

MEMO

To: Sustainability Committee

From: James Jacobs

RE: Pell Students as a Share of Total Students by Institution

Date: July 7, 2010

Income has become the new dividing line in higher education in this nation. It is the poorest students who do not enroll, or they do, do not continue. This memo is to generate a discussion on identifying the problem and seeking ideas on how to proceed.

Pell grants are federal funds given to students based on family income. Information developed by DHE shows the resident Pell recipients by FTE, as well as resident undergraduate FTE for 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009. The first table creates a four-year average for the data. One-year data can significantly fluctuate. An average will smooth out some of these differences. This table shows Adams State College with the largest share of Pell students at 74% for the four-year average. The Colorado School of Mines reported the lowest at 15.8% for the four-year institutions. Pueblo Community College had the highest for the two-year institutions at 61% and Colorado Mountain College recorded the lowest at 13.9%. The state average for all institutions was 30.0%.

An index using the statewide average of 30% is shown on the second table. Adams State had 2.48 times the number of Pell FTE students as the average. The Colorado School of Mines had about one-half or an index of 0.53. Similarly, Pueblo Community College had twice the number with 2.05 and Colorado Mountain has less than one-half at 0.46.

The third table uses the four-year average for the two major segments, four-year and two-year institutions. Adams State had an index of 2.78 and Mines at 0.59 for this measure. The range for the two-year institutions went from 1.72 for Pueblo to 0.39 for Colorado Mountain College.

The income of students has become an important factor in analyzing student performance. Should it become important in funding those institutions? It can be assumed that the lower the income, the greater the need in support services is necessary. Further analysis need to be conducted to look at these costs. In addition, there may be other costs that have not yet been spent to increase graduation and continuation rates. This is an issue that needs further discussion by institutions and policymakers.