

**Strategic Issues:**

- Because of dwindling enrollments during the early 1990s, the Board of Governors established an advisory council to make recommendations. Among other suggestions, the council recommended that students be treated as 'customers'.
- Governor John G. Rowland proposed the consolidation of the Commission of Higher Education into the state Department of Education in 1995. The measure was ultimately rejected in the state legislature.
- The Connecticut General Assembly cut the state financial aid programs by 11% in 2001–2002, and by some estimates, approximately 1,600 students will be affected by the legislative budget slashing in 2003.

**Summary**

- *Exemplary Access:* Connecticut ranked high compared to other states on both high school graduation rates and college enrollment rates during the 1990s.
- *Structural Issues:* The state's high ranking on access could be related to the relatively high income level of the population. The state had a lower percentage of resident undergraduates enrolled in public colleges than most other states as well. The state fell below the equity threshold for need-based grants.
- *Opportunity:* Improving need-based grant aid could improve college enrollment opportunities for low-income college-qualified students, further improving access.

**Access Indicators***High School Graduation Rates (Table 7.1)*

Although the state's high school graduation rates declined from 80% in 1992 to 73% in 1998, they increased somewhat to 77% in 2000. Compared to the performance of other states, Connecticut had a high school graduation rate nearly ten percentage points higher than the national average in 2000.

*College Enrollment Rates (Table 7.1)*

An increasing percentage of Connecticut residents attended postsecondary institutions after high school during the 1990s. In 1992, 57% of high school graduates attended postsecondary

institutions, but by 1998, that figure had increased to 65%. Although the percentage slipped to 62% in 2000, the state performed consistently better than other states, remaining at least a percentage point higher than the national average throughout the decade. As of 2000, the state outperformed the national average by six percentage points.

**State Demographics***State Demographics (Table 7.2)*

Although Connecticut's poverty rates increased from 10% in 1992 to 12% in 1996, they decreased steadily for the remainder of the decade to 7% in 2000. Despite the initial increase, the state poverty rates were at least a percentage point lower than the national average throughout the decade. As of 2000, the differential was four percentage points. African-Americans were the largest minority group in the state at 9%, while Hispanics trailed closely behind at 8.5% during the same year. Other Minorities, which include Native Americans and Asian Americans, make up 3% of the state population. The state experienced an increase in the percentage of college-educated residents during the 1990s. The percentage of state residents with a bachelor's degree or higher increased from 28% in 1992 to 32% in 2000. The differential between the percentage of Colorado residents with a bachelor's degree and the national average was at least five percentage points each year data were tracked, and in 2000, the state

exceeded the national average by seven percentage points. The average income per capita rose throughout the decade, exceeding the national average by \$11,233 in 2000.

#### *System Composition* (Table 7.3)

The largest percentage of Colorado students (44%) chose private institutions as the means to acquire their postsecondary degrees in 2000, and 39% enrolled in public four-year institutions. The remaining 18% of students attended public two-year institutions for their education.

### **Financial Indicators**

#### *Financial Capacity* (Table 7.4)

State tax rates fluctuated between 7% and 8% during the 1990s. Connecticut residents were taxed nearly a percentage point higher than the national average throughout the decade. Per-student state expenditures for K-12 education increased from \$5,944 in 1992 to \$6,185 in 2000. Compared to other states, Connecticut K-12 expenditures were higher than the national average by at least \$1,400 per student throughout the decade, and in 2000, were \$1,991 higher than the national average.

#### *Educational Revenue* (Table 7.5)

State and local appropriations for the public system increased from \$6,240 in 1992 to \$9,792 in 1998, but then fell to \$8,747 in 2002. Compared to the national average, Connecticut went from falling \$118 behind the national average in 1992 to exceeding it by \$1,252 in 2000.

#### *Tuition and Fees* (Table 7.6)

Consistent with the trend for other states, Connecticut tuition and fees increased, from \$3,062 in 1992 to \$3,587 in 2000. Connecticut exceeded the national average by \$730 to \$869 at different points in the decade, reflecting the high dependency on private institutions for postsecondary education.

#### *Need-based Grants* (Table 7.6)

Need-based grants per student fluctuated throughout the decade between \$345 and \$500 with no apparent pattern. As of 2000, the average need-based grant stood at \$461, \$95 higher than the national average. Compared to other states throughout the decade, Connecticut has been both lower and higher than the national mean. In 1998 and 2000, the average need-based state grant was at least \$80 higher than the national average.

#### *Non-need Grants* (Table 7.6)

Non-need based grants in Connecticut averaged \$4 per student or less throughout the decade.

### **Projections**

#### *Coordinated System of Grants* (Table 7.7)

Had Connecticut increased its need-based grant aid, given tuition charges, 600 more students would have graduated from high school, an increase of one percentage point. Of the state's high school graduates, 2,200 more students would have attended postsecondary institutions in the state.

*Federal Grant Program Prospectus (Table 7.7)*

In addition, had the federal government provided incentives for Connecticut to award adequate grant aid equaling one-quarter of the tuition on top of current state aid, 1,200 more high school students would have graduated, an increase of three percentage points. An additional 4,200 high school graduates would have enrolled in postsecondary institutions, an increase of ten percentage points over the current college continuation rate.