

Accountability

Autonomy

Academic Performance

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State Higher Education Executive Officers



Accountability

As old as
the grading system.

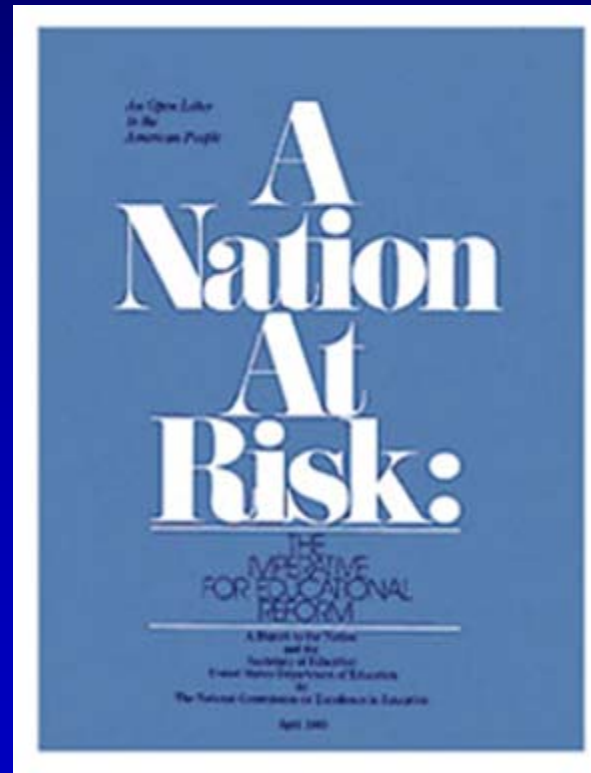
Not a new idea.

Accountability

Now used to express
urgent need for improved
educational performance

Accountability

Recent calls for greater accountability:



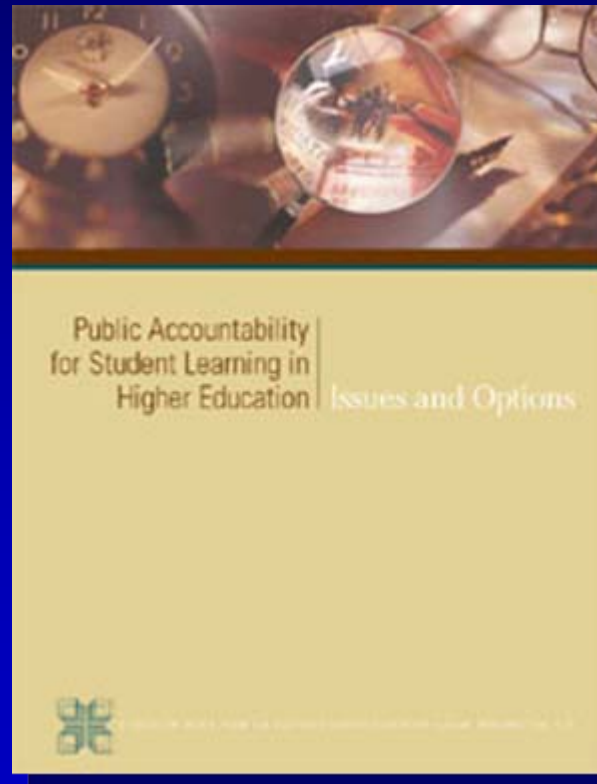
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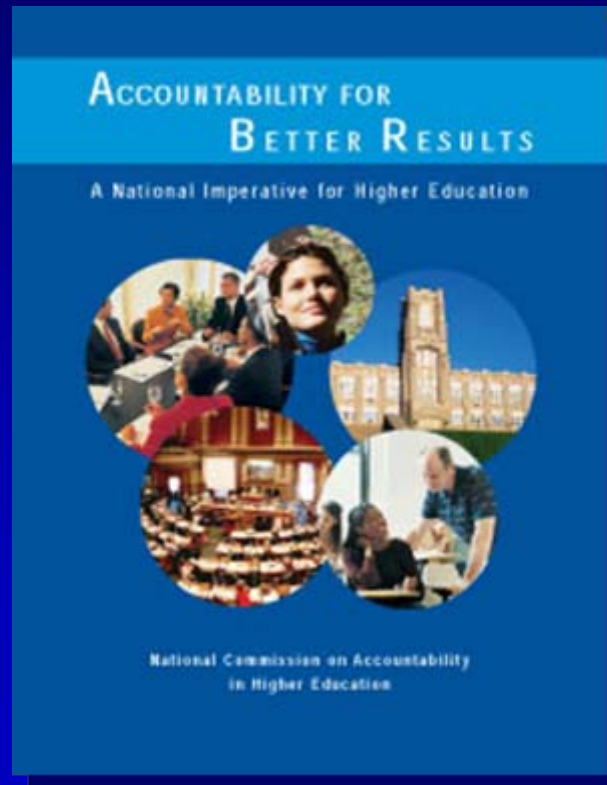
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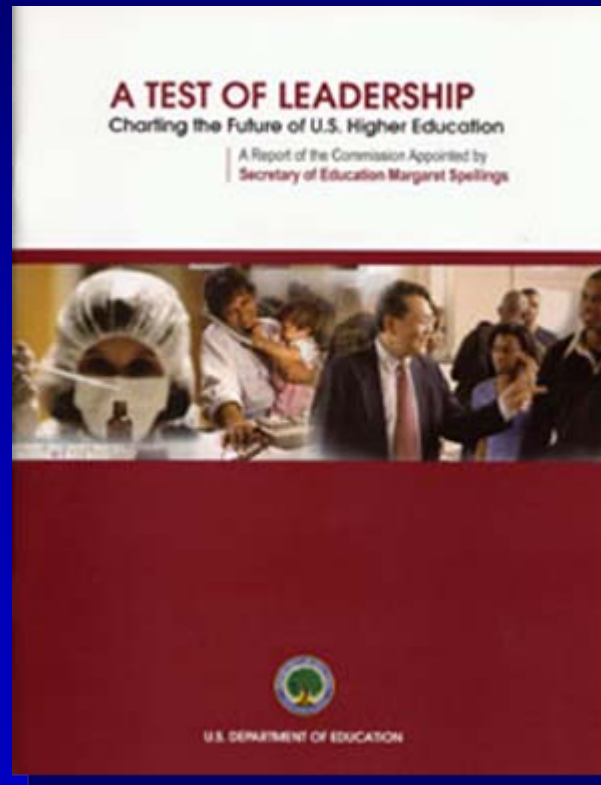
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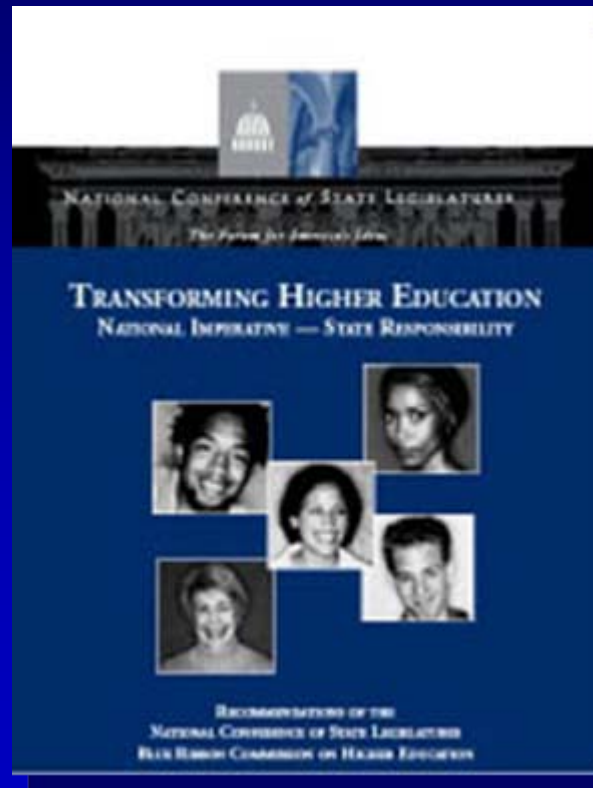
Accountability

Recent calls for greater accountability:



Accountability

Recent calls for greater accountability:



Accountability

Different in

focus, diagnosis, scope,
and recommendations;

but all with a

common objective.

Autonomy

Like “accountability”,

a fighting word with multiple meanings.

Academic Freedom:

The freedom to explore, to teach, to be a social critic

- (a) An extension of the fundamental right to freedom of expression
- (b) Not necessarily connected to tenure, but certainly related to the practice

Autonomy

Like “accountability”,

a fighting word with multiple meanings.

Institutional Autonomy:

The freedom to offer any program, any service, to define mission, standards, and academic policies and practices without external limits.

Autonomy

Like “accountability”,

a fighting word with multiple meanings.

Freedom from Regulation:

- (a) Personnel policies and practices
- (b) Purchasing, capital planning and development
- (c) Prevention of fraud and abuse

Autonomy

Like “accountability”,

a fighting word with multiple meanings.

Freedom to Set Prices:

Raise tuition and fees

Autonomy

“Institutional **autonomy**” is asserting too much

Every institution’s autonomy is limited by:

- (a) The market, what its customers and employees will tolerate
- (b) The priorities of its financial supporters – whether alumni, government, philanthropy, or contractors
- (c) The law – what is fair, equitable, safe in the social context

Autonomy

“Institutional **autonomy**” is asserting too much

The proper question – not institutional autonomy, but:

- (a) What obligations do institutions have to society?
- (b) What reciprocal obligations do governments and citizens have to institutions?
- (c) What freedom, flexibility, and accountability are required for excellence and efficiency in the delivery of education, research, and service?

Academic Performance

Strategies for improvement

Top-down accountability:

set standards,

measure performance,

impose rewards and punishments

Academic Performance

Strategies for improvement

Market transparency:

require disclosure of performance
relative to standards
to inform consumer choice

Academic Performance

Strategies for improvement

Shared accountability:

common purposes,

agreement on metrics,

transparent performance,

division of labor,

shared responsibility for improvement

Common Pitfalls

Excessive reporting as
a substitute for
performance accountability

Common Pitfalls

Lack of focus on priority objectives,
at the right level of responsibility

- (a) State or federal policy makers getting “into the weeds”
- (b) Institutional leaders failing to require departments and units to focus on priorities that contribute to larger goals

Common Pitfalls

Trading off “flexibility”
or “deregulation” against
common commitment
and financial support

Common Pitfalls

Excessively detailed

“performance contracts”

Common Pitfalls

Funding mechanisms
that neglect priorities
and provide
perverse incentives

Common Pitfalls

Funding mechanisms
that seek to

“over-control” performance
with incentives

Essential Freedom

with accountability yields higher academic performance

The freedom to **express ideas**,
explore new knowledge, and be
a **social critic** is essential
to democracy and
a fundamentally important
function of higher education.

Essential Freedom

with accountability yields higher academic performance

The importance of these freedoms does not make higher education “autonomous;” it just means higher education has an especially **important role to play in an open society.**

Essential Freedom

with accountability yields higher academic performance

A common **understanding**
of public priorities and
the role of higher education in
meeting them is the **foundation**
for an effective, well-supported system
of higher education.

Essential Freedom

with accountability yields higher academic performance

An **effective accountability system** will contribute to that common understanding and motivate and **inspire each essential partner** – government, civic leaders, institutional leaders, faculty, and students – to do their part to **improve academic performance.**

Essential Freedom

with accountability yields higher academic performance

A **consensus on goals** and
a **shared sense of mutual commitment**
between government and higher education
are essential for laying
a **foundation of trust** – the basis for
necessary flexibility and freedom from
unproductive regulation and reporting.

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