State News Summary: Utah

College Affordability Continues to Erode in Utah

San Jose, Calif., and Washington, D.C. — Utah students and their families are now devoting more of their income to pay for college costs. Since the late 1990s, the share of family income, even after student financial aid, needed to pay for college expenses has increased from 15 percent to 21 percent at public four-year institutions.

Poor and working-class families must devote 28 percent of their income to pay for net college costs at public four-year colleges and universities. (Net college costs equal tuition, room, and board minus financial aid.)

In addition, there are substantial gaps in college opportunities in the state. Among young adults, for example, 16 percent of Hispanics are enrolled in college, compared with 45 percent of whites.

These are among the major findings of Measuring Up 2008: The National Report Card on Higher Education, released today by the independent, nonpartisan National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education. According to the report:

- The likelihood of young Utah residents enrolling in college by age 19 has dropped by 14 percent since the early 1990s.
- Forty-nine percent of college students complete a bachelor’s degree within six years of enrolling, compared with 65 percent in the top states.
- Thirteen percent of Hispanics have a bachelor’s degree, compared with 32 percent of whites. In the best-performing states, 37 percent of residents (ages 25 to 64) have a bachelor’s degree.
- Sixty-seven percent of Hispanics have a high school credential, compared with 94 percent of whites—one of the largest gaps in the nation on this indicator.
“With the current challenges of a competitive global economy, states need to raise the
level of education of their population to help their residents compete,” said Patrick M. Callan,
president of the National Center. “The purpose of Measuring Up 2008 is to identify the key areas
where states can improve.”

Measuring Up 2008 grades all 50 states in six overall areas of higher education
performance, based on quantitative measures. Grades are calculated by comparing each state’s
performance with that of the best states—defined as the median of the top five states. The report
also identifies gaps in college opportunity and achievement by ethnic/racial groups within each
state, as well as identifying each state’s improvements or declines on key indicators since the
early 1990s.

Utah’s Grades:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>B–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordability</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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All states received an “Incomplete” in learning because there are not sufficient data to
allow meaningful state-by-state comparisons.

Measuring Up 2008 includes a national report and 50 state reports. The national report
offers a summary of the nation’s current performance, and improvements or declines since the
early 1990s. The state reports provide a detailed picture of higher education in each state.

Upon release of the report card on Dec. 3, 2008, the national and state reports will be
available at www.highereducation.org. The Web site also offers state-by-state comparisons, as
well as technical information about methodology.

The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education promotes policies that
enhance Americans’ opportunities to pursue and achieve a quality higher education. Established
in 1998, the National Center is an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization. It is not
associated with any institution of higher education, with any political party, or with any
government agency.

(Please note: Measuring Up 2008 is embargoed until Wednesday, Dec. 3. The findings of the
report cannot appear before December 3.)

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