report data relating to race or ethnicity. A new “two or more races” category will now be available for reporting student information to the government. These changes could potentially impact demographic information already gathered by higher education institutions. Some groups will show drastic decreases while others significant increases in numbers. Institutions should also consider modifying their admissions applications to coincide with these changes in reporting. At present, only 27 percent of colleges and universities have policies in place that allow students to avoid picking only a single box when identifying race or ethnicity. (*insidehighered.com, August 8, 2006*)

Fundraising is an important part of every college campus. Traditionally, development officers focus primarily on student alumni when soliciting financial contributions. The

fact is that non-graduates are now beginning to play an important role in fundraising efforts by colleges and universities. “Last year, non-alumni gave \$5 billion to U.S. schools, according to a study by the Council for Aid to Education, a New York-based nonprofit group.” When non-alumni give to a specific college or university, the reasons are usually of a personal nature, such as a love interest that graduated from there or a distant relation who attended there. Regardless of the reason, there is an untapped market for potential donations. (*boston.com*, April 27, 2006)

In a recent study conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics, the monthly debt burden for graduates with student loans remains as high today as it was over seven years ago despite higher loan amounts. “Higher salaries (after adjusting for inflation) and lower payments (relative to the amount borrowed) appear to be the major reasons why there was no increase in debt burden.” This might not necessarily be the case over the next five years when wages are not increasing and interest rates are. (*University Business*, May 2005, p. 15)

A survey conducted by Vault.com indicates that internships for students are on the rise. In fact, “62 percent of college students planned to do an internship this summer, up from 41 percent two years ago.” Unfortunately, the majority of internships are unpaid or low-paid. Some students must work to pay for their education and, thus, cannot afford to participate in internship opportunities. Colleges, today, need to provide financial assistance for internships in order to increase access at all socioeconomic levels. This aid could be offered via grants or stipends from alumni associations or private donors, similar to scholarships. (*nytimes.com*, July 19, 2006)

According to a recent study conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, the overall job market is shifting to a “buyer’s market.” In fact, “job-market analysts and career counselors see hiring growth in many sectors of the economy. Nationwide, employers plan to hire 13.8 percent more new graduates than they did last year...” The demand is especially high for students in engineering and financial services. The highest level of hiring will be in the service and manufacturing sectors. Overall, “Regardless of industry, almost 90 percent of the companies surveyed by NACE reported more competition over new grads this year, and more than 20 percent said they planned to increase starting salaries to make job offers more attractive.” (*csmonitor.com*, May 1, 2006)

While the overall job market is strong with high salary offers and additional perks, one field that is flourishing despite lower wages and high labor is Teach for America. This 17 year old nonprofit organization “has begun training about 2,400 recent graduates for two-year teaching stints in disadvantaged schools, nearly tripling the figure in 2000.” This organization received almost 19,000 applications this year, with 80 percent of applicants turned away. The reason for its popularity is it “seems to appeal to high-achieving students who relish a challenge and want to be in the trenches – as long as they have help.” Teach for America functions to recruit, train, and help get new teachers “alternative certification.” After that, the hiring schools pay their salaries. (*cnn.com*, June 17, 2006)

The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education reports that Texas is not doing well in educating its youth today. One reason for this could be the high costs of attending college in the state. The report went further to state, "...sending a student to a public university costs low- to middle-income Texas families almost half of their annual earnings." Other areas the state was not doing well in were in higher education enrollment numbers and actual degree completion rates. All of these issues "could limit the state's access to a competitive work force and weaken its economy over time."
(*KXAN.com, September 7, 2006*)

The Society for College and University Planning reports that federal obligations for academic research are on the rise. However, funding for capital improvement projects are declining. These outcomes will impact universities across the nation. There will be more joint efforts and partnerships among colleges, government agencies, and private industry to conduct research with shared building and/or laboratory space. This could result in more collaboration and inclusion in research projects and funding. (*SCUP Trends to Watch in Higher Education, July 2005*)

In his book, *The World is Flat*, Thomas Friedman indicates that America is losing the "global race" to other countries like India and China. This is becoming evident by the increased outsourcing of jobs to these countries by the United States. In order to regain our competitiveness, "Key to that strategy is the emergence of new 'middle jobs,' or jobs that can't be outsourced." Our colleges and universities need to provide the "right" education to meet the future job market needs. The eight new "middle" jobs of this type involve people who are: great collaborators, great "leveragers", great synthesizers, great explainers, great localizers, green adapters, passionate people, and great adapters. The race is not yet lost, however our educators need to adapt their teaching methods to instill these abilities into our students. (*University Business, August 2006, p. 13*)

Our economy is changing, and thus the needs and expectations of "Corporate America" are changing as well. Employers of today have much higher expectations from their new hires than ever before and the competition for jobs is intense. "The harsh truth is that many companies today view new college grads as a hiring risk. Employers don't have the time, money, or wherewithal to teach them the practical skills they need to jump the breach between liability and asset." The burden and opportunity is on colleges and universities to instill these "life skills" in their students. (*University Business, February 2006, p. 21*)

A report by State Higher Education Executive Officers indicates that there is a rapid decline in state spending on higher education. "State and local support amounted to \$5,833 per student nationwide in 2005...That's down from the \$7,121 – in comparable 2005 dollars – that was spent in fiscal 2001." In reality, higher education appropriations by the states actually increased by 3.5 percent last year and are up by roughly 7 percent since 2001. The difference is that public higher education has had to make room for 14 percent additional students with these slightly increased allocations. (*cnn.com, March 23, 2006*)

In a report produced by the Institute for Higher Education Policy, it is predicted that within the next decade “more financial aid flowing to upper-income students and families.” It further predicts that “financial aid will become less effective against rising tuitions and that those entering higher education will be forced to take on more debt.” The report further indicates that support is shifting more toward academically-based financial aid and away from those low-income, minority and underserved populations. At a time when the future student population will include primarily students that fall into these categories, the result could be one of further “declining opportunity.” (*diverseeducation.com, April 14, 2006*)

A growing trend among institutions of higher education involves offering some form of free tuition to low-income students. “The aim is to develop the local economy by investing in a high-quality, homegrown workforce.” For example, the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, Michigan State University, Miami University in Ohio and the University of Pennsylvania have each modified their financial aid packages to low-income students to eliminate the loan portion. Similarly, institutions like Harvard, Yale, and Stanford have done away with the parental contribution for low-income students. “Going to college tuition free is an increasingly attractive option for students who don’t want to begin their working lives owing money on loans.” (*usnews.com, September 10, 2006*)

A report published by Excelencia in Education and the Institute for Higher Education Policy indicates that “the percentage of Latino students receiving financial assistance to attend college is at an all-time high, but they receive the lowest average student-aid awards of any racial or ethnic group...” In 2003-04, Latino students received \$6,250 in average financial aid awards, compared with \$6,890 averaged for all students. The report also indicates that Latinos are the students that are more likely to apply for aid than any other group, which defies the myth that the reason these students don’t get aid is because they don’t apply. (*chronicle.com, September 2, 2005*)

4. POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

The U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, in a recent proposal published in the *Federal Register*, recommends that colleges set up accurate reporting systems to track the time spent on federally financed research projects. “This notice follows several recent cases in which the federal government said academic scientists had spent less time working on federal research grants than they had promised.” This guidance is not intended to force grant recipients into compliance but they take a great risk if they ignore it. (*Chronicle, December 9, 2005*)

President Bush unveiled his new American Competitiveness Initiative to the nation during his State of the Union address. This proposal calls for doubling federal spending on basic research at the National Science Foundation, The Energy Department’s Office of Science, and the Commerce Department’s National Institute of Standards and Technology, which would cost \$50 billion over the next ten years. It also seeks to make

permanent and expand the research and development tax credit, thus encouraging investments from corporations in scientific endeavors (at a cost of \$86 billion across 10 years). Additionally, in 2007, \$380 million will be invested into programs aimed at improving the teaching of math and science in elementary and secondary schools. This action has university officials concerned that this funding might come at the expense of other types of academic research. (*Inside Higher Ed.com, February 2, 2006*)

Trends indicate that since 2005, legislation aimed at increasing accountability in higher education continues at the state and federal levels. Planners in higher education indicate that as costs continue to increase, institutions are going to see increased scrutiny from legislatures and Congress on what students are getting for their tuition dollars. Efforts at student learning outcomes required by accrediting bodies will not be enough to convince parents that a college education is worth the cost. (*SCUP, March 2005, p. 8*)

The Bush Administration's Commission on the Future of Higher Education is seriously considering standardized testing as a means of accountability for colleges and universities regarding their quality of education offered. In fact, it is already being pilot tested with small groups at more than 100 institutions nationwide. This type of testing is of great concern to many academics who contend that the broadly diverse missions and programs of the nearly 4,000 higher education institutions would make standardized testing essentially worthless. Academics are concerned that standardized testing will lead to a more uniform college curricula that "teaches to the test," similar to what has occurred in the K-12 education arena. (*Philadelphia Enquirer, March 28, 2006*)

The push for more accountability and transparency in higher education is hardly a new concept. State legislators and members of Congress have been tackling this issue for years. Colleges and universities have been trying to prove, in measurable ways that they are successfully fulfilling their missions. Accrediting bodies have already crafted measures aimed at determining several aspects of institutional success. But, the pressure on higher education to prove itself is mounting. A federal study released last year found that only one-fourth of American college graduates are proficient on a set of literacy measures. Institutions are being urged to do a better job of measuring the progress of students in developing cognitive skills prior to graduating. If this is not possible, then the independence and flexibility in developing assessments will be removed from institutions and placed elsewhere. (*Inside Higher Ed.com, February 15, 2006*)

One of the foremost issues on the agenda of the Commission of the Future of Higher Education involves making higher education available and affordable to all Americans. Some possible recommendations that are surfacing include strongly emphasizing need-based financial aid versus merit based, as well as instituting incentives for colleges to control their costs and the prices they charge students. The Commission is also strongly encouraging lifelong learning, whether by making existing tax credits deductible or by creating new federal tax incentives for employers and employees. (*Inside Higher Ed.com, February 3, 2006*)