Increasing Higher Education Attainment
The Emerging Policy Agenda in the United States

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Global Competitive, Locally Engaged
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Percent of adults with postsecondary degree, 55-64

Percent of adults with postsecondary degree, 45-54

Percent of adults with postsecondary degree, 35-44
Percent of adults with postsecondary degree, 25-34

- Canada: 53
- Japan: 52
- Korea: 47
- Sweden/Finland/Norway: 40
- Belgium: 40
- United States: 38
- Spain/France/Ireland: 36
- Australia/Denmark: 34
- U.K.: 32
- New Zealand: 30
- Switzerland/Iceland: 28
- Netherlands: 26
- Germany: 22
- Poland: 20
- Mexico: 16
- Hungary: 12
- Portugal: 12
- Austria: 8

Number of Degrees Required Beyond Expected Production, 2005 to 2025

- To Close Equity Gaps
- To Compete Internationally: 15,600,000
- To Meet Domestic Workforce Needs: 16,200,000

Source: NCHEMS
Graduates already in workforce (31 million)

New graduates at current rates of production (41 million)

New graduates from immigration (6.4 million)

New graduates needed to meet world standards (15.6 million)

Composition of the U.S. population, 2000 to 2050
Source: United States Census Bureau

Levels of educational attainment, 2000
Source: United States Census Bureau

Growth in the U.S. population, 2000 to 2020
Source: United States Census Bureau
All potential students should be prepared for success in higher education and the workplace.

- Recent research by the Education Trust and others has shown that the preparation students need to be successful in college and the workplace is the same.
- Every young person and their family should know what it takes to go to and be successful in college (KnowHow2Go).
- High school curricula and standards must directly align with readiness for college.
- Accelerated learning options should be available for all students.

Improve student outcomes from higher education.

- Equity gaps in access and success must be closed.
- Increase college completion rates.
- Align higher education programs and outcomes with workforce needs (not just job skills).
- Develop more and better measures of students learning outcomes. (In their absence, colleges are evaluated based on input measures such as those used in the U.S. News and World Report rankings. Better measures of college learning outcomes are being developed by the Collegiate Learning Assessment and others.)
THE CHANGING AGENDA FOR COLLEGE ACCESS AND SUCCESS

Better meet the needs of adult learners

• Align policies and practices with adult learner needs, which differ from those of traditional students.
• Redesign delivery systems to meet the wide range of needs among adult learners.
• Develop better approaches and systems to meet the needs of marginalized adults, including second language learners, the working poor, displaced workers, and re-entry students.

Strengthen public policy setting and implementation for higher education

• Improve accountability systems, particularly through the development of state-of-the-art student performance data systems. Without better data on college students, programs, and outcomes, it is difficult or impossible to make good decisions on reallocation of resources, strengthening academic programs, and improving student services.
• Through the involvement of all stakeholders, define a public agenda for higher education in the states that defines state needs and expectations from the higher education system and sets priorities for the allocation of public resources.