

**James B. Hunt Jr.**

Chair, National Center  
for Public Policy and  
Higher Education;  
Former Governor of NC

**Garrey Carruthers**

Vice-Chair, National Center  
for Public Policy and  
Higher Education;  
Former Governor of NM

**Frank Keating**

Co-Chair, National Commission  
on Accountability in  
Higher Education;  
Former Governor of OK

**Richard W. Riley**

Co-Chair, National Commission  
on Accountability in  
Higher Education;  
Former Governor of SC;  
Former U.S. Secretary  
of Education

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12/26/2006

Dear Governor:

During the past several years the four of us, all former Governors, have spent part of our time working to strengthen higher education in America. Two of us, Jim Hunt and Garrey Carruthers, are Chairman and Vice Chairman of the National Center for Public Policy in Higher Education. The other two, Dick Riley and Frank Keating, co-chaired the National Commission on Accountability in Higher Education.

Our work and our concerns have been reinforced by *A Test of Leadership*, the report of the National Commission on the Future of Higher Education, convened by Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings, and by *Transforming Higher Education: National Imperative – State Responsibility*, the report of a bipartisan Blue Ribbon Committee of state legislators organized by the National Conference of State Legislatures.

These reports, and others like them, have a clear and consistent message. We can no longer afford to be complacent about the performance of higher education in America. We have enjoyed our reputation for having the world's best system of higher education, but a disturbing number of other nations are educating more of their citizens to a higher level. Unless more Americans successfully enroll and graduate in higher education, our democracy and our economy will almost certainly become progressively weaker.

The federal government, the states, and our educational leaders all are responsible for addressing this challenge. But the states and *you personally* must play an especially critical role.

[Custom paragraph for state was inserted here.]

We know you and every other governor are thinking about how to respond to this challenge. While every state has unique needs, we believe there are essential components of gubernatorial leadership. Based on our experience and observations (including some memorable mistakes), we respectfully advise you to:

1. **Develop an explicit state agenda for higher education.** Some states have done a great job of convening political, business, and educational leaders to set explicit state goals and organize themselves to achieve them. But most states need to do this more intentionally and more visibly.
2. **Recruit and appoint outstanding business and civic leaders with credibility and stature to coordinating, governing, and advisory boards for higher education.** Many good people will be interested in these appointments, but the times require especially able and credible civic leaders. Nothing short of the very best in these roles can be effective in the coming years.
3. **Build a broad, bipartisan base of support.** Addressing the educational challenges facing the nation will take many years. Success is unimaginable without a public consensus on fundamental goals, shared leadership among political, educational, and civic leaders, and initiatives that extend far beyond terms of office.
4. **Strengthen the capacity for sustained state-level policy analysis and leadership in higher education.** You, the legislature, *and* your successors should have the benefit of a permanent group of civic and business advisors, supported by non-partisan, professional staff, who are focused on higher education policy. In the 1960s, every state called on professional expertise and planning to make the changes necessary to educate the baby boom. Most states now need to expand *both* the size and effectiveness of their state systems. This will be harder, and it will take longer. Statewide coordinating or governing boards for higher education and state P-16 councils should be empowered and held accountable for giving governors and legislators sound advice and implementing more effective policies.

We have enclosed a package of resources that might be helpful to your staff as they work with you on this issue. It includes:

1. The results for your state from *Measuring Up 2006*, a project of the National Center for Public Policy in Higher Education to measure the performance of states in meeting the needs of their citizens for higher education.
2. *Accountability for Better Results*, the report of the National Commission on Accountability in Higher Education.
3. *A Test of Leadership*, the report of the National Commission on the Future of Higher Education, commissioned by U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings.

4. *Transforming Higher Education: National Imperative – State Responsibility*, the report of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Higher Education of the National Conference of State Legislatures.
5. *The Need for State Policy Leadership*, a short paper prepared by the National Center for Public Policy in Higher Education. And
6. *How Should States Respond to: A Test of Leadership?* an upcoming article from *Change* magazine.

In addition, we invite you to call any one of us, or to have your staff contact Pat Callan, President of the National Center for Public Policy in Higher Education, or Paul Lingenfelter, President of the State Higher Education Executive Officers, if we can be of further help. Our contact information is enclosed.

With every good wish for your continuing success,

Sincerely,



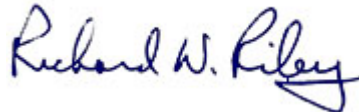
James B. Hunt, Jr.



Garrey Carruthers



Frank Keating



Richard W. Riley

cc. [name or names of SHEEOs from the state]

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