

Accountability in Higher Education

American Council on Education

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What does the public want?

**Double the degree production
of the 1960s with
no compromise in quality.**

2002 High School sophomores plan:

- ◆ **At least a baccalaureate degree – 80%**
- ◆ **A graduate or professional degree – 40%**
- ◆ **Some postsecondary education – 11%**
- ◆ **No postsecondary education – 9%**

Higher Education vs. The State

The Case Against the State

The instruction and research of colleges and universities:

- ◆ **Build prosperity**
- ◆ **Enhance the quality of life**
- ◆ **Are essential for a successful democracy**

Higher Education vs. The State

The Case Against the State

Enrollment demand is unrelenting

YET

**State funding is decreasing as a percentage
of university revenues**

AND

**Higher education is receiving a
decreasing percentage of state
appropriations**

Higher Education vs. The State

The States Respond:

- ◆ **We have funded enrollment growth and inflation**
- ◆ **Tuition and fees increases have greatly exceeded inflation**
- ◆ **The people have needs in addition to higher education**
- ◆ **Where is all the money going?**

Higher Education vs. The State

Higher Education Responds:

The CPI doesn't come close to actual cost increases in higher education

Our market basket includes:

- **High priced talent**
- **Cutting edge technology**
- **Etc.**

Higher Education vs. The State

Higher Education Responds:

The money is going for:

- ◆ (Barely) competitive faculty salaries
- ◆ Student aid and student services
- ◆ Health care costs and retirement
- ◆ Keeping pace with technological change
- ◆ Keeping programs current
- ◆ Teaching loads to attract strong faculty
- ◆ O&M of aging facilities

Higher Education vs. The State

The State Responds – What about:

- ◆ **Incoherent curricula – courses on obscure topics**
- ◆ **Lots of mediocre research**
- ◆ **Wasteful competition for empty prestige**
- ◆ **Wasteful uses of faculty time**
- ◆ **Frills (athletics, amenities) for pampered students (Your children and mine!)**
- ◆ **Unjustified reductions in teaching loads**
- ◆ **No motivation to reduce costs in seller's market**

Higher Education vs. The State

Grand Jury's Deliberations:

- ◆ **We need excellent higher education, and lots of it.**
- ◆ **We only have so much money.**
- ◆ **Can't you folks figure this out?**

Higher Education vs. The State

Grand Jury's Verdict:

Plaintiff

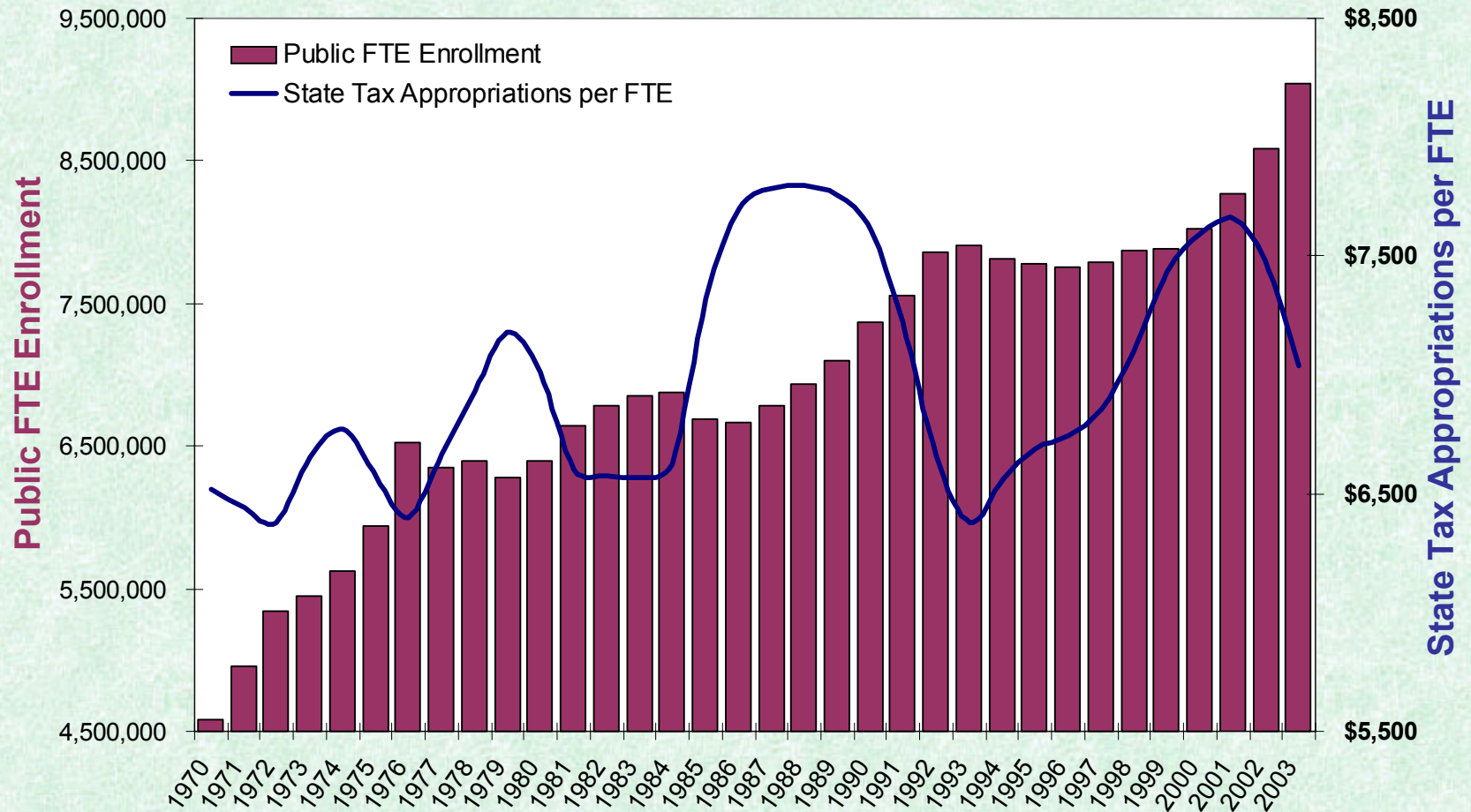
and

Defendant

– both indicted!

The National Numbers

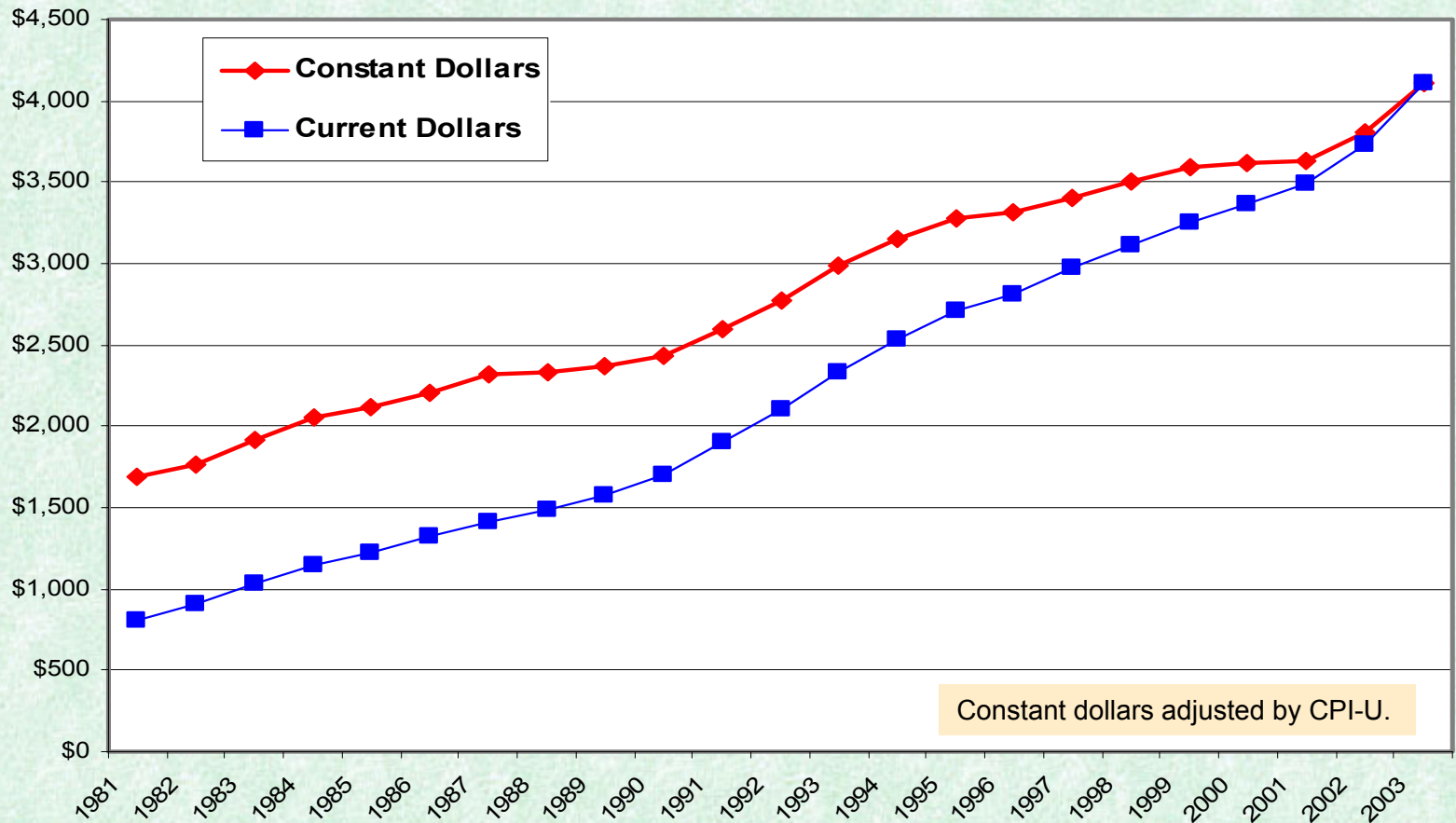
Enrollment and State Tax Appropriations per FTE in Constant 2003 Dollars, Fiscal 1970 - 2003



Sources: Grapevine and NCES Digest of Education Statistics

The National Numbers

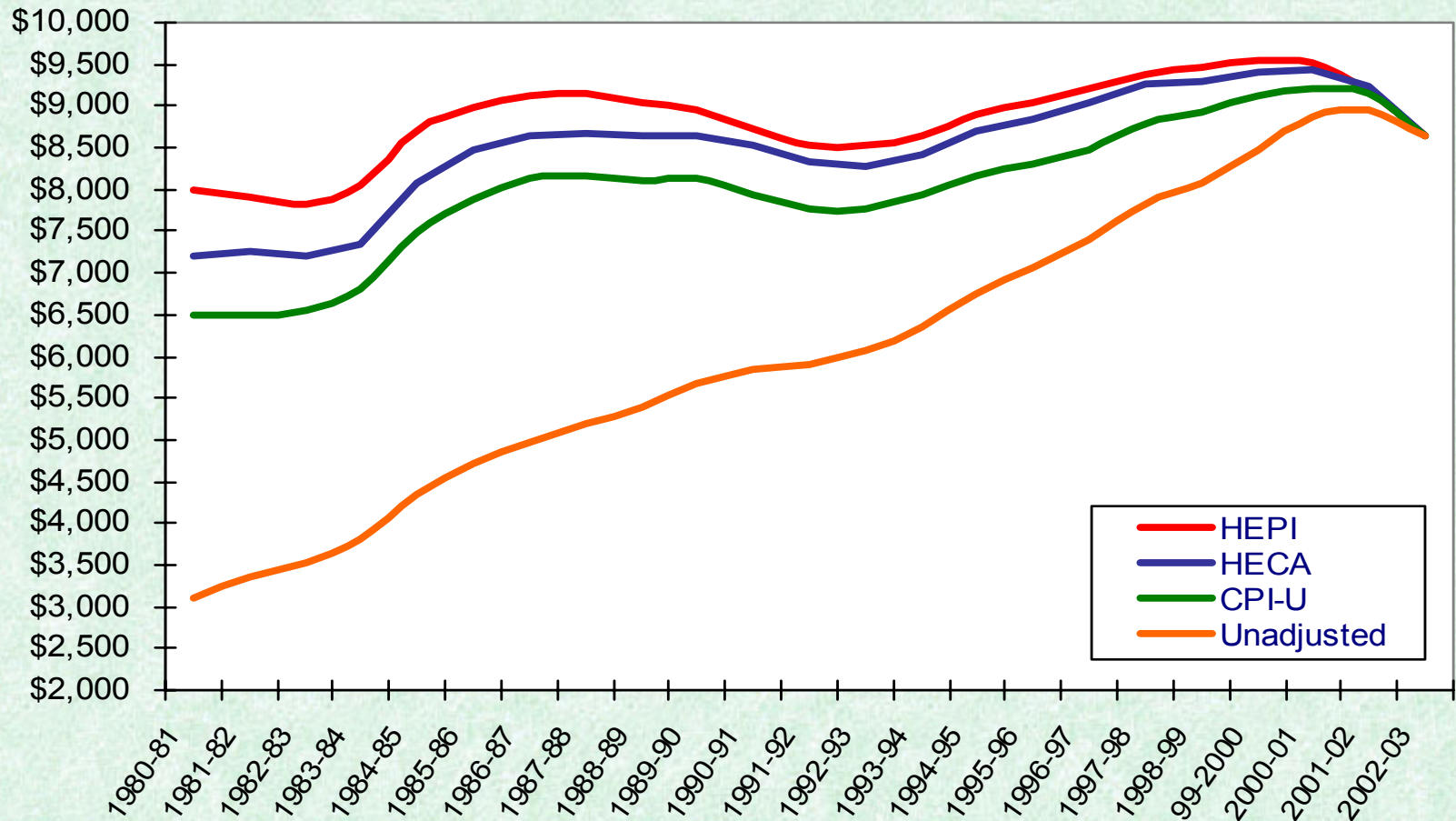
Public Four-Year Tuition and Fees in Current dollars and Constant Dollars, 1981-2003



Source: College Board, *Trends in College Pricing 2003*

The National Numbers

**Total Educational Funding per FTE
Under Alternative Inflation Adjustments, Fiscal 1981 - 2003**



Source: SHEEO State Higher Education Finance

What's the Answer?

Better accountability!

The National Commission on Accountability in Higher Education

◆ Commissioners:

- Two Governors**
- Three legislators**
- Three state higher education executives**
- Three institutional leaders**
- Two business representatives**

◆ Research and Advisory Group:

- Joseph C. Burke**
- Peter T. Ewell**
- Margaret A. Miller**
- Nancy Shulock**
- Jane V. Wellman**

What is “better accountability?”

- ◆ **Not the status quo – Unfocused, unread, unused reporting exercises;**
- ◆ **Not measuring performance, rewarding performance or punishing the lack of performance;**
- ◆ **Not centralized bureaucracies, but**

A WAY TO IMPROVE PERFORMANCE

The National Commission on Accountability in Higher Education

Fundamental Principles

- ◆ **Responsibility for performance – *and* accountability – is shared among**
 - **Teachers and learners**
 - **Policy makers and educators**

- ◆ **Effective accountability must be based on:**
 - **Pride, not fear**
 - **Aspirations, not minimum standards**

The National Commission on Accountability in Higher Education

Components of Effective Accountability

- ◆ **Affirm and pursue fundamental goals**
 - **The public agenda vs. market position**
- ◆ **Establish and honor a division of labor**
 - **Top-down centralization is a dead end**
- ◆ **Focus on a few priorities at every level**
 - **No focus, no progress**
- ◆ **Measure results, respond to evidence**
 - **Elementary Baldrige**

State Responsibilities

- ◆ **Set clear public goals for higher education**
 - **Participation and success rates**
 - **Research and service productivity**
- ◆ **Stay focused on a policy agenda, stay out of institutional operations**
- ◆ **Measure results, including student learning, and work collaboratively to achieve goals**
- ◆ **Provide necessary resources**

Federal Responsibilities

- ◆ **Focus on enhancing access to opportunity**
 - **Financial assistance**
 - **GEAR Up and TRIO**

- ◆ **Maintain, enhance research support and quality**

- ◆ **Improve data resources**
 - **Create Student Unit Record System to track retention, success, net cost data**
 - **Improve, expand NAAL**
 - **Consumer Information**

Institutional Responsibilities #1

- ◆ **Improve teaching and learning**
 - **Establish clear goals for general education and each academic program**
 - **Assess learning achievement systematically**
 - **Disclose results and work for improvement**
- ◆ **Assure access to opportunity in tuition and financial aid policies**

Institutional Responsibilities #2

- ◆ **Assure research quality and value**
 - **Employ high standards for institutional support**
 - **Recognize different kinds of scholarly work**

- ◆ **Improve productivity in these ways:**
 - **Increase curricular coherence and focus**
 - **Help improve student preparation**
 - **Use technology to reduce cost and improve quality**
 - **Streamline, outsource operations**
 - **Reallocate toward priorities**

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