



Policy and Performance in American Higher Education: An Examination of Cases across State Systems

Richard Richardson Jr.

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Policy and Performance in American Higher Education presents a new approach to understanding how public policy influences institutional performance, with practical insight for those charged with crafting and implementing higher education policy.

Public institutions of higher learning are called upon by state governments to provide educational access and opportunity for students. Paradoxically, the education policies enacted by state legislatures are often complex and costly to implement, which can ultimately detract from that mission. Richard Richardson, Jr., and Mario Martinez evaluate the higher education systems of five states to explain how these policies are developed and how they affect the performance of individual institutions.

The authors compare the higher education systems of New Mexico, California, South Dakota, New York, and New Jersey and describe the difficulty of enforcing state policies amid increasing demands for greater efficiency and accountability. In the process they identify the "rules in use"—rules that are central to the coherence and performance of higher education systems—that administrators apply to meet organizational goals within the constraints of changing, sometimes conflicting federal and state policies.

Incorporating rich data from seven years of observations, interviews, and research, Richardson and Martinez offer a clear comparative framework for understanding state higher education.

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