Latino Access to Higher Education in the State of Washington

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I. Introduction

It is the responsibility of the community, at the local, State, and National levels, to guarantee that financial barriers do not prevent any able and otherwise qualified young person from receiving the opportunity for higher education. There must be developed in this country the widespread realization that money expended for education is the wisest and soundest of investments in the national interest. The democratic community cannot tolerate a society based upon education for the well-to-do alone. If college opportunities are restricted to those in higher income brackets, the way is open to the creation and perpetuation of a class society which has no place in the American way of life.
-Harry S. Truman[1]

This report will examine the current level of diminished access that Washington State's Latino population has to the state's higher education system, which is in serious danger of creating the very type of society that worried President Truman fifty-nine years ago. Access to higher education is dependent on two main factors: students need to be academically prepared to attend college, as well as having the financial means to afford the costs of attendance. This report will focus exclusively on the latter aspect, because despite the lower rates of Latino high school completion, many Latinos graduate prepared to enter college but face significant financial barriers to enrollment. Therefore, this report seeks to answer the following questions: how do we explain the low levels of Latino student enrollment in institutions of higher education in Washington State? As a corollary, what economic factors are contributing to Latinos failure to enroll and their lower rate of graduation than their peers, and what implications do these matters have not only for current Latino students, but for the future of the state of Washington? What financial aid policies and economic trends are contributing to this disparity? What types of support, financial or otherwise, are Latinos receiving in pursuing their education? How can more Latino students be enrolled in college? Finally, what are the most feasible policy remedies available for achieving equity in education?

In order to analyze this situation I will examine information regarding historical trends and the current state of higher-education public policy at the local, state, and federal levels to gauge where Washington stands in relation to the larger national matrix of higher-education policy. Additionally, I will analyze this body of data and research through the lens of Critical Race Theory in order to analyze how, exactly, Latinos are being prevented from attaining a college degree. I also conducted interviews with state policymakers and current Latino high school and college students in order to see how these various policies are affecting the lives of everyday students. Before detailing my findings, I would be remiss not to mention the instrumental help of Andrew Dankel-Iba□ñez, the director of TRiO-Educational Talent Search at Walla Walla Community College. His advice, hard work, and connections to his students were integral to the success of my research and this project. In a policy area often filled with insurmountable challenges and bad news, Andrew's hard work was a source of inspiration and energy.

[1] Heller, Donald E. "Preface." Condition of Access. Ed. Juliet V. Garcia. West Port, CT: American Council on Education/Praeger, 2002, p. IX.

Answering these questions is of the utmost importance; Latinos are already the state's largest ethnic/racial minority, and over the next fifteen years, the state's Latino population is projected to be the fastest growing of any minority group. Yet they are the most underrepresented at college campuses across the state.[2] Additionally, the Latino student population is expected to increase by an additional seventy-five percent by the year 2020, nearly three times faster than any other group.[3] If the state does not move to serve the expanding numbers of Latino students attending college, Latino communities will be relegated to the margins of society and the state will suffer a significant economic deadweight loss. A college education increases a graduate's lifetime earnings by seventy-five percent compared to high school graduates, which expands the state's tax base as well.[4] Beyond the economic benefits, Harvard Professor Robert Putnam notes that, "[E]ducation is one of the most important predictors—usually, in fact the most important predictor—of many forms of social participation—from voting to associational membership, to chairing a local committee to hosting a dinner party to giving blood. The same basic pattern applies to both men and women and to all races and generations. Education, in short, is an extremely powerful predictor of civic engagement."[5] Add to this the fact that as the United States' economy finishes its transformation from a manufacturing-based economy to a knowledge-based economy, a college education will no longer be a luxury for the upper class, but rather a necessary requirement for achieving and maintaining an adequate standard of living

Overall, I have found that the state of Washington is failing to adapt quickly enough to the influx of Latino students who are entering its elementary and secondary classrooms in order to give them the necessary financial aid to allow them to enroll and graduate at the same rates as their classmates. Given the explosive expansion of the Latino student populations, the state can no longer afford to take the color-blind approach that has been the norm since the passage of Initiative-200 in 1998. These increases in aid and support need to be targeted specifically at Latino groups in order to become effective, because a continued maintenance of the status quo in terms of educational attainment will in fact bear negative consequences for the entire state. Thankfully, there are a number of programs, such as TRiO-Educational Talent Search, that serve as excellent examples of how solutions on the local level, if properly funded, can make a significant impact in erasing the racial disparities between Latinos and their peers within the state's educational system.

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[2]Latinos compose 11.3% of the population between 17 and 39, but only represented 5.2% of the state's undergraduate student body. "July 2006 Diversity Report." Higher Education Coordinating Board Research. 2006. Higher Education Coordinating Board. 5 Nov. 2006

[3]Ibid.

[4] Heller, Donald E. "Preface." Condition of Access. Ed. Juliet V. Garcia. West Port, CT: American Council on Education/Praeger, 2002, p. 7.

[5] Putnam, Robert . Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000, p. 186.

II. Literature Review

The underlying framework guiding my research into Washington's higher education system was guided by an interpretative framework known as Critical Race Theory (CRT). The works of Richard Delgado, Jean Stefancic, Edward Taylor, and Daniel Solórzano were all crucial in creating my understanding of how CRT can be used to analyze issues of race in higher education. CRT was initially a branch of legal scholarship founded in the 1970s as a response to the perceived failures of the civil rights movement in creating substantive racial equality, and over the past decade it has spread into the realm of educational theory. In an educational context, CRT aims to underscore "the importance of viewing policies and policy making within a proper historical and cultural context to deconstruct their racialized content."[6] Rather than viewing racism as the product of occasional misguided individual actions, CRT instead views racism as "a normal, not aberrant or rare, fact of daily life in society;" to such an extent that "the assumptions of white superiority are so ingrained in our political and legal structures as to be almost unrecognizable."[7] CRT adopts a more expansive definition of racism that encompasses political and social systems that benefit the white majority and that do not rely on any specific individual action. In order to bring these forms of institutional racism to light, the theory relies on five main guiding principles: the centrality of racism in the operation of society, the importance of challenging dominant ideology, a commitment to social justice and praxis, the centrality of experiential knowledge, and the grounding of its analysis within the proper historical context and interdisciplinary perspective.[8] These methods provide an effective counter-framework to contest the "objective" and "race-neutral" responses to the civil rights movement levied by contemporary conservatives against affirmative action programs.

Primarily, CRT relies on the intersection of race and property rights to examine the way in which racism acts in contemporary society. Viewed from a historical perspective, this type of property-based racism assumes that "possession—the act necessary to lay the basis for rights in property—was defined to include only the cultural practices of Whites. This definition laid the foundation for the idea that whiteness—that which Whites alone possess—is valuable and property."[9] An example of this type of racism in higher education is the increased use of merit aid, both by states and higher education institutions, which reward students on the basis of high test scores, grades, and community involvement. The result intended or not, is that this type of aid often goes to middle and upper class students who possess particular kinds of "human capital," and do not necessarily require this money to attend college. Viewed from the CRT perspective, this type of aid has racial effects that serve to reinforce systems that privilege specific forms of property both economic and intellectual, despite its appearance of objectivity.

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[6] Solorzano, Daniel , Octavio Villalpando, and Leticia Oseguera. "Educational Inequities and Latina/o Undergraduate Students in the United States: A Critical Race Analysis of Their Educational Progress." Journal of Hispanic Higher Education 4.3 (2005): 274-93, p. 274.

[7] Taylor, Edward . "Critical Race Theory and Interest Convergence in the Backlash against Affirmative Action: Washington State and Initiative 200." Teacher's College Record 102.3 (2000): 539-60, p. 541.

[8] Solorzano, Daniel , Octavio Villalpando, and Leticia Oseguera. "Educational Inequities and Latina/o Undergraduate Students in the United States: A Critical Race Analysis of Their Educational Progress." Journal of Hispanic Higher Education 4.3 (2005): 274-93 274-5.

[9] Dixson, Adrienne D., and Celia K. Rousseau. "And We are Still Not Saved: Critical Race Theory in Education Ten Years Later." Critical Race Theory in Education: All God's Children Got a Song. Eds. Adrienne D. Dixson and Celia K. Rousseau. New York: Routledge, 2006, p. 32.

This connection between property—whether it is economic, cultural, or intellectual—and racialized systems of privilege requires any analysis of race to be tied to one of socioeconomic status as well. Delgado and Stefancic in Critical Race Theory: an Introduction, introduce the concept of "intersectionality," another key tenet of CRT. They define it as the examination of "race, sex, class, national origin, and sexual orientation, and how their combination plays out in various settings."[10] In the context of this report, I will be examining the ways in which socioeconomic status and race intersect in Latino student populations within the state of Washington and the consequences that intersection has on their access to higher education.

Accomplishing this task from a Critical Race Theory perspective entails situating the current condition of higher education in its larger historical and racial contexts, because neither one is static in their composition. Somewhat ironically, the last major transformation in both the formation of the public higher education system and racial identity took place during the 1960s. With the passage of the Economic Opportunity Act in 1964 (EOA) and the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA), the Federal government became the driving policy force in higher education. Both pieces of legislation greatly expanded assistance to students across the nation and created programs specifically aimed to assist historically disadvantaged students attend college. Simultaneously, the mass protests of the civil rights movements redefined the concepts of "race" and "racism" in the public discourse of America, the vestiges of which are still present today.

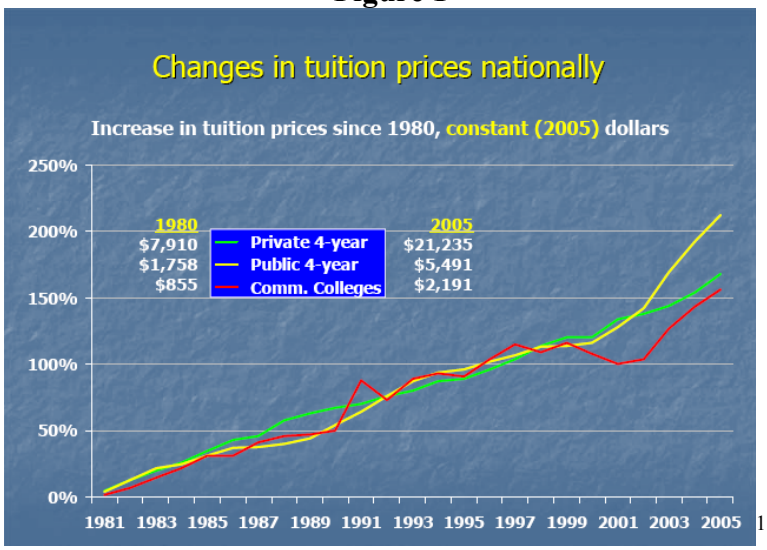
To better see how exactly race and racism are currently operating in society, requires that we understand how its current form has been created over time. Michael Omi and Howard Winant introduce their concept of "racial formation theory" in order to better comprehend the true definition of race and racism in contemporary society.[11] Essentially, this theory conceives of race and racism as the productions of ongoing "racial projects," ideological political agendas which use essentialized notions of racial identity to further their own ends. Not all racial projects, however, are considered *racist* unless they "create or reproduce structures of domination based on essentialist categories of race."[12] Since this ongoing process of formation of racial identity did not end with the dissipation of the Civil Rights Movement, Omi and Winant beg us "to question whether concepts of racism which developed in the early days of the post-civil rights era, when the limitations of both moderate reform and militant racial radicalism of various types had not yet been encountered, remain adequate to explain the circumstances and conflicts a quarter-century later."[13] The obvious answer is that racism now operates in ways that bear little resemblance to the highly visible and apparent practices like Alabama Governor George Wallace physically blocking the desegregation of the University of Alabama, which served as a foil for the emerging Civil Rights Movement. In the final analysis, since the appearance and definitions of race and racism are neither objective nor immutable, Omi and Winant stress "the importance of locating racism within a fluid and contested history of racially based social structures and discourses."[14] In the realm of higher education, this is accomplished by looking at the alteration of the programs created by the EOA and HEA over the last forty

[10] Delgado, Richard, and Jean Stefancic. Critical Race Theory: An Introduction. New York: NYU Press, 2001, p. 51.
[11] Omi, Michael, and Howard Winant. Racial Formation in the United States. 2nd ed. New York and London: Routledge, 1994, p.71.
[12] Ibid., p. 71.
[13] Ibid, p. 71.
[14] Ibid., p. 71.

years from the perspective of low-income minority students, who have seen their goal of attending college rapidly accelerate away from them.

Returning to the structure of the United States' higher education system, it is important to remember that the role of America's universities are redefined every generation as a new social contract is formed between the current generation of students, the universities, and the larger needs of society. James Duderstadt and Farris Womack state, "[I]t is important in all these considerations to remember that the public university in America is a social institution, created and shaped by public needs, public policy, and public investment to serve a growing nation."[15] Starting with the land-grant institutions of the nineteenth century, which promoted westward expansion and agricultural improvements, American universities have shaped the course of American society. In the twentieth century, the nation's colleges and universities were also essential in the transformation of the U.S. economy from agrarianism to industrialism, as well as helping millions of veterans gain economic skills and enter the American middle-class following World War II. Starting with the passage of the GI Bill, the federal government acknowledged that a student's graduation from college was viewed as a public good; therefore, such education should "be available to all who are qualified, without respect to academically irrelevant criteria such as gender, race, religion, and socioeconomic status."[16] This commitment is further evidenced by the passage of the Higher Education Act of 1965, which created a crop of new financial aid and outreach programs like TRiO aimed at meeting student financial need and expanding access rather than simply increasing institutional funding. This trend was further expanded throughout the 1970s with the creation of programs like the Pell Grant program, which provided grants directly to the lowest-income students. Unfortunately, this trend was relatively short-lived.

Figure 1



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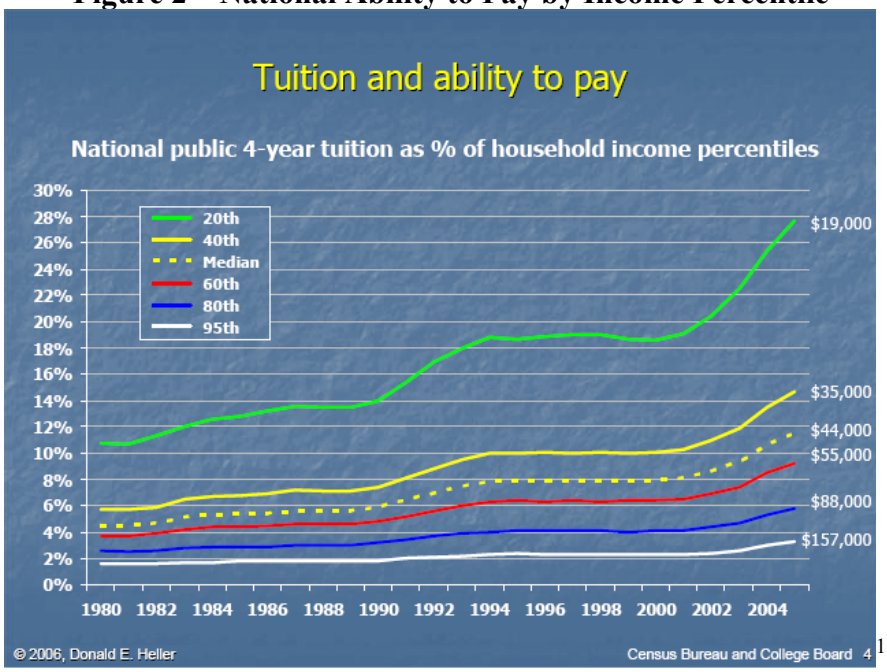
[15] Duderstadt, James J., and Farris W. Womack. The Future of the Public University. Baltimore And London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003, p. 6

[16] Ibid., p. 7.

[17] Heller, Donald E. "Tuition and Financial Aid Trends in Higher Education." Washington Learns: Higher Education Advisory Committee, Seattle. 23 Mar. 2006. 5 Nov. 2006 <http://www.washingtonlearns.wa.gov/materials/060323_hied_finaidtrends.pdf>.

Figure 2—National Ability to Pay by Income Percentile



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The higher education social contract forged in the immediate post-war period and expanded in the 1960s and 70s was renegotiated in the 1980s and 1990s, shifting towards a model of individual rather than social benefit that has served to restrict the affordability of higher education, with particular impact on low-socioeconomic status and minority students. As tuition began to account for a higher percentage of annual family income for middle and upper class families in the early 1980s, the ways by which the government subsidized higher education changed significantly in order to mitigate these new problems. Instead of primarily aiding students through grants distributed on the basis of financial need, the government shifted its policy towards one that relied on loans, which require students to repay the funds they borrowed. In 1979, two-thirds of federal aid came in the form of grants and work-study jobs and one-third was in the form of subsidized loans, but today that ratio has been inverted.[19] The last major increase in federal financial assistance was in 1997, when Congress legislated forty billion dollars worth of new tax credits and deductions aimed specifically at middle-class families. Essentially, the overall arch of federal policy for the last generation has been one of placing the priority of insuring middle-class affordability above that of lower-class accessibility. These shifts in policy—first from grants to loans, then from loans to tax credits—are symbolic in the larger ideological shift. Duderstadt and Womack succinctly write, "[F]ederal policy has shifted away from the view that higher education is a public good and toward the view that education benefits primarily the individual."[20] Under the innocuous appearance of supporting individual benefit,

[18] Heller, Donald E. "Tuition and Financial Aid Trends in Higher Education." Washington Learns: Higher Education Advisory Committee, Seattle. 23 Mar. 2006. 5 Nov. 2006 <http://www.washingtonlearns.wa.gov/materials/060323_hied_finaidtrends.pdf>.
[19]. Duderstadt, James J., and Farris W. Womack. The Future of the Public University. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003 p. 39.
[20] Ibid, p. 40.

current policy is failing to address the systematic disadvantages that face American Latinos as well as other ethnic and racial minorities. As a result, it has become easier for the primarily white upper and middle classes to afford a college education and significantly less feasible for racial and ethnic minorities to attend college.

A quick numerical overview of the shift from grants to loans, pay particular attention to the columns labeled "Fed. Grant," "Loan Sub.," and "Fed. State Grant":

Figure 3—Financing Undergraduate Tuition, 1986-7 and 1995-6, in 1992-3 dollars

		Net Tuition	Fed. Grant	Loan Sub.	Fed. State Grant	Inst. Grant	Gross Tuition
Private Non-Profit Institutions							
Low Income	86-87	1446	1658	999	1469	2133	7704
	95-96	3530	1525	1308	984	3473	10821
Middle Income	86-87	4118	374	879	625	2151	8147
	95-96	6323	136	1176	503	3830	11967
High Income	86-87	7616	130	334	93	977	9151
	95-96	11098	13	593	88	1738	13530
Public Institutions							
Low Income	86-87	-512	1074	403	415	277	1658
	95-96	-143	1087	691	505	539	2679
Middle Income	86-87	1076	1073	10	116	259	1868
	95-96	1731	71	569	156	332	2859
High Income	86-87	1864	36	83	19	138	2140
	95-96	3155	3	307	56	209	3730

[21]

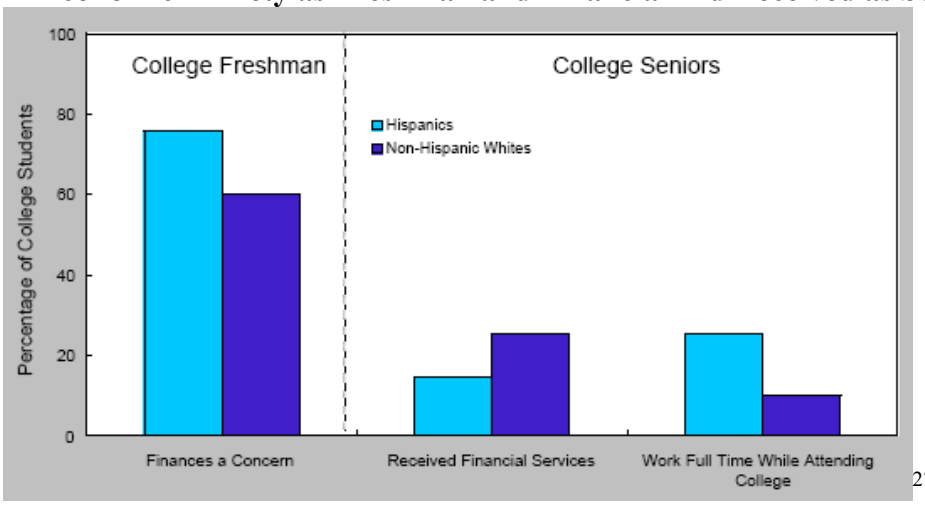
From this historical analysis of the national structure of America's higher education system and its racialized aspects, I proceeded to look at the national demographic trends of college-age Latinos over the past twenty years. The Pew Hispanic Center, a subset of the larger national Pew Research Center, has conducted several in-depth analyses of Latinos within higher education. Additionally, the organization Excelencia in Education is a think tank specifically geared towards increasing Latino achievement in higher education. Both organizations' reports show that, despite their lower high-school graduation rates, Latino undergraduate enrollments have grown by two-hundred percent over the past twenty-five years, compared with a thirty-eight percent growth in the number of white students and thirty-six percent growth for the total United States population.[22],[23] The primary barrier to entry and degree completion for the growing numbers of Latino college students is financial, and, these scholars argue, is not necessarily

[21] McPherson, Michael S., and Morton O. Schapiro. "Reinforcing Stratification in Higher Education: Some Disturbing Trends." National Center for Postsecondary Improvement. 1999. Stanford University School of Education. 5 Nov. 2006 <http://www.stanford.edu/group/ncpi/documents/pdfs/3-02_disturbingtrends.pdf>.
[22] Brown, Sartia E., Deborah Santiago, and Estela Lopez. "Latinos in Higher Education: Today and Tomorrow." Excelencia in Education. 2003. Excelencia in Education and Pew Hispanic Center. 5 Nov. 2006 <http://www.edexcelencia.org/pdf/Today_Tomorrow.pdf>.
[23] http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d05/tables/dt05_181.asp

solely based in a dysfunctional K-12 education system. Rather, the growing cohorts of Latino high school graduates face both cultural as well as economic deficits that prevent their entry and graduation from college.

First, I will explore the financial barriers, which have been largely created by the changing financial aid structures. In its report "How Latino Students Pay for College," the Institute for Higher Education Policy found that although eighty percent of Latino college students are applying for financial aid and sixty-three percent are receiving some form of aid, they receive the lowest aid packages of any racial or ethnic group. On average, a typical student's typical financial aid package was $6,892, whereas Latinos only received $6,250. I could find no research demonstrating why this is the case; nevertheless, this disparity is further exacerbated by the fact that Latinos, in particular, are the group most heavily reliant on federal grants to finance their college education. Fifty percent of Latinos received their aid as grants and thirty percent received it as loans. The percentage figures are misleading, however, because the average loan amount, $5,620, dwarfs the average amount they received as grants, $3,810.[24] Low-income Latinos, those with incomes below 20,000 dollars a year, receive $6,945 of aid compared to the average amount of $8,430 received by Latinos with family incomes greater than 80,000 dollars.[25] Additionally, nearly half of all Latino college students are the first in their family to attend college, higher than any other racial or ethnic group.[26] This combination of these factors places Latinos in a very tough position, they receive less aid and the aid they do receive is in the most restrictive forms, which erects an obvious economic barrier to higher education enrollment. As evidence of this concern, there exists among Latino high school and college students considerably higher economic anxiety than in their Caucasian peers. Additionally, Latinos received less financial aid and had to work full-time more often than their white peers, which creates additional burdens in addition to their school work.

Figure 4—Economic Anxiety as Freshman and Financial Aid Received as Seniors



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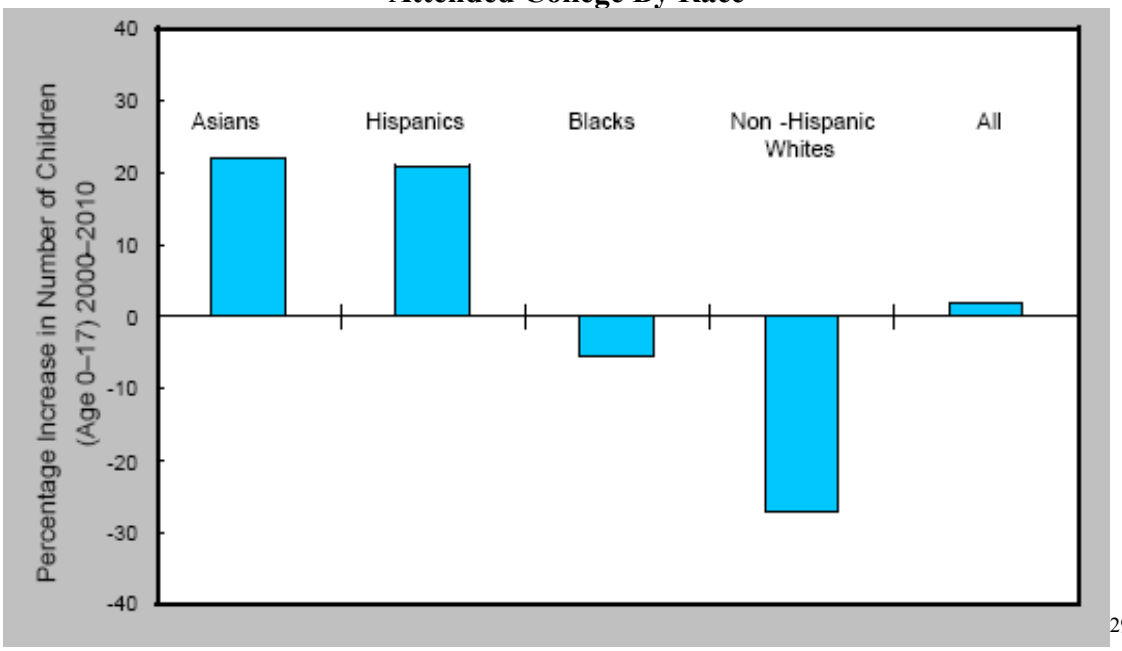
[24] "Fact Sheet: How Latinos Pay for College: Patterns of Financial Aid (2003-4)." Excelencia in Education. 2004. Institute for Higher Education Policy. 5 Nov. 2006 <http://www.edexcelencia.org/pdf/LSA_fact_sheet_bi.pdf>.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.
[27] "Fact Sheet: How Latinos Pay for College: Patterns of Financial Aid (2003-4)." Excelencia in Education. 2004. Institute for Higher Education Policy. 5 Nov. 2006 <http://www.edexcelencia.org/pdf/LSA_fact_sheet_bi.pdf>.

In addition to receiving lower levels of financial aid, Latinos face large economic barriers because they are more likely to come from low-income households as well as being first-generation college students. Nationwide in 2004, the poverty rate for Latinos was 21.9% compared to 8.6% for whites.[28] In a Research and Development Corporation (RAND) study entitled "Goal: To Double the Rate of Hispanics Earning a Bachelor's Degree," Georges Vernez and Lee Mizell found that not only are Latinos already coming from predominately low income backgrounds and households where neither parent graduated from high school, but that the percentage of such students are only expected to increase by 2010. Currently, at the national level, one in three Latinos comes from a home where neither parent has graduated from high school, compared to the one-in-twenty rate for white children.

Figure 5—Percentage Increase of Children in Families Where Neither Parent Attended College By Race



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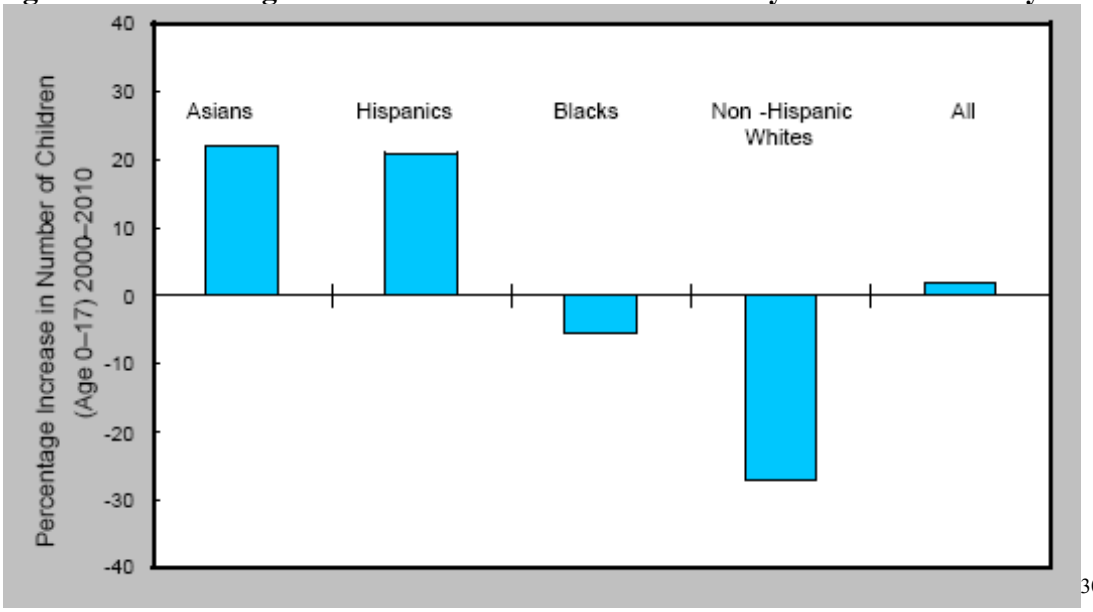
[28] 'Poverty in the United States: Frequently Asked Questions'. National Poverty Center. 14 Nov. 2006 <http://www.npc.umich.edu/poverty/>.

[29] Vernez, Georges , and Lee Mizell. "Goal: To Double the Rate of Hispanics Earning a Bachelor's Degree." Rand Education. 2001. Center for Research on Immigration Policy. 5 Nov. 2006 <http://192.5.14.110/pubs/documented_briefings/2005/DB350.pdf>.

Additionally, the same study found that poverty rates, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, for Latino students are also expected to rise.

Figure 6—Percentage Increase of Children Whose Family Below the Poverty Line



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These two factors both independently contribute to lower levels of education achievement, particularly in higher education. As the following table demonstrates, socioeconomic status largely influences whether or not if students at all levels of ability enroll in college. Particularly troubling is the fact that in 1994, high-income, low-achieving students enrolled at nearly the same rates as low-income, high-achieving students.

[30] Ibid.

Figure 7—College Enrollment Rates By Family Background and Student Ability

		Family Income			
	Test Score Group	Low	Middle	High	
1961-63	1	14%	24%	42%	
	2	24%	36%	55%	
	3	38%	51%	77%	
	4	60%	77%	91%	
1972	1	18%	21%	35%	
	2	25%	35%	53%	
	3	38%	51%	72%	
	4	58%	68%	84%	
1980	1	21%	26%	40%	
	2	31%	39%	68%	
	3	47%	59%	77%	
	4	58%	76%	86%	
1994					All
	1	29%	47%	64%	38%
	2	49%	68%	81%	63%
	3	75%	86%	95%	87%
	All	44%	69%	86%	[32]

As the above data demonstrates, the economic barriers to college are significant. There are, however, other barriers to increasing enrollments of academically prepared students that are commonly referred to as deficits in "cultural capital," which are not quite so obvious. A common essentialized understanding of the achievement gap between Latino students and their peers is that Latino culture does not "value" a higher education. In actuality, as demonstrated by the rapidly increasing number of Latino undergraduates, many Latino families do want their children to attend college, but are unfamiliar with the application process. This gap of information rather than values highlights the difference of cultural capital between Latinos and their higher-achieving white peers. Pierre Bourdieu defines cultural capital as the "symbolic wealth that upper- and middle-class parents transfer to their children to maintain class status."[33] Essentially, it is the intergenerational transfer of expectations of knowledge that reinforce higher enrollment rates among middle- and upper-class students. When compared to students who come from families whose parents previously attended and graduated from college, first generation students lack necessary information about standardized testing, course selection,

[31] McPherson, Michael S., and Morton O. Schapiro. "Reinforcing Stratification in Higher Education: Some Disturbing Trends." National Center for Postsecondary Improvement. 1999. Stanford University School of Education. 5 Nov. 2006 <http://www.stanford.edu/group/ncpi/documents/pdfs/3-02_disturbingtrends.pdf>.

[32] Test Score Group is refers to aptitude tests administered by the National Longitudinal Study.

[33] Brewer, Ernst W., and Jama M. Landers. "A Longitudinal Study of the Talent Search Program." Journal of Career Development 31.3 (2005): 195-208. 12 Nov. 2006 <ttp://wc2vb5mt8e.scholar.serialssolutions.com/?sid=google&auinit=EW&aulast=Brewer&atitle=A+Longitudinal+Study+of+the+Talent+Search+Program&id=doi:10.1007/s10871-004-2227-0>.

financial aid procedures, and the actual application process. As a result, it has been demonstrated that first-generation college students "(a) have weaker cognitive skills, (b) have lower degree aspirations, (c) report receiving less familial support to attend college, (d) have less basic knowledge of college."[34] Many academically qualified students simply are not familiar enough with the college application or financial aid process and as a result fail to apply or enroll because they are discouraged by higher education's rising "sticker price," not realizing that financial assistance is even available.[35] This deficit in cultural capital, however, is easily bridged. Research shows that students who take the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and apply for college and financial aid on time, have "very high" chances of enrolling in college regardless of their SAT score or their eventual financial aid amount.[36]

This fact led me to consider programs that can quickly cross this cultural capital deficit to help more Latino students enroll in college in the immediate future while considering larger policy solutions to ameliorate the much more significant economic deficits between Latinos and the student populations at large. Although few academic studies have been conducted nationally to assess the effectiveness of TRiO-Educational Talent Search, there have been longitudinal studies gauging its effectiveness at the institutional level. At the University of Tennessee, it was found that among low-income students, those who participated in the Talent Search program attended college at a rate of 93.8% versus a college attendance rate of 42.2% of low-income students who did not.[37] Additionally, the students who participated in the Talent Search program attended a four-year school at a rate of 76.4% compared to a rate of 14.2% for the control student population.[38] Clearly, crossing this cultural divide between first generation college students and those students who have already been to college can powerfully affect enrollment rates.

After all of this academic research, I examined how these national factors apply to Washington state and its Latino communities. I began to ask the following questions: Are these same national trends in higher education manifesting themselves within Washington? How fast has tuition risen in Washington? Has student aid and family incomes kept pace? How fast are Latino populations growing? What is the relative economic status of Latino communities throughout the state? Has the state enacted any higher education outreach programs specifically targeted at these communities? How large are the differences in economic as well as cultural capital between Latinos and their peers in the state? Finally, how can a Critical Race Theory perspective add to an understanding of Latinos' access to higher education in Washington?

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[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.
[36] National Center for Educational Statistics, *Confronting the Odds: Students at Risk and the Pipeline to Higher Education*, U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 1997.
[37] Brewer, Ernst W., and Jama M. Landers. "A Longitudinal Study of the Talent Search Program." Journal of Career Development 31.3 (2005): 195-208. 12 Nov. 2006 <ttp://wc2vb5mt8e.scholar.serialssolutions.com/?sid=google&auinit=EW&aulast=Brewer&atitle=A+Longitudinal+Study+of+the+Talent+Search+Program&id=doi:10.1007/s10871-004-2227-0>.
[38] Ibid.

III. Research Methods

In order to take these larger academic arguments and apply them to Latinos in Washington State, it was necessary to gather quantitative data about Washington's higher education system and Latino populations. I analyzed the level of access to the higher education system in aggregate, rather than examining two and four-year schools separately or the differences between public schools versus private institutions. The latter distinction I did not view as significant on a larger scale because both private and public colleges receive large federal and state subsidies of various forms. I did not examine the differences between two and four year schools because both systems are intricately intertwined with each other across the state. Forty-one percent of all bachelor degree graduates transferred from a two-year school to the four-year school they eventually graduated from.[39] Some authorities claim that community colleges, because of their conflicting educational mandates, often fail to prevent students from transferring to bachelor degree granting schools. However, Washington's community and technical colleges have three differing missions—to provide remedial classes, help students transfer to four-year institutions, or provide them with two-year associate degrees—Washington's two-year schools do a better than average job of keeping students within the larger educational pipeline. In Washington, seventeen of the state's nineteen thousand students currently enrolled at a two-year school because it was their first choice school. Furthermore, students who attend Washington's community and technical colleges who expressed a desire to transfer as freshman, achieve junior standing just as quickly as their peers that enrolled as freshman at four year schools.[40] Therefore, improving access at community colleges will help to roughly improve access to Washington's four-year schools as well.

I found the majority of the educational data relating to Washington's higher education system through the United States Census Bureau, the National Center for Education Statistics, and the national think tanks and state policy boards. I relied heavily on the research of the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB), the Office of Financial Management (OFM), the Washington State Board of Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), and two University of Washington scholars, William Zumeta and Edward Taylor. The HECB, OFM, and SBCTC all have done extensive research into the current condition of Washington's post-secondary education system and the challenges facing it in the coming decade. Specifically, I was looking for the correlation of Latinos and socioeconomic status as well as the types of financial aid being provided to them relative to the population at large. Gathering this data is crucial in showing how the changes in public policy, which now focuses on the individual benefit of a higher education, have disproportionately aided middle to upper class Caucasian students relative to lower income Latino populations. In addition to the policy reports, the work of Dr. Taylor and Zumeta provide a historical context on the state level to frame the policy analysis of the various state boards. Overall, as demonstrated by Figure 8, the state of Washington's level of

[39]"Preparing Students to Be on the Transfer Path in Community and Technical College." Resh04-2-2.pdf. Dec. 2004. Washington State Board For Community and Technical Colleges. 12 Nov. 2006 <http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/data/rsrchrpts/Resh04-2-2.pdf>.
[40] Ibid.

educational access as recent as ten years ago was average, state policy has been unable to adapt quickly enough to its rapidly expanding number of college students, the majority of which are Latino.[41]

Figure 8-Decline of Affordability in Washington over the Past Fourteen Years

AFFORDABILITY	WASHINGTON		Top States In Early 1990s
	1992*	2006	
Family Ability to Pay (50%)			
Percent of income (average of all income groups) needed to pay for college expenses minus financial aid:			
at community colleges	19%	27%	15%
at public 4-year colleges/universities	20%	31%	16%
at private 4-year colleges/universities	54%	68%	32%
Strategies for Affordability (40%)			
State investment in need-based financial aid as compared to the federal investment	24%	86%	89%
At lowest-priced colleges, the share of income that the poorest families need to pay for tuition	11%	21%	7%
Reliance on Loans (10%)			
Average loan amount that undergraduate students borrow each year	$3,170	$3,801	$2,619

[42]

In addition to economic access, Washington's higher education policy also must account for the demonstrated gap in "cultural capital," between low-income, first generation Latino students and their peers. I began to research what types of already existing programs would be able to provide the necessary outreach to Latino students, who, despite their lack of knowledge of the higher education system, are nevertheless qualified and prepared to attend college. I have decided to focus on the TRiO programs, eight different federal educational outreach programs created as a part of President Johnson's Great Society agenda by the Economic Opportunity Act and Higher Education Act. Initially, TRiO consisted of three separate programs. The first, Upward Bound provides middle and high school students with one-on-one mentoring and academic support throughout secondary school so they can graduate from high school academically prepared to enter college. The second program, Educational Talent Search (ETS), helps exposed talented but disadvantaged students to the idea of college by sponsoring campus visits and helping students navigate the college application process. Lastly, Student Support

[41] This decline in affordability can be seen by the declining grade awarded to Washington in that category by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, a non-partisan national higher education think tank. In 2000, the first year the Center began grading every individual states, Washington received a grade of B-, by the year 2006 that grade had sunk to D-.

[42] [42] "Measuring Up 2006: the State Report Card on Higher Education Washington." WA06.pdf. 2006. National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education. 5 Nov. 2006

Services (SSS) was created to help support students in college to help increase college retention and graduation rates.[43] Together, these programs form the largest educational outreach on the planet, which has helped over two million disadvantaged students graduate from college in 1965.[44] Given that programs like TRiO have been proven to have a positive impact on Latinos more than any other racial or ethnic group, they possess a high potential to reach the growing number of Latino students wishing to attend college in Washington.[45] Although such programs cannot mitigate the educational shortcomings of the state's secondary education system, they provide effective models for programs that can increase access within the current educational system to quickly address the needs of the state's growing Latino population while larger reforms are conceived of and implemented.

I chose to study the TRIO-Educational Talent Search program being conducted out of Walla Walla Community college for various reasons. Although the program is only five years old, it is already significantly increasing the rate of college attendance of Walla Walla high school students. This rise in participation is particularly encouraging given the recent growth of the Latino population in and around the Walla Walla Valley. According to the United States Census Bureau, sixteen percent of Walla Walla County's population is Latino, more than double the ratio for the entire state.[46] The program also is able to enroll its students at various types of colleges—two-year community colleges, public four-year comprehensive research universities, and private four-year liberal arts colleges—all located near Walla Walla. In this sense the ETS program is indicative of how even a small investment can generate large educational returns.

In addition to the quantitative data, I conducted three qualitative interviews with Latino alumni of the Walla Walla Educational Talent Search program. In order to protect their privacy I have changed their names in this report. All three students are currently enrolled in college. Jose and Ricardo are currently attending large public four-year universities, and Belinda attended a community college for two years before transferring to a private liberal arts college. I recorded face-to-face interviews with both Belinda while Jose and Ricardo responded to my questions regarding how ETS helped them via email due to travel and time constraints. All three provided insights into the process of applying to and attending college in a way that simply cannot be found through quantitative analysis alone.

Throughout every step of the research process, I was careful to keep the principles of Critical Race Theory in mind. Therefore, I was looking for evidence of how these larger shifts in policies were having impacts specifically on Latinos and what type of policies could be enacted to help increase access for Latinos. I was also searching for how different forms of capital, both

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[43] What is TRiO? Dec. 1996. Council for Opportunity in Education. 14 Nov. 2006 <http://www.trioprograms.org/abouttrio.html>.

[44] Brewer, Ernst W., and Jama M. Landers. "A Longitudinal Study of the Talent Search Program." Journal of Career Development 31.3 (2005): 195-208. 12 Nov. 2006 <ttp://wc2vb5mt8e.scholar.serialssolutions.com/?sid=google&auinit=EW&aulast=Brewer&atitle=A+Longitudinal+Study+of+the+Talent+Search+Program&id=doi:10.1007/s10871-004-2227-0>.

[45] Santiago, Deborah A., and Sartia E. Brown. "Federal Policy and Latinos in Higher Education: A Guide for Policy Makers and Grantmakers." FederalPolicyBrief. 2004. Pew Hispanic Center. 5 Nov. 2006 <http://www.edexcelencia.org/pdf/FederalPolicyBrief.pdf>.

[46] Walla Walla QuickFacts from the United States Census Bureau. 2000. United States Census Bureau. 5 Nov. 2006 <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/53/53071.html>.

economic and cultural, might be operating along predominately racial lines within the state. Lastly, it was important that I place the current state of Latino access to higher education within its more expansive historical context in order to show where the state is headed in relation to given past trends in the state's higher education policy.

IV. Higher Education for Latinos in Washington—A History of the Present

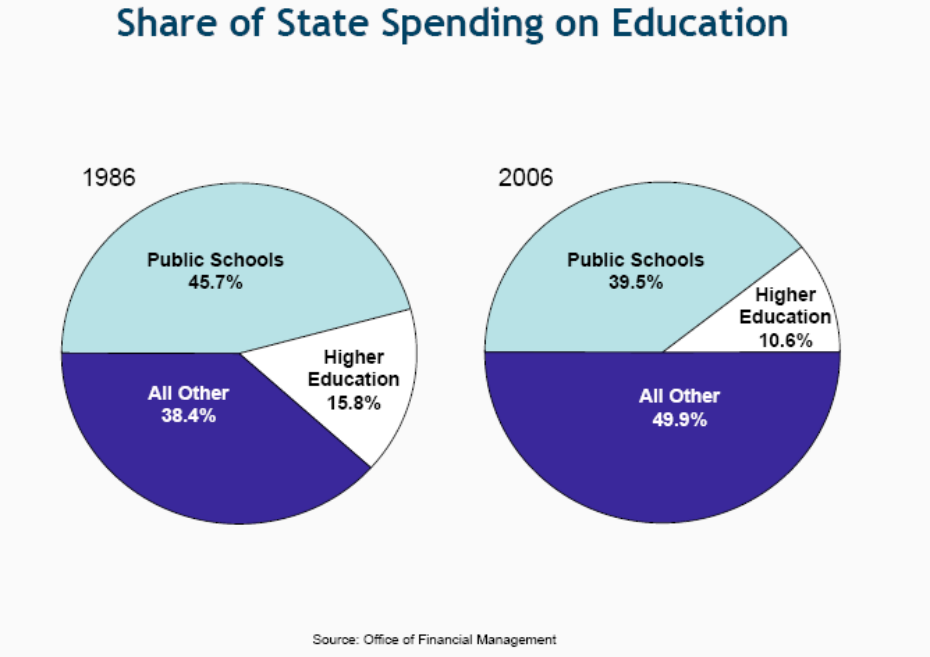
Overall, I discovered that the factors restricting Latino access at the national level hold true in Washington. These national trends of increasing tuition prices and more restrictive forms of financial aid are particularly troubling given the current economic condition of Latinos here in Washington. According to the latest census data, 21.9% of Latinos in Washington live below the poverty level, three times the state average of 7.3%. The disparity is even greater when children under eighteen are disaggregated from the larger population. Among this group, 29.9% of Latino children are living below the poverty level, far above the rate of 13.2% of all races and ethnic groups combined. In both areas, compared to all other ethnic groups, Latinos have the highest rate of living in poverty. Although I could not find any data relating the national figures of educational attainment or the expected growth in both the areas of poverty and lack of familial educational attainment, the fact remains that Latinos within the state, because of their disproportionately high levels of poverty, are more likely than any other group to not attend college. As a consequence, even Latinos of high academic ability are less likely to enroll in institutions of higher education than are their less qualified, but richer peers. Therefore, improving access relative to the economic condition of Washington's Latinos must remain in the forefront of state educational policy, which is best accomplished through increased funding.

Accomplishing this goal, however, will entail utilizing a fundamentally different approach to higher education than the state has traditionally adopted. The state's role is extremely important because, although the federal government provides nearly half of all the funding for financial aid, the state of Washington provides for an additional thirteen percent of need-based aid monies and supports the operation of all of the state's public universities and colleges with direct appropriations.[47] Put simply, the state directly funds a specified number of student "slots" every year, which are then filled with tuition paying students. Historically lawmakers have used higher education as tool to balance the state's overall budget since it is funded through discretionary budgets. Meaning that when a strong state economy generates revenue surpluses, the higher education budgets are expanded and the number of "slots" is increased and when deficits accrue, higher education's funding is likewise contracted. The state is also responsible for setting the next year's tuition increase. Lawmakers, however, have viewed tuition as an outside source of revenue that is able to cover state budget shortfalls without considering how higher tuitions restricts access. In the 1980s, Washington was forced to cut higher education budgets to meet the rising costs of entitlement programs like Medicare, triggering a new round of tuition hikes. As a consequence, the overall funding for higher education has shrunk, tuition has risen, and educational opportunities have been restricted. Latinos, specifically, are susceptible to losing access. At the national level, it has been proven

[47] "Update on State Financial Aid Programs and Funding." Tab13-jan26-06.FAUpdate.pdf. Jan. 2006. Higher Education Coordinating Board. 15 Nov. 2006 <http://www.hecb.wa.gov/research/issues/documents/Tab13-jan26-06.FAUpdate.pdf>.

that six to eight percent of Latinos lose access to higher education for every one-thousand-dollar increase in tuition.[48]

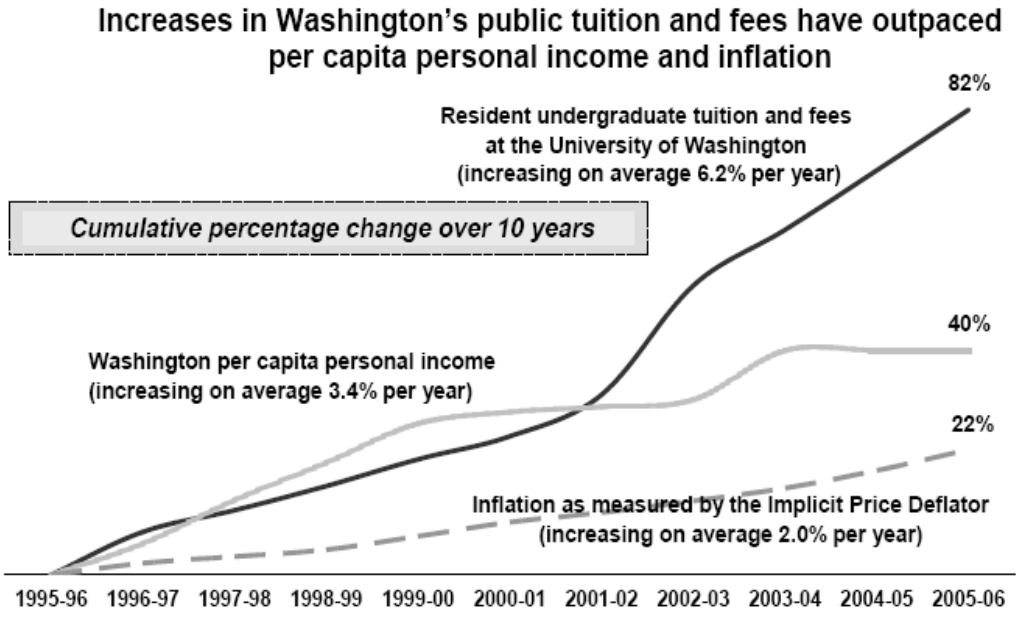
Figure 9



[49]

Simultaneously, as state funding decreased, resident tuition in Washington has risen precipitously:

Figure 10



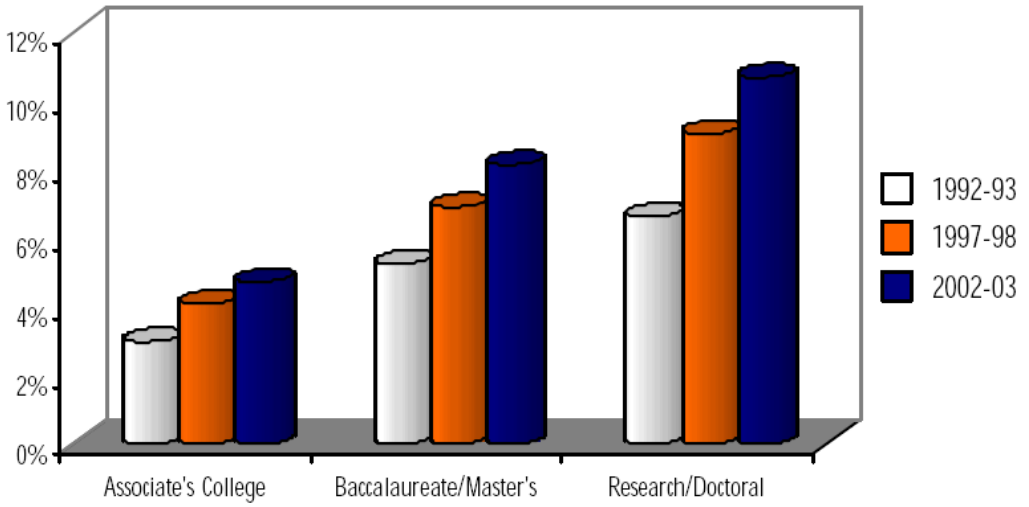
[50]

[48]Padron, Eduardo J. "A Deficit Understanding: Confronting the Funding Crisis in Higher Education and the Threat to Low-Income and Minority Access." HACUDocument.pdf. Miami Dade College. 5 Nov. 2006 <http://www.mdc.edu/president/Email/HACUDocument.pdf>.

[49] Daley, Ann. "What Have We Learned?" Washington Learns. 5 Nov. 2006 <http://www.washingtonlearns.wa.gov/materials/WhatHaveWeLearned_PHversion.pdf>

This increase has outpaced family incomes in Washington as well.

Figure 11—Ration of Tuition and Fees to Median Household Income



[51]

In a key report, "Measuring Up 2006," the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education graded each of the fifty states in six categories related to higher education: preparation, participation, affordability, completion, and benefits. The respective grades that Washington received were: B in preparation, C- in participation, a D- in affordability, an A in completion, and A- in benefits, which combines to form a 2.0 GPA, the minimum GPA required to graduate from a four-year university. Although Washington does invest heavily in need-based financial aid, the share of family income needed to pay for college, even after tuition is discounted remains prohibitively high for middle and lower class students.

Figure 12- Breakdown of Washington's Family Ability to Pay

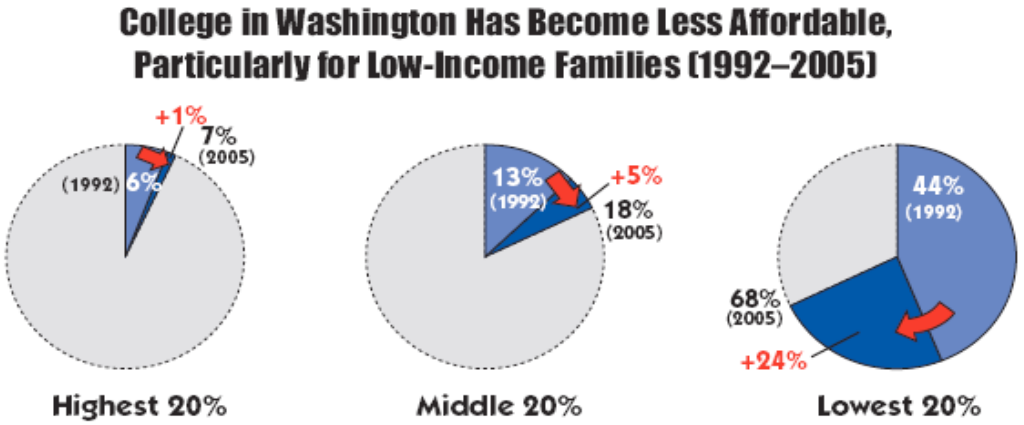
A CLOSER LOOK AT FAMILY ABILITY TO PAY	Average family income	Community colleges		Public 4-year colleges/universities		Private 4-year colleges/universities	
		Net college cost*	Percent of income needed to pay net college cost	Net college cost*	Percent of income needed to pay net college cost	Net college cost*	Percent of income needed to pay net college cost
Income groups used to calculate 2006 family ability to pay							
20% of the population with the lowest income	$12,210	$8,271	68%	$9,275	76%	$21,782	178%
20% of the population with lower-middle income	$30,000	$8,754	29%	$10,017	33%	$21,747	72%
20% of the population with middle income	$50,556	$9,202	18%	$11,081	22%	$21,761	43%
20% of the population with upper-middle income	$78,317	$9,360	12%	$11,403	15%	$22,206	28%
20% of the population with the highest income	$128,000	$9,398	7%	$11,541	9%	$22,880	18%
40% of the population with the lowest income	**$21,105**	**$8,513**	**40%**	**$9,646**	**46%**	**$21,765**	**103%**

[52][53]

[50] "Higher Education Finances." Part4-Highereducationfinances.pdf. Higher Education Coordinating Board. 5 Nov. 2006 <http://www.hecb.wa.gov/news/newsfacts/documents/Part4-Highereducationfinances.pdf>.
[51] Supporting Higher Education in Washington." Wa.pdf. Interstate Commission for Higher Education. 5 Nov. 2006 <http://www.wiche.edu/Policy/Fact_Book/PDF/wa.pdf>.

Attending a public four-year university has become extremely hard, if not impossible without heavy financial aid subsidies for those families in the lowest economic quintile.

Figure 13—Share of Family Income Devoted to Attend a Four-Year College

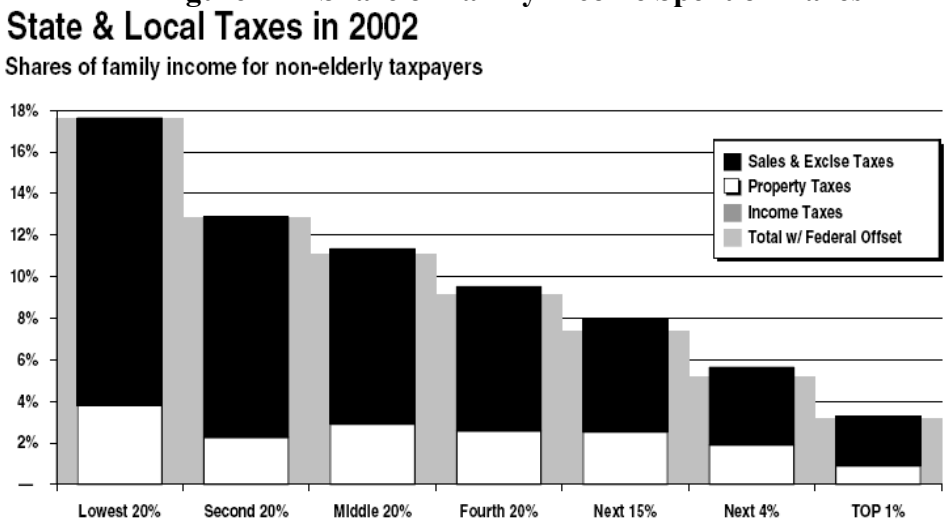


Net costs to attend public 4-year colleges as a share of income for different income families.

[54]

Combined with the increased price of tuition, low-income families bear the additional burden of Washington's tax system, which is the most regressive in the nation. The state relies on sales and excise taxes to account for its lack of a personal income tax, which disproportionately affects the lower and middle class. In 2002, after tuition and taxes, a family's income with just one student attending college would be reduced by seventy-two percent. [55]

Figure 14—Share of Family Income Spent on Taxes



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[52] "Measuring Up 2006: the State Report Card on Higher Education Washington." WA06.pdf. 2006. National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education. 5 Nov. 2006

[53] Net College cost equals the sum of tuition, room, board and fees minus financial aid

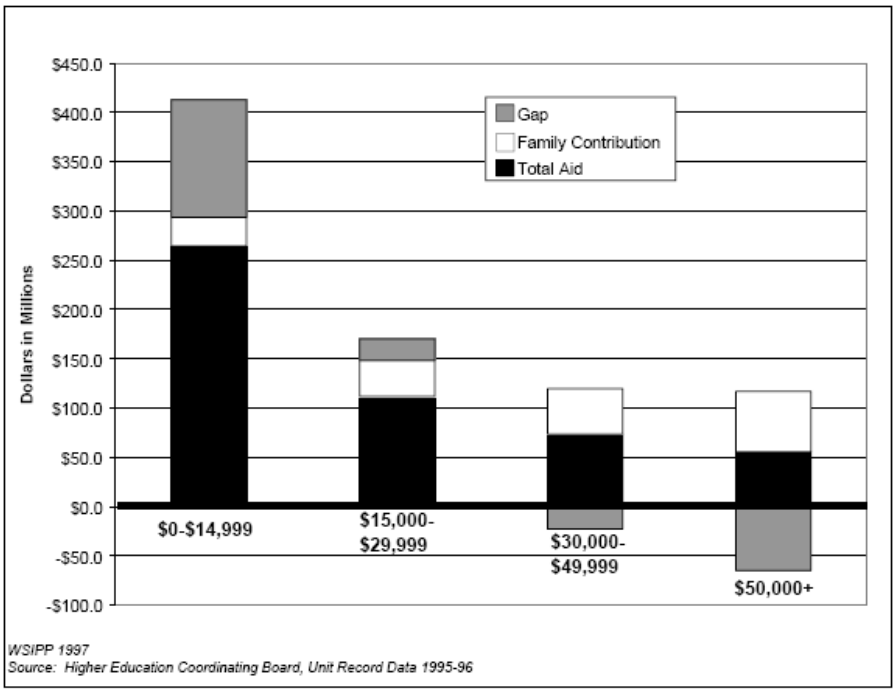
[54] Ibid.

[55] Figures combined from Washington's 2002 "Measuring Up" report card and the tax report issued by the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy.

[56] "Washington's Tax System is the Most Regressive in the Nation." Wa pr .pdf. 7 Jan. 2003. Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. 5 Nov. 2006 <http://www.itepnet.org/wp2000/wa%20pr.pdf>.

Although Washington has done an excellent job in allocating most of its financial aid programs on the basis of financial need rather than various types of merit, it fails to provide enough funding to cover adequately the full costs of a college education for low-income families. The following chart from the Washington State Institute for Public Policy details the gap between the cost of a year of education after financial aid and family contributions have discounted the student's tuition and fees. There remains a significant gap between the cost of education and what is feasibly affordable for lower class students, but for upper-class families, the state aid exceeds their cost of education. Put bluntly, the state is failing to uphold its end of the higher education social contract for its most disadvantaged students, because it is failing to provide enough funding to adequately fund the full costs of a college education for low income families.

Figure 15-Total Student Financial Need for Attending College in Washington, 1995-6



57

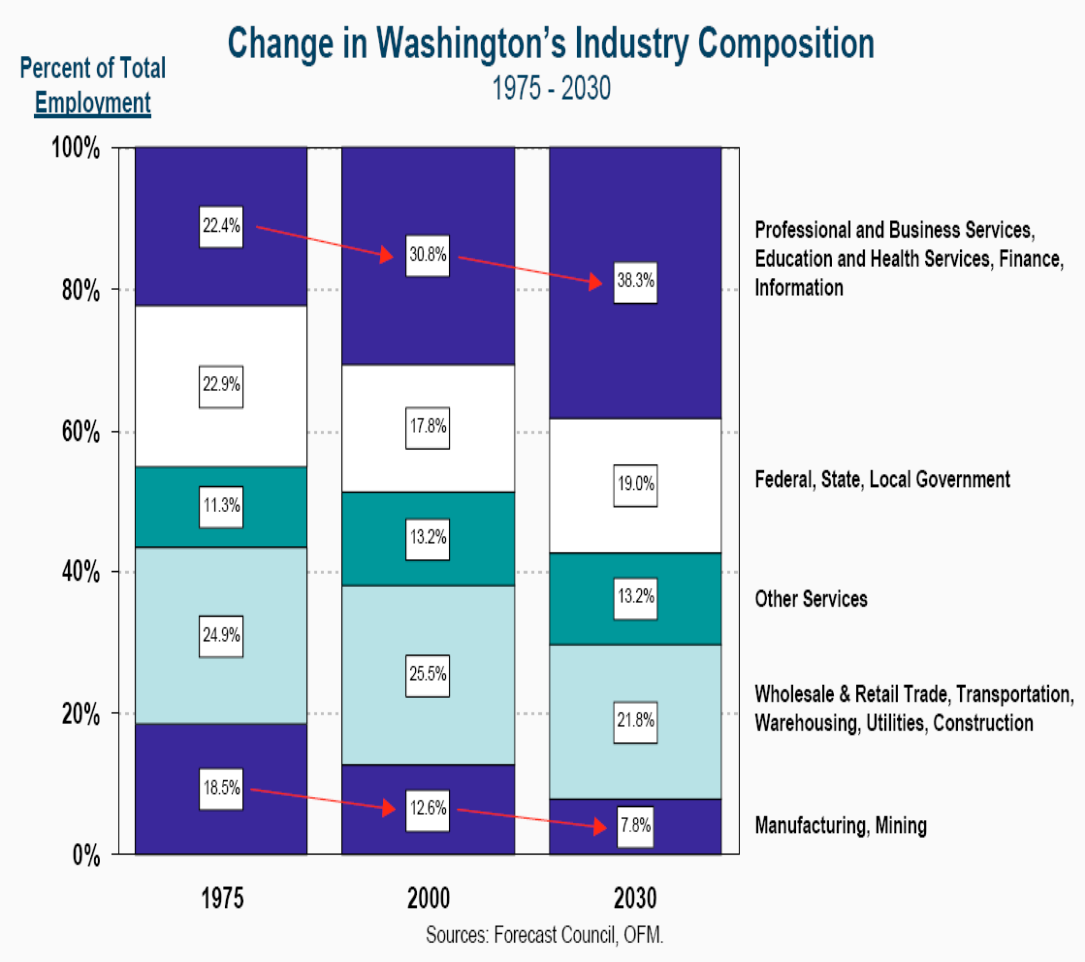
Further exacerbating this situation are two significant ongoing and impending demographic and economic transformations changing the very fabric of Washington's society. Demographically, Washington's Latino population between the ages of nineteen and thirty-seven – the age range in which individuals are most likely to enroll as students – is expected to grow by seventy-five percent by the year 2020.[58] Financing the same rate of Latino students as the population balloons will require significant spending increases just to maintain enrollment rates. Add to this that Washington's economy is shifting towards an 'information-based economy," away from its traditional manufacturing base, and it becomes clear that the demand and necessity

[57] [57] Harding, Edie, and Laura Harmon. "Washington State's Student Financial Aid Programs." Finaidpgms1.pdf. 1998. Washington State Institute for Public Policy. 5 Nov. 2006. <http://www1.leg.wa.gov/documents/Senate/SCS/WM/SwmWebsite/Publications/1998/finaidpgms1.pdf>.

[58] "July 2006 Diversity Report." Higher Education Coordinating Board Research. 2006. Higher Education Coordinating Board. 5 Nov. 2006 <http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/diversity/July_2006_diversity_report.pdf>.

of higher education will also increase. Out of all the jobs to be created in Washington over the next decade, sixty percent of them will require a college education.[59] If Latinos are to achieve any type of substantive economic equality, the state of Washington must begin meeting the demonstrated need of its low-income Latino students. We currently find ourselves residing in a limited time of opportunity. If we fail to act quickly to expand access, the state's higher education system will be overwhelmed by the oncoming wave in Latino students. If policy makers fail to act, there exists a significant risk that the maintenance of the status quo will result in the creation a permanent Latino under-class within Washington's society.

Figure 16



[60]

From a Critical Race Theory Perspective, this ideological shift from the public good of higher education to the emphasis on the benefits gained by individual students concurrent with prevailing economic trends have restricted minority access to college, which has manifested itself along the lines of property. Since the 1980s, students from upper class families, who are predominately Caucasian, have had little additional hardship in affording their college education, in part because state policy has actively responded to mitigate the increasing costs for these families. This same attention has not been paid to the lower and middle class students, who are

[59] HECB Meeting in Yakima, Washington. October 26th, 2006.
[60] Daley, Ann. "What Have We Learned?" Washington Learns. 5 Nov. 2006 <http://www.washingtonlearns.wa.gov/materials/WhatHaveWeLearned_PHversion.pdf>

much more likely to be students as color. As college becomes necessary prerequisite for membership in the American middle class, this kind of salutary neglect of the financial need of lower- and middle-class students will lead to a permanently segregated society along the lines of class and race. In order to prevent this unfortunate consequence, the state must act quickly to improve not just upper-class affordability but *insure* lower class access to college for qualified and motivated students.

IV. Case Study

There are many federal and state organizations and programs within the state of Washington that are working to improve minority education. Many focus on overcoming the academic shortcomings of students who attend dysfunctional or failing elementary and secondary schools, while others provide the necessary financial means for poor students to attend college. These programs are providing a invaluable service to disadvantaged students, but I choose to look at programs that are trying to overcome the deficit in cultural capital that is preventing many qualified and motivated students from enrolling in college. Although overcoming this imbalance in cultural capital will not completely fix the inequity in higher education, it presents the quickest and most immediate way to enroll higher numbers of Latino students in college. One such specific program that I researched extensively was the TRiO-Educational Talent Search program (ETS), founded in 2001, which operates out of Walla Walla Community College. The ETS program, like all TRiO programs, is currently bound by Congress to enroll two-thirds of its students from families where neither parent went to college and their earnings were equal to or less than $24,000 annually. In the context of Washington State, this population contains a high number of Latinos. Its effects within Walla Walla are already impressive. Ninety-one percent of its past students are enrolled and actively participating in the campus communities of the twenty-seven different post-secondary colleges and universities they are currently attending, and one hundred percent of these students are receiving financial aid.[61]

Although the title of TRiO now extends over eight different programs, Educational Talent Search serves the most students, 389,000, which is nearly double the amount served by the next largest program. Educational Talent Search is fundamentally a college access program. Starting in middle school, ETS counselors in Washington State begin mentoring students by educating them about the importance of getting good grades, passing the WASL (Washington Assessment of Student Learning) exams, and exposing them to different career opportunities. As the students progress into high school, ETS focuses more closely on educating and motivating students about the steps they need to take in order to graduate successfully from high school and subsequently apply to and enroll in college. As the students move closer and closer to graduation, ETS provides more and more workshops educating students about career and post-graduate planning, financial aid, ACT and SAT preparation, as well as sponsoring students to visit various college campuses. All these activities form a crucial informational bridge to students who, though capable, lack the requisite knowledge about the application and financial aid process to enter college successfully. College, which was previously viewed as an impossible dream, becomes an eminently feasible option.

[61] Dankel-Iba□n□ez, Andrew. "Globalization, Technology, and Education in the 21st Century: Preparing Students for a Flatworld." Northwest Association of Special Programs, Anchorage. 21 May 2006.

Educational Talent Search does many things well. Most importantly, it introduces its students to the idea and feasibility of attending college as early as the seventh grade, which has been shown to be the time when most students begin forming their post-secondary aspirations.[62] The program is also community based, involving parents as well as their children in the pre-college application process. These strengths engender further success, specifically relating to Latinos. A national Department of Education Survey has found TRiO programs to benefit Latino students more than any other racial or ethnic group served by the program.[63] As a result, the ETS program serves as an excellent template for how to perform outreach to Latino youth. TRiO, however, both locally and nationally, is under-funded to such a degree that it is only able to serve a small fraction of eligible students. At current funding levels, of the eleven million TRiO eligible students, only five percent are being reached by TRiO.[64]

Programs like TRiO are performing a vital service to the low-income students of Washington by allowing them to take full advantage of the current financial aid systems of the state, which in many individual cases allows Latino students to attend college who would not have otherwise. The underlying problem, however, of the large amount of unmet need for low-income Washingtonians, who are disproportionably Latino, remains. It behooves the state to use TRiO as a template on which to further expand its outreach efforts while simultaneously expanding the financial aid mechanisms of the state in order to restore lower-class access.

V. Interviews

Since the research regarding the Educational Talent Search program is divided into either national accountability reviews or institution specific analyses, I decided throughout the course of my research to conduct interviews with various high school and university students who were involved with the program in Walla Walla. All of these students were the first in their families to attend college, were from lower-class backgrounds, and were Latino. Consistently, these three students reiterated how instrumental Educational Talent Search's role was in their continued education. Ultimately, I was hoping to gather qualitative narratives that would demonstrate that sometimes the only barrier between qualified Latino students and a college education are easily bridged gaps in cultural capital. Examples of such gaps are unfamiliarity with the benefits of a college education, lacking a family support and encouragement, and a lack of knowledge about the application processes.

I found that ETS was able to bridge these gaps. Once these barriers, which appear trivial to other college-bound students possessing higher amounts of cultural capital, are crossed the goal of graduating from college often becomes attainable. As a junior at Eastern Washington University who participated in ETS said: "I truly believe that without the ETS program I would have not gone to college. ETS helped me find the resources that I needed. At the time, my family didn't have the money to get me to college, and we didn't even know what college really

[62] Santiago, Deborah A., and Sartia E. Brown. "Federal Policy and Latinos in Higher Education: A Guide for Policy Makers and Grantmakers." FederalPolicyBrief. 2004. Pew Hispanic Center. 5 Nov. 2006 <http://www.edexcelencia.org/pdf/FederalPolicyBrief.pdf>.

[63] Santiago, Deborah A., and Sartia E. Brown. "Federal Policy and Latinos in Higher Education: A Guide for Policy Makers and Grantmakers." FederalPolicyBrief. 2004. Pew Hispanic Center. 5 Nov. 2006

[64] "Historically Black Colleges and Universities Urge Expansion of Title III and TRiO Programs." 1997. Look Smart. 15 Nov. 2006 <http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0DXK/is_n23_v13/ai_19149855>.

was. ETS educated me on how I could go to college and I was given hope."[65] The type of mentoring, advice, and education provided by Andrew Dankel-Iba□n□ez and his staff proved instrumental in these students lives. Generally, the education provided by the Talent Search program is particularly important for many Latinos who come from homes where their parents are first-generation immigrants and posses little to no knowledge of either how to apply or how they stand to benefit from a college education. All of the students I interviewed expressed how their involvement with ETS crucial in their enrollment in college. Another quote from Jose demonstrates how relatively simple pieces of information can greatly change the trajectory of a student's post-secondary plans. He wrote, "Some examples that ETS and the advisors helped me with were helping me fill out my FAFSA, which at the time I didn't know what that was, they helped my find scholarship and with the processes of applying for them. The advisors helped me revise my personal statements that I need to apply for scholarships."[66] Clearly, attending college for some Latino student does not entail a wholesale reinventing of the educational wheel, rather it just requires an additional outreach effort and the knowledge that the path to higher education is not as arduous as it may initially appear.

VI. Synthetic Analysis and Recommendations

In order to answer the question that I initially posed—how do we explain the low levels of Latino enrollment in higher education in the state—I will now return to the framework of Critical Race Theory in order to combine the preceding elements of this report, which present a mixed picture about the future of Latinos in higher education. Through the lens of CRT, the lower level of Latino access to higher education is a result of systematic and ingrained racism of Washington's government and society. It is a less visible and individually pernicious form of racism; instead it is de-personalized and institutional. Edward Taylor defines this form of racism as any "political or social force that has benefited a certain group, through no single action on the part of individuals."[67] This type of racism, unlike the Jim Crow attitudes and institutions, operates under the guise of objectivity and race-neutrality. Instead of focusing on acts of prejudice, CRT seeks instead to examine the "centrality, and invisibility of white privilege."[68]Additionally, CRT theorists in education examine the intersection of race and property rights throughout the educational system. Therefore, any analysis of race must be one that engages the racial as well as economic factors operating in society. This type of racial/economic preference is found throughout the changes in the financing structure of higher education over the last forty years. As loans have replaced grants, tuition has replaced state funding, real wages have declined for all but the richest Americans, poor Latinos are being denied the option of attending college. This widespread denial will have intergenerational effects as a college education adds billions of dollars of income to the life of its graduates. If current trends are not reversed, our civil society will become solidly stratified between the largely white college-educated upper classes and the uneducated lower classes of color.

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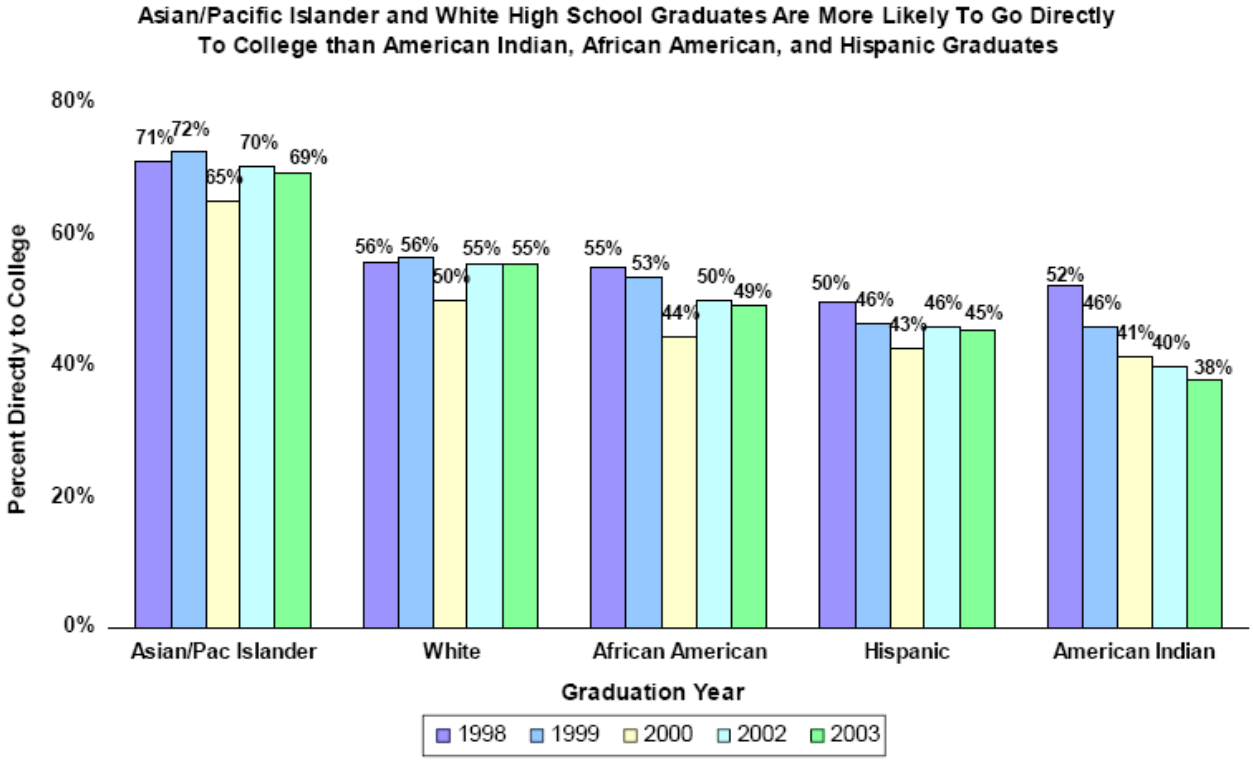
[65] Rodriquez, Jose. "Re: Question for the Interview." E-mail to the author. 1 Nov. 2006.
[66] Ibid.
[67]Taylor, Edward. "Critical Race Theory and Interest Convergence in the Backlash against Affirmative Action: Washington State and Initiative 200." Teacher's College Record 102.3 (2000): 539-60, p. 548.
[68] Ibid., page 548.

Figure 17



[69]

This graph is a perfect distillation of the de facto racism that Critical Race Theory aims to combat. Upon a first reading of I-200, you are more than likely to agree with its aim of prohibiting the state from discriminating "against, or grant preferential treatment to, any individual or group on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in the operation of public employment, public education, or public contracting."[70] Despite this language couched in equality, however, it enshrined the systematic economic and cultural advantages of Caucasians and Asian Americans as "normal" and "equal," when in reality these groups are privileged within the educational system because of past historical advantages. When the state insists that its colleges and universities operate in a "color-blind" fashion, it is only allowing the racial inequalities of American society to further manifest themselves in the classroom. If we are to take seriously the idea that public higher education is the manifestation of the social contract between the government and its citizens, that contract should be creating substantive opportunity for its students. Therefore, this law must be repealed or amended in order to create a truly level playing field of opportunity for the state's college students.

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[69] "July 2006 Diversity Report." Higher Education Coordinating Board Research. 2006. Higher Education Coordinating Board. 5 Nov. 2006 <http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/diversity/July_2006_diversity_report.pdf>.
[70] Taylor, Edward . "Critical Race Theory and Interest Convergence in the Backlash against Affirmative Action: Washington State and Initiative 200." Teacher's College Record 102.3 (2000): 539-60.

Despite our inclination to deny that this type of "objective" educational racism exists even on the national scale, in Washington State the most telling example of CRT racism exists. As mentioned earlier, in 1998 Washington state voters passed Initiative 200 (I-200), which effectively ended all forms of public race-based affirmative action policies. It took effect banning the state from discriminating "against or grant preferential treatment to any individual or group on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin."[71] The language of I-200 invokes the rhetoric of equal protection and opportunity foundational to the civil rights movement, but its effects were extremely detrimental to racial minorities, especially in higher education. The following fall, freshman enrollments fell forty percent for African Americans, thirty percent for Latinos and twenty percent for American Indians. Nearly a decade later, as mentioned in the quantitative analysis section, these rates have not returned to their 1998 levels. What I-200 did, in essence, was to take a snapshot of Washington society, declare it "equal," when whites were enrolling at higher rates than all other minorities, and then preserve the enrollment advantages of Caucasians. Another example of this type of racism is still ongoing in the state. Proposed ballot initiative 914 sought to "prohibit public and private entities from using race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in decisions about employment, contracting, subcontracting, college admissions and school assignment, and limit collection of data."[72] Thankfully, the measure was withdrawn by its sponsor, but is troubling in the respect that it would expand the preservation of privilege of I-200 into the private sphere while simultaneously limiting the collection of data that, more than likely, would show its counter-egalitarian effects. Nevertheless, the continued stasis imposed by I-200 in the face of Washington's changing demographics, which are overwhelming Latino in nature, is worsening the inequity of higher education in the state.

Using the same critical logic, the funding priorities of the state and federal government are having significant racial impacts without any specific racial intent, which is contributing to the lower-levels of enrollment. The philosophical shift in viewing student participation in higher education from a societal good to a personalized benefit has had effects along class and racial lines. As the price of a college education has risen, both the federal and state government has failed to maintain the same level of access created by the Higher Education Act of 1965. Under the current Bush Administration alone, Pell Grants have been held stagnant for the past five years, twelve billion dollars have been cut from federal loan budgets, and student loan interest rates have increased.[73] By relying on loans and tax credits rather than grants, and by failing to maintain the real purchasing power of the Pell Grant, government neglect rather than overt intention is closing the doors of the academy to Latinos in Washington.

Although the benefits of a college education are significant for individual graduates, the benefits to society are equally so, and to ignore the societal benefits of a highly educated workforce is a luxury the state can no longer afford. College graduates are less likely to incur costs to state, more likely to participate in voting, less likely to become felons, and more likely to

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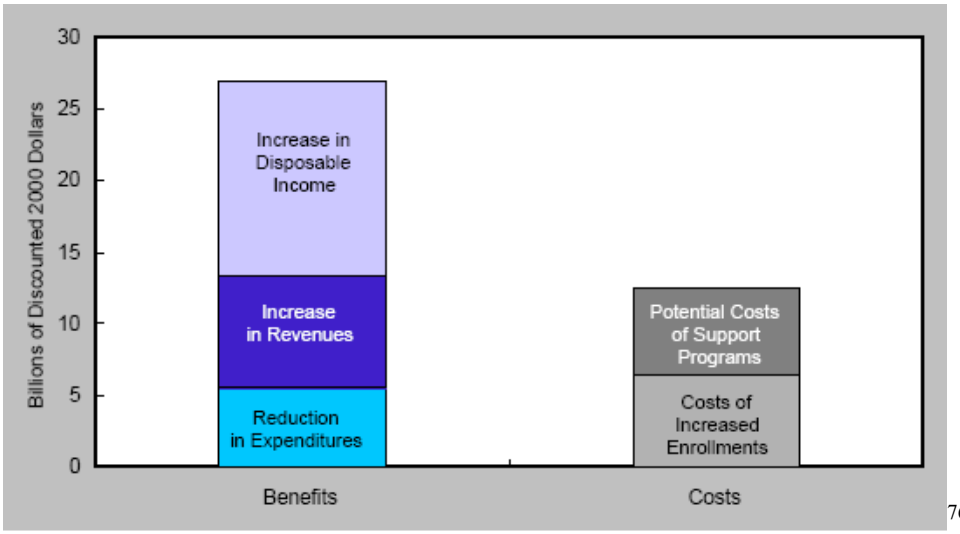
[71] Ibid. p. 545.

[72] Elections: Initiatives to the People. 2006. Washington Secretary of State Sam Reed. 5 Nov. 2006 <http://www.secstate.wa.gov/elections/initiatives/people.aspx>.

[73] Esparaza, Araceli. "Study Says Rise in Costs Hit Latinos Harder." San Gabriel Valley Tribune 25 Oct. 2006, West Covina ed.. Academic Universe. LexisNexis. Penrose Library, Whitman College. 5 Nov. 2006 < http://web.lexis-nexis.com/universe/document?_m=c213e09ec60da5f52a488cccbf8f351a&_docnum=4&wchp=dGLbVzz-zSkVA&_md5=37d1b21c47e9e048ac525603c42ee36e>.

generate large amounts of increased tax revenues throughout the state.[74] If Washington continues to under enroll Latinos at its current rate, as the state's population expands it will be hamstringing its future economic competitiveness. In an economic analysis conducted by RAND, they found that doubling the rate of Latino graduation from college would have a four-to-one return on investment through an increase in tax revenues and disposable income while simultaneously reducing other costs to the state.[75] The election of Christine Gregoire, who is placing education at the forefront of her policy agenda to the Governorship with her Washington Learns campaign, presents an exciting opportunity to reverse the stagnation in Washington's higher education policy and funding.

Figure 18 National Increases in Benefits, in Billions of Dollars, of Doubling Latino College Graduation Rates



[76]

Increasing Latino enrollment in the short-run does not necessarily involve a reinvention of Washington's education system; it just requires more money. First, the Legislature and the Governor should adopt and should sign Senate Concurrent Resolution 841, which seeks to create a joint-select committee dedicated to studying the specific barriers and affordability issues that are facing Washington's Latino students and families. In order to create effective policies, Washington lawmakers need to know what type of financial aid Latinos are getting and if it is enough for them to achieve their educational goals unimpeded. Additionally, Washington needs to make tuition increases moderate and predictable instead the steep and varied increases of the past twenty years. The state needs to further expand its state need and opportunity grants so that they can meet the unmet financial need of current students and help increase enrollments. A particular area that this aid is most needed in is helping undocumented Latinos afford an education. The state took positive steps in extending in-state tuition to these Latinos in 2003

[74] Vernez, Georges, and Lee Mizell. "Goal: To Double the Rate of Hispanics Earning a Bachelor's Degree." Rand Education. 2001. Center for Research on Immigration Policy. 5 Nov. 2006 <http://192.5.14.110/pubs/documented_briefings/2005/DB350.pdf>.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid.

with the passing of House Bill 1079.[77] However, that bill failed to extend state-aid to these students, which for many of these students is essential for their enrollment. Beyond increasing its budgets, Washington should increase in scope the outreach efforts of organizations like TRiO-Educational Talent Search in order to increase the Latino community understanding of how higher education operates in the state. These steps combined will be the necessary first to increasing educational equity for Latinos in Washington.

[77] Esparaza, Araceli. "Study Says Rise in Costs Hit Latinos Harder." San Gabriel Valley Tribune 25 Oct. 2006, West Covina ed.. Academic Universe. LexisNexis. Penrose Library, Whitman College. 5 Nov. 2006 < http://web.lexis-nexis.com/universe/document?_m=c213e09ec60da5f52a488cccbf8f351a&_docnum=4&wchp=dGLbVzz-zSkVA&_md5=37d1b21c47e9e048ac525603c42ee36e>.

VII. Interview Transcripts

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