

# Community and Technical College Governance

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National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS)

## Evolution of colleges

The governance of community and technical colleges across the 50 states defies easy description or classification. Each state's colleges evolved from unique state circumstances. Examples of development include:

- Colleges that evolved, often as junior colleges, primarily through local initiative on the basis of school districts and the K-12 system with limited state oversight.
- Colleges that developed through state law that established a framework for both local governance and a statewide structure for community college development
- Colleges that evolved from postsecondary vocational/technical systems—usually linked to the state board for vocational education.
- Colleges that evolved from branch campuses linked to state universities

Some states experienced the proliferation of two or more of these developments resulting in highly fragmented networks of less-than-baccalaureate-level institutions. Many of the governance controversies in the 1970s through the 1990s revolved around rationalizing these networks.

## Patterns of state and system governance

As a result of the unique state evolution, community colleges vary widely in the forms of state and local governance (see Appendix 1)

The powers of state-level structures differ according to three categories:

- System governing boards have broad powers related to the governance of the colleges within their jurisdiction. A distinguishing power is the authority to appoint or to approve the appointment of college-level presidents.
- Statewide coordinating boards have powers to strategically plan, allocate resources, hold colleges accountable for performance, and provide central services. However, these boards do not have authority to appoint college presidents. Each college functions as a separate entity under its own governing board.
- State regulatory agencies regulate locally governed community colleges and play only limited system coordinating functions.

## Patterns of state and local funding

Community and technical colleges are generally financed from state and local sources in either of two ways:

- Funding from a combination of local tax resources and state appropriations. Local tax resources commonly come from:
  - Mill levies set by community college taxing districts or local governments
  - Contributions/assessments paid by local governments

- Funding from state appropriations without funding from local tax resources

In approximately 25 states, community and technical colleges receive a portion of their funding from local tax sources. State appropriations and student tuition and fees are the other principal revenue sources. In the other 25 states, community and technical colleges are funded primarily from state appropriations with limited, if any, funding from local tax sources (see Appendix 2 for shares of funding from state appropriations, local appropriations, and student tuition and fees for each state).

### **Relationship of governance to resources of funding**

The level of centralization in community and technical college governance is generally related to the primary sources of funding (see Appendix 3).

- Colleges that have significant levels of funding from local tax resources are generally governed by local boards that operate within the framework of overall statewide coordination or regulation. The state-level boards do not have governing authority as described above.
- Colleges that receive most of their funding from state appropriations are commonly governed by a system board. In some cases, the individual colleges have local advisory boards with authority delegated by the system board. In three states (Florida, Washington State, and West Virginia), the colleges have local boards with broad governing powers and function within the framework of overall statewide coordination.

### **Governance of technical college systems**

Technical college systems in several states evolved from vocational/technical systems established under the requirements of federal vocational education laws dating back to the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917. These federal laws required that federally-funded vocational education programs be under the supervision of a designated sole state agency, the state boards for vocational education. The legacy of these federal requirements is that postsecondary technical institutes or colleges in several states continue to be centrally governed and funded. Their principal sources of funding are state appropriations and student tuition and fees. These state-funded institutions exist in several states (e.g., Kansas, Pennsylvania and Texas) in which most of the community colleges are locally governed and funded partially from local tax resources.

### **Trends in community and technical college governance**

Just as governance structures are unique to each state, the major changes in state-level community college governance over the past fifty years have similarly taken place because of particular state circumstances.

The major governance changes, clustered according to common themes, were:

- **Consolidating two-year institutions under a single community and technical college board.** North Carolina (1979), Washington State (1991), Connecticut (1992), Kentucky (1997), Louisiana (1998) and West Virginia (2000) established consolidated state community (and technical) college systems under statewide governing boards. In each of these cases, the states consolidated highly fragmented networks of two-year university campuses, community colleges and postsecondary technical institutions to form statewide systems.
- **Consolidating oversight of locally governed community colleges and state technical institutions under a statewide university governing board.** Kansas (1999) moved the statewide oversight of the locally governed community colleges and the state technical institutions from the State Board of Education to the Board of Regents, the statewide

governing board for universities. The community colleges, however, retained their local governing authority.

- **Consolidating of community and technical colleges and access-oriented state universities under a single governing board.** Minnesota (1995) and Connecticut (2011) consolidated previously independent state community and technical college boards under a state-wide board also responsible for governing state universities (but not the states' major flagship university). In neither of these states are there local college boards.
- **Expanding the mission of an existing technical college system.** Indiana (2005), Maine (2003) and New Hampshire (1999) reconfigured technical college systems to ensure that the full range of community college services (including transfer programs) might be available in every region of the state.
- **Eliminating a state-level coordinating board for locally governed community colleges.** Arizona (2003), a state with local elected boards and financing that includes local tax support, state appropriations and tuition, abolished the state-level coordinating board for community colleges. Efforts to re-establish this entity have been rejected.

## Appendix 1 - Patterns of State Coordination and Governance of Community Colleges and Other Two-Year Institutions

State	State Board of Education Coordinates and Regulates Community Colleges States=5	Consolidated Governing Board for Both Two- and Four-year institutions Governs Community Colleges States = 17	Coordinating Board for All Higher Education Coordinates Locally Governed Community Colleges States = 11	Independent State Board Coordinates Community Colleges and/or Technical Institutions States = 8	Independent State Board Governs Community Colleges and/or Technical Institutions States = 14	Four-year Institutions have Two-year Branches States = 11	Postsecondary Technical Institutes Organized Separately From Community Colleges States = 12	Some Four-year Institutions Offer Associate Degree Programs States = 19
Alabama	X (1)						X (1)	X
Alaska		X (2)				X (2)		X (2)
Arizona			X					
Arkansas						X		X
California				X				
Colorado				X (3)	X (3)			
Connecticut					X			
Delaware					X			
Florida	X (4)			X (4)			X (4)	
Georgia		X			X (5)			
Hawaii		X						
Idaho	X (6)	X (6)					X (6)	X (6)
Illinois								
Indiana								
Iowa	X				X (7)	X (16)		X
Kansas								X
Kentucky		X (17)			X			X
Louisiana					X	X		X
Maine					X			X
Maryland			X					
Massachusetts		X						
Michigan	X (18)							
Minnesota		X						X

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Mississippi				X				
Missouri			X				X	X
Montana	X (11)							
Nebraska			X (12)					
Nevada	X							
New Hampshire					X			
New Jersey			X				X (13)	
New Mexico			X (19)			X	X	X
New York	X (14)				X			
North Carolina								
North Dakota	X							X
Ohio			X			X	X	X
Oklahoma			X		X	X	X	X
Oregon			X					
Pennsylvania			X			X		X
Rhode Island		X						
South Carolina					X (15)	X		X
South Dakota							X	X
Tennessee		X						
Texas			X			X	X	X
Utah	X (21)						X (21)	
Vermont	X							
Virginia					X			
Washington				X				
West Virginia					X			X
Wisconsin				X		X		

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Wyoming				X				
Puerto Rico		X						
District of Columbia		X						

- (1) Community Colleges and technical institutions are both under jurisdiction of the State Board of Education, but organized separately.
- (2) Only one campus functions as a community college, other former community colleges have been integrated with regional UA institutions.
- (3) Colorado Board is a governing board for state-operated community colleges and coordinating board for locally governed colleges.
- (4) State Board of Education's jurisdiction includes both the coordinating board for community colleges and the administrative entity for technical institutions but these units function separately.
- (5) Technical College System of Georgia.
- (6) Idaho State Board is responsible for all levels of education, including coordinating two local governed community colleges, governing universities that have community college missions and the technical colleges.
- (7) Ivy Tech Community College Board of Trustees.
- (8) State Department of Education coordinates locally governed community colleges and administers the state operated technical institutions
- (11) Board of Regents has a coordinating responsibility for local community colleges. Former vocational/technical centers are now linked to one of the two universities.
- (12) In addition to the formal role of the coordinating board, a state association performs a voluntary coordinating role for the locally governed community colleges.
- (13) Vocational-technical institutions are under the authority of the Department of Education.
- (14) SUNY includes both community colleges that are partially financed at the county level, as well as five state-funded colleges of technology. CUNY includes several community colleges.
- (15) State Board of Technical and Comprehensive Education.
- (16) Indiana University branches transitioning to four-year campuses.

- (17) Kansas Board of Regents governs four-year institutions but coordinates locally governed community colleges.
- (18) Michigan Department of Education has limited authority to only approve certain career and technical programs as recommended by local community colleges
- (19) Statewide coordination by New Mexico Department of Higher Education
- (20) Community colleges and technical institutes/colleges are both under the state Board of Regents but function separately.
- (21) Utah College of Applied Technology and community colleges are both under the State Board of Regents but function separately.

Appendix 2 -- Revenues by State for Public Two-Year Colleges (Tribal excluded), 2011-12

State	Tuition and Fees		State Approp		Local Approp		Total and Fees		Percent Tuition		Percent State		Percent Local	
	Tuition	Fees	State Approp	Local Approp	Total	Fees	Approp	Approp	Percent	Approp	Percent	Approp	Percent	
Alaska	925,614		3,676,202	-	4,601,816		20.1	79.9	0.0					
Connecticut	96,074,051		203,920,277	-	299,994,328		32.0	68.0	0.0					
Delaware	45,194,202		66,651,403	-	111,845,605		40.4	59.6	0.0					
Hawaii	45,402,301		93,260,345	-	138,662,646		32.7	67.3	0.0					
Indiana	141,758,041		216,235,174	-	357,993,215		39.6	60.4	0.0					
Louisiana	102,236,462		142,468,082	-	244,704,544		41.8	58.2	0.0					
Maine	14,281,727		49,250,213	-	63,531,940		22.5	77.5	0.0					
Massachusetts	223,999,828		277,887,197	-	501,887,025		44.6	55.4	0.0					
Minnesota	284,092,000		310,801,000	-	594,893,000		47.8	52.2	0.0					
Nevada	13,166,000		30,590,000	-	43,756,000		30.1	69.9	0.0					
New Hampshire	63,752,632		29,242,036	-	92,994,668		68.6	31.4	0.0					
North Dakota	15,090,700		29,758,227	-	44,848,927		33.6	66.4	0.0					
Rhode Island	32,018,883		44,482,657	-	76,501,540		41.9	58.1	0.0					
South Dakota	26,712,273		12,652,383	-	39,364,656		67.9	32.1	0.0					
Tennessee	186,218,702		239,790,133	-	426,008,835		43.7	56.3	0.0					
Utah	65,778,533		93,531,318	-	159,309,851		41.3	58.7	0.0					
Vermont	18,721,731		4,705,161	-	23,426,892		79.9	20.1	0.0					
Washington	263,977,664		432,899,798	-	696,877,462		37.9	62.1	0.0					
Georgia	235,612,743		374,300,402	44,213	609,957,358		38.6	61.4	0.0					
Kentucky	105,487,000		156,762,740	44,130	262,293,870		40.2	59.8	0.0					
Alabama	146,332,813		289,657,493	1,277,347	437,267,653		33.5	66.2	0.3					
Virginia	362,647,259		310,998,596	2,139,793	675,785,648		53.7	46.0	0.3					
West Virginia	26,213,024		52,327,312	874,326	79,414,662		33.0	65.9	1.1					

Florida	146,860,206	265,855,479	27,266,902	439,982,587	33.4	60.4	6.2
Arkansas	60,668,353	173,322,047	25,472,442	259,462,842	23.4	66.8	9.8
Colorado	248,243,097	8,795,134	30,461,548	287,499,779	86.3	3.1	10.6
Pennsylvania **	371,434,286	234,971,159	111,523,772	717,929,217	51.7	32.7	15.5
North Carolina **	215,859,437	872,165,420	200,979,897	1,289,004,754	16.7	67.7	15.6

State	Tuition and Fees	State Approp	Local Approp	Total	Percent		
					Tuition	State Approp	Local Approp
Mississippi **	90,225,633	226,937,870	59,716,232	376,879,735	23.9	60.2	15.8
South Carolina **	221,132,643	104,848,881	61,813,259	387,794,783	57.0	27.0	15.9
Ohio **	385,828,680	404,430,712	158,682,407	948,941,799	40.7	42.6	16.7
Montana **	18,100,627	21,860,577	8,403,967	48,365,171	37.4	45.2	17.4
Idaho **	48,618,664	46,971,693	20,558,592	116,148,949	41.9	40.4	17.7
Wyoming **	31,011,019	115,085,633	45,274,256	191,370,908	16.2	60.1	23.7
Iowa **	170,790,524	188,359,250	114,880,209	474,029,983	36.0	39.7	24.2
New Jersey **	424,582,972	135,743,630	194,451,798	754,778,400	56.3	18.0	25.8
Oregon **	271,677,898	255,171,240	203,406,849	730,255,987	37.2	34.9	27.9
Oklahoma **	71,241,372	173,305,070	117,103,528	361,649,970	19.7	47.9	32.4
New York **	618,326,971	599,927,697	623,874,352	1,842,129,020	33.6	32.6	33.9
Missouri **	116,436,527	108,849,214	115,447,235	340,732,976	34.2	31.9	33.9
Maryland **	318,278,227	257,411,136	310,463,216	886,152,579	35.9	29.0	35.0
New Mexico **	55,720,846	168,607,999	126,889,521	351,218,366	15.9	48.0	36.1
California **	691,182,474	2,945,547,973	2,249,116,664	5,885,847,111	11.7	50.0	38.2
Texas **	810,620,748	1,071,307,007	1,298,984,124	3,180,911,879	25.5	33.7	40.8
Michigan **	400,411,775	283,506,318	523,243,064	1,207,161,157	33.2	23.5	43.3
Kansas **	128,864,015	136,834,491	209,844,975	475,543,481	27.1	28.8	44.1
Nebraska **	58,845,685	89,367,892	127,736,654	275,950,231	21.3	32.4	46.3
Illinois **	534,752,380	329,038,170	924,855,114	1,788,645,664	29.9	18.4	51.7
Wisconsin ** (1)	151,244,424	78,687,917	651,569,601	881,501,942	17.1	8.9	73.9
Arizona **	219,752,787	69,742,030	659,982,442	949,477,259	23.1	7.3	69.5

**Data Source: NCHEMS NCES IPEDS Finance Survey, Part A, 2011-12**

(1) Wisconsin data include only the Wisconsin Technical College System

\*\* Most colleges in state have local tax support

**Appendix 3 -- Patterns of State and System Governance for Community and Technical Colleges  
Related to Level of Funding from Local Tax Sources**

	Most Community and Technical Colleges Receive a Percentage of Funding from <b>Local Tax Sources</b> (Total=25). Most colleges in these states have local governing boards					Most Community and Technical Colleges Receive Are <b>State-Funded</b> and Do Not Have Funding from Local Tax Sources (25) Except as noted, colleges in these states do not have local boards				
	Level of centralization: High to low, left to right					Level of centralization: High to low, left to right				
	Governing Board	Coordinating Board	Regulatory Agency	No state agency		Governing Board	Coordinating Board	Regulatory Agency	No state agency	
Arizona				X		Alabama				
Arkansas	X	X				Alaska				
California		X				Colorado				
Idaho	X	X				Connecticut				
Iowa			X			Delaware				
Illinois		X				Florida	X			
Kansas		X				Georgia	X			
Maryland		X				Hawaii	X			
Michigan				X		Indiana	X			
Mississippi		X				Kentucky	X			

	Governing Board	Coordinating Board	Regulatory Agency	No state agency		Governing Board	Coordinating Board	Regulatory Agency	No state agency
Missouri		X			Louisiana	X			No state agency
Montana	X	X			Maine	X			
Nebraska		X			Massachusetts	X*			
North Carolina	X				Minnesota	X			
New Jersey		X			Nevada	X			
New Mexico		X			New Hampshire	X			
New York		X			North Dakota	X			
Ohio		X			Rhode Island	X			
Oklahoma		X			South Dakota	X			
Oregon		X			Tennessee	X			
Pennsylvania			X		Utah	X*			
South Carolina	X				Vermont	X			
Texas	X				Virginia	X*			
Wisconsin		X			Washington State		X		
Wyoming		X			West Virginia		X		

Notes: \* States that have local advisory boards for community colleges with authority from system governing board  
Aims McGuinness, National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), September 2014