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Contacts: Daphne Borromeo, 408-792-3153
dborromeo@highereducation.org

Kari Hudnell, 202-955-9450 x314
khudnell@commworkslc.com

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:

Preparation:	B
Participation:	B–
Affordability:	F
Completion:	B+
Benefits:	B
Learning:	I

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. *Measuring Up 2008* is the latest in a series of higher education report cards that began in 2000.

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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