

# Nevada Higher Education Challenges<sup>1</sup>

## Challenges Facing Nevada Higher Education

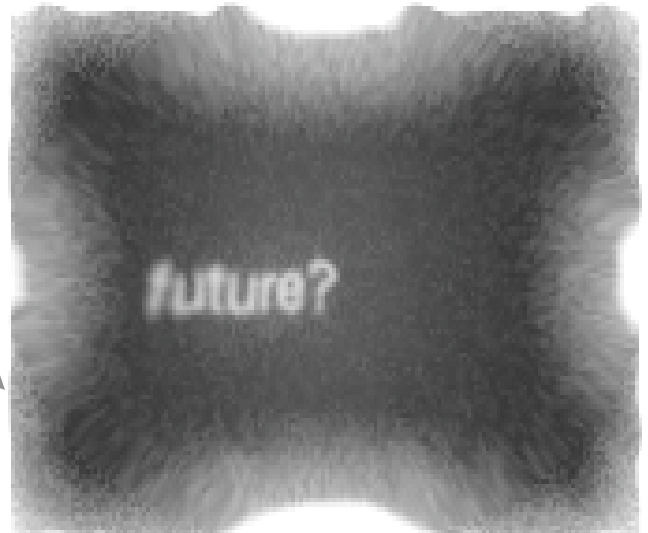
The State of Nevada has invested more than \$14.8 billion on education in the last decade, and it will continue to invest over \$2 billion per year during the next five years. On the surface, it seems, educational expenditure is yielding a meager **social** return on investment if we look at how we rank nationally on educational standard indicators of performance. Furthermore, when we examine the trends of developmental educational needs in Nevada, they suggest we need to raise our “grade” in educational attainment if we are to improve our social (return on investment) ROI at significant levels. The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education ([http://measuringup.highereducation.org/state\\_comparison.cfm](http://measuringup.highereducation.org/state_comparison.cfm)) reported a national comparison to state higher education systems. Nevada ranks:

- **50th** for the number of students who go directly to college after H.S. graduation, and with the lowest “go-to-college” rate in the nation.
- **49th** for the number of college students who continue from the freshman year into their second year.
- **49th** for the number of college graduates who earn a bachelor’s degree within six years or an associate’s degree within three years.
- **39th** nationally in high school graduation rate.

### In addition:

- The number of students who went directly to college in Nevada declined considerably since 2002
- Nevada holds “One of the **lowest college graduation rates**” reports the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems ([www.nchems.org](http://www.nchems.org)).

In summary, our grade book has some room for improvement. Fortunately, we can change the low ranking, gloomy looking picture into a bright colorful future.



### Are we there yet... Are we there yet... ?

It would take us 25 years to reach the national midpoint if we make a plan and increase the quality of Nevada higher education at the rate of one point per year under a challengeable assumption that the rest of the States stagnate or freeze the generation of new knowledge at current levels.

Aiming high will not suffice, we need to aim higher. If the plan we implement is solid enough, we could reach that midpoint position in 10 years with quantum leaps of 2.5 points per year.

Trends in Nevada’s Financial History for Higher Education show that, Nevada needs a solid plan with concrete action-programs that focus attention on the burning issues that stop higher education from succeeding. We can certainly create a bright new future.

<sup>1</sup> Excerpt from “A Planning Framework for CCSN” 2004-2009