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Foreword

Robert C. Dickeson

Robert C. Dickeson is senior vice president for policy and organizational learning at Lumina Foundation for Education. He has worked in a number of leadership roles for the Foundation since its inception. President emeritus of the University of Northern Colorado, he has served as the chair of the cabinets of governors in two states, as president and CEO of Noel-Levitz Centers Inc., and as a professor/administrator at five universities. He has consulted with several hundred colleges and universities over the past 40 years. Author of numerous publications, Dickeson received his doctorate in political science from the University of Missouri.

America is wasting human resources because of runaway college costs, and it's time to do something about it. To that end, Lumina Foundation for Education has generated a major policy initiative, *College Costs: Making Opportunity Affordable*.

As a part of that initiative, these essays represent a national effort that began last fall with the publication of a policy brief titled *Collision Course: Rising College Costs Threaten America's Future and Require Shared Solutions*. That publication outlined 33 suggested approaches to the college cost issue. *Collision Course* divided the suggestions among six constituent groups that share varying degrees of responsibility for tackling the cost issue: colleges and universities, the federal government, state governments, secondary schools, students and parents, and the private sector. The publication can be downloaded at www.luminafoundation.org.

Lumina also issued a *Call for Solutions* that would highlight creative ideas and suggest alternatives for discussion and resolution. We received 25 responses from across the country and, through the advice of a National Editorial Advisory Panel of distinguished leaders and researchers (see Page 112), narrowed the submissions for publication to the eight essays in this volume.

The papers represent a diverse set of authors as well as solutions. Higher education researchers weigh in on the recommendations, but authors also include state legislators, economists, private sector representatives and a student interest group.

Although each paper stands on its own merits and the reader will want to judge the relative strengths of the ideas presented, the essays lend themselves to certain analytic patterns.

Improved institutional practices

Three of the authors focus on institutional practices. **Mary F. Bushman** and **John E. Dean** make the case for colleges to outsource their non-mission-critical functions. Outsourcing, long a valued practice in business, is slowly gaining acceptance in higher education. The authors review current trends in postsecondary outsourcing, and argue that, if done well, outsourcing can lead to improved quality while reducing institutional costs. In his essay, **Bill Coplin** takes on the sacrosanct arena of academics—at undergraduate and graduate levels—on campus. Coplin suggests specific efficiencies that can be obtained by such practices as adapting concurrent enrollment programs with high schools to reduce time-to-degree, and adopting an apprenticeship model for all doctoral programs. **Carol A. Twigg**, whose National Center for Academic Transformation has enjoyed notable achievements in course redesign, argues for a new model of technology-assisted learning to correct undue reliance on costly, labor-intensive instruction. Citing data from 50,000 students at 30 institutions, Twigg's results show improved student learning in 83 percent of the projects while reducing institutional costs by an average of 37 percent.

Improved state and federal policies

Three papers suggest changes in public policy to help close the college affordability gap. The writing team of **Lana Oleen**, **Debra Hollon** and **Diane Lindeman** (Oleen served 16 years as a state senator in Kansas) urges greater collaboration as a cost-reducing solution. Citing several examples of collaboration, including state-to-state reciprocal tuition agreements, in-state agency student data sharing programs, and state-agency-private sector scholarship programs, the authors make a compelling case that could be emulated in other

states. **Kristin D. Conklin's** essay targets the knotty problem facing American education: poor college preparation of our nation's high school graduates. Conklin identifies five strategies that, if adopted on a statewide scale, could contribute to educational savings. Conklin supports a comprehensive state agenda that would enable each state to build a more highly skilled workforce at the same time that every high school graduate would be ready to succeed in college or a good job. Economist **Sandy Baum** views the issue of affordability as both a supply-side and demand-side problem of the higher education market. On the supply side, institutions must focus on reining in cost. But lower cost will not, in itself, increase access. The demand side requires a new federal approach to subsidies to college students: PROMISE credits for low-income students. Baum outlines how this dual-side course of action could prove effective.

Policy-practice combinations

Timothy M. Kuehnlein Jr. and **Olin Joynton** share some working initiatives from Michigan: state-sponsored income tax credits for students who attend colleges that limit tuition increases, and budget incentives to state institutions that limit rises in tuition. These policies, coupled with institutional efforts, show some mixed but promising indicators of effectiveness. Students also have a role to play in reducing college costs, and **Meriah S. Fairchild** reports on the successful effort by the California Public Interest Research Group (CALPIRG) Education Fund to call attention to expensive textbooks and questionable publishing practices. The CALPIRG project includes a set of recommended practices for publishers, faculty and institutions to keep this college cost more reasonable—including details on setting up a textbook-rental program.

Because we wanted to share as many good solutions as possible, we culled the remaining submitted essays for nuggets—suggestions that offered promise—and commissioned **Corinne Wohlford Taff** to author a chapter

that captured these creative ideas. This potpourri includes a suggestion for a national transfer articulation pact, by **Michael P. Riccards**; a model for eliminating merit-based tuition discounting, by **Roy F. Heynderickx**; **Robert Berdahl's** thoughts about state incentives to encourage joint doctoral programs between cooperating institutions; a dual-enrollment design based on proficiency, by **Nancy Hoffman**; a strategy for limiting price increases at selective independent institutions, authored by **J. C. Strauss**; an action plan for change, particularly focusing on the high cost of admitting unprepared students, by state legislator **Harry C. Stille**; and the "Student Associate" work program at Rhodes College (which saves money for both the student and the college), by **Forrest M. Stuart**.

Alternative models of delivery

Finally, to round out this smorgasbord of solutions, we asked our own **Dewayne Matthews**, senior research director at Lumina Foundation, to share his thoughts on alternative organizational models of expanding the delivery of postsecondary education. At the same time that traditional higher education has been wrestling with time-honored models, other providers have stepped in to fill voids and educate students in new ways. Matthews also calls attention to the rapidly changing postsecondary landscape in other countries and notes the innovations in delivery being advanced abroad. The implications of these trends for American higher education require further national dialogue.

The college costs initiative

All of these solutions, from whatever source, should be seen in the larger context of Lumina Foundation's efforts to raise the level of public discourse about the college cost issue so that more effective solutions to the problem are likely to be created and implemented. What's at stake, we believe, is the future of American postsecondary education and through it, the accomplishment of all significant national goals and

aims. Because we regard this as a critical issue, we will focus on it for the long term. Specifically, we intend to pursue the following objectives:

- Build a national consciousness about the importance of awareness, preparation and financial responsibilities (both public and private) in achieving student access and success in higher education.
- Work with other partners, associations and organizations in pointing the way to rational, achievable solutions.
- Fund the most promising solutions through a systematic approach to research, grants and communications efforts.
- Serve as the clearinghouse for stakeholders to share information and solutions that work.

Lumina Foundation is open to additional ideas, suggestions for action, and positive solutions. We earnestly solicit your interest and involvement. If there is indeed an imminent “collision course,” our nation needs to make some serious course corrections.

Other publications from Lumina Foundation on college costs and affordability

When Saving Means Losing: Weighing the Benefits of College-savings Plans, by Roberto M. Ifill and Michael S. McPherson (July 2004)

Unintended Consequences of Tuition Discounting, by Jerry S. Davis (May 2003)

Meeting the Access Challenge: Indiana’s Twenty-first Century Scholars Program, by Edward P. St. John, Glenda Droogsma Musoba, Ada B. Simmons and Choong-Geun Chung (August 2002)

Hope Works: Student Use of Education Tax Credits, by Barbara A. Hoblitzell and Tiffany L. Smith (November 2001)

Debts and Decisions: Student Loans and Their Relationship to Graduate School and Career Choice, by Donald E. Heller (June 2001)

Discounting Toward Disaster: Tuition Discounting, College Finances, and Enrollments of Low-Income Undergraduates, by Kenneth E. Redd (December 2000)

College Affordability: Overlooked Long-Term Trends and Recent 50-State Patterns, by Jerry S. Davis (November 2000)

Student Debt Levels Continue to Rise, by Patricia M. Scherschel (June 2000)

Cost, Price, and Public Policy: Peering into the Higher Education Black Box, by William L. Stringer, Alisa F. Cunningham, Jamie P. Merisotis, Jane V. Wellman and Colleen T. O’Brien (August 1999)

Student Indebtedness: Are Borrowers Pushing the Limits?, by Patricia M. Scherschel (November 1998)

It’s All Relative: The Role of Parents in College Financing and Enrollment, by William L. Stringer, Alisa F. Cunningham, Colleen T. O’Brien and Jamie P. Merisotis (October 1998)