State Legislatures and Higher Education Policy
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Julie Davis Bell
NCSL Education Program
Growing Legislative Interest in Higher Education Accountability

- Tight state budgets
- College completion rates everywhere are dismal
- Changing demographics in states
- Higher education as an investment to help economic development
- Competitiveness and job outsourcing
- New competition from University of Phoenix, online learning and other private for-profit entities
- Hearing from constituents about cost
Accountability Strategies

- Setting clear statewide goals about state priorities: A Public Agenda for Higher Education
- Focusing policy on outcomes
- Shifting toward outcomes-based funding
- Encouraging higher ed/K-12 connections
State Examples

- **Oregon 40/40/20**: By 2025 40% of Oregonians will have a bachelor's degree, 40% will have an associate degree or certificate, and 20 percent will have a high school diploma.

- **Virginia Top Jobs**: Increase the number of college grads prepared for the top job opportunities.

- **Illinois Public Agenda Task Force**: Increase access, affordability, attainment and research and innovation.

- **Tennessee: Complete College Tennessee Act**: Improve economic and workforce development, increase degree production, target underserved populations, promote institutional collaboration.

- **Kentucky Strategic Agenda**: Improve adult literacy and overall educational attainment.

- **Texas Closing the Gaps**: Reduce achievement/completion gaps.

- **California Master Plan**: Higher education as vital to state economic development.
Legislative Roles and Responsibilities

- Set state goals: A "Public Agenda" for higher education.
- The discussion is about state needs, it is not about individual institutions.
- Bring state stakeholders to the table to discuss goals, strategies, implementation and data collection.
- Think and plan about the entire postsecondary enterprise and all the opportunities for students within it.
- Performance Funding is one piece of a funding and accountability strategy.
- Think and plan long term and strategically for the future.