

# Innovate *to* Compete *in the* *21st Century*

Anticipating the Demand for  
Colorado Community College  
Services in 2020

Four Scenarios for 2020  
October, 2007

## Acknowledgements

There are many individuals who contributed to this initiative, most notably the participants on the scenario planning team who are named within this report. The scenario writing teams deserve our gratitude and special recognition goes to each of the lead authors who spent countless hours drafting and revising the scenarios to get them just right: Bill Lewis, Andrew Stevens, Sandy Veltri, Victoria Garcia, Rhonda Bentz, Kristin Corash, and Carol Jonas-Morrison. We especially commend and appreciate the enthusiasm of Bill Lewis who went well above and beyond the call of duty to help write not just one, but two of the scenarios. In addition, the authors would like to especially acknowledge the ongoing support provided by Michelle Salazar and Yvonne Gilstrap of the Colorado Community College System as well as Renée Regnier of McREL.

### About McREL

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) is a nonprofit education and research organization based in Denver, Colorado. For more than 40 years, McREL has been dedicated to helping educators use research to improve student achievement. As a national leader in research, school improvement, standards-based education, balanced leadership, professional development, and scenario planning, our highly respected education researchers and experts have provided services to educators in all 50 states and 18 foreign countries. Our website ([www.mcrel.org](http://www.mcrel.org)) offers hundreds of reports, tools, guides, and services designed to improve school and student performance. To learn more about McREL, contact us at 303.337.0990 or [info@mcrel.org](mailto:info@mcrel.org).

### About this Report

This document contains a complete set of the four scenarios developed by the CCCS “Envisioning the Future” work group between June-October, 2007. An analysis of the implications for CCCS, strategic options that might be considered, and indicators to track the future as it unfolds is also provided for each scenario. A final report and executive summary are also available. The report is submitted to:

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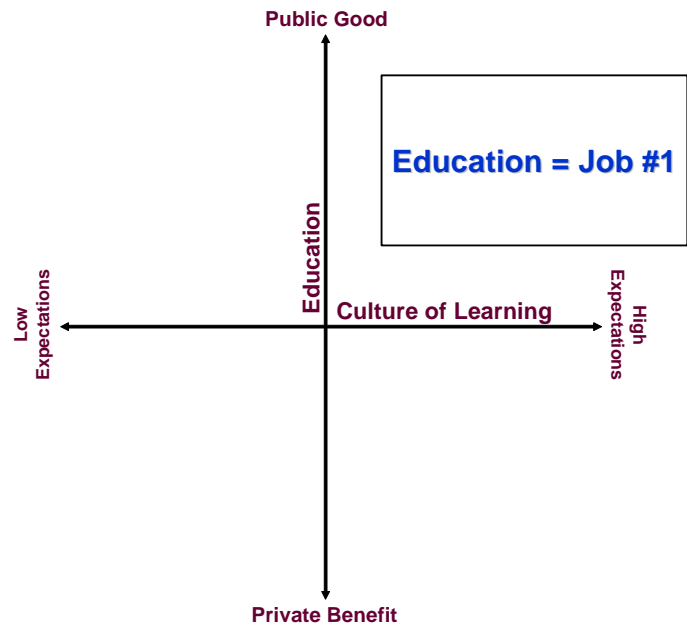
**The Future Demand for  
Colorado Community College Services in 2020:  
Four Scenarios**

## Scenario A: Education = Job #1

### Education = Job #1

#### Abstract

In this scenario education is viewed as a public good and there is a shift to a culture of high expectations and rigor, although it takes a while to get there due to the feeling that something big has to occur to cause this shift. The story moves from a perceived complacency in these areas as we follow the lives and interactions of two main characters, Sam Smith and Maria Martinez through a series of events that helps society realize how much better things could be. This realization comes after some very drastic events occur and stems from a need for a highly educated workforce in a few key industries, especially renewable energy and nanotechnology. In reality there are many more areas to consider.



Smith, born in 1944 and a member of the baby boom generation, spent the bulk of his career as a college professor before becoming a state senator, and special counsel on higher education in Colorado. Martinez, a Millennial born in 1988 and a former student of Smith's, demonstrates the potential of the burgeoning "hero" generation to focus on solving public problems in unique and innovative ways. Both become involved and active in the Governor's P-20 Education Council, which is continued throughout the administration that follows from 2014-2020. Society remains complacent about education from 2007 to 2012 when suddenly Colorado is presented with an opportunity to play a role in ending the long-running Pan-Islamic World War by developing and bringing to scale a new technology that will end the US' dependence on foreign oil, once and for all. Both Smith and Martinez recognize that developing the technology for hydrogen fuel pods (Hydro-Pods) is one thing. Developing it and bringing it to scale on a level that would impact the nation, and even the world, is another. Doing this would require a newly educated workforce to take on multiple roles within this and related industries. In 2012 there is a turning point when Smith and Martinez team up to launch the Education =Job #1 Campaign that re-focuses Colorado on building the strongest P-20 public education system in the nation. The scenario opens with news clippings introducing the main characters and then unfolds through excerpts from Sam Smith's journal and copies of letters he received from Martinez.

# THE YEAR: 2020

**MEET  
FORMER  
SEN. SAM SMITH**

[MountainReader.com](http://MountainReader.com)

## Smith to be Honored by Governor Simon

By George Grant  
Mountain Reader  
September 4, 2020

Former State Senator Sam Smith, 76, is set to receive the state's highest honor for civic leadership tonight. Smith, who for the last five years has served as the Special Counsel to the Governor for Higher Education Issues, retired this June after more than 46 years in public service. Tonight he will receive the prestigious Civic Leadership Lifetime Achievement Award.

Smith was a Professor of Public Policy at CU Boulder from 1974 through 2014. He served in the Colorado State Senate from 2006 to 2014. In 2015, after completing two terms, he was appointed by the Governor to become Special Counsel for Higher Education.

Smith became known as a thoughtful problem-solver during his tenure in the Senate by making education his top issue, serving as Co-Chair of the Governor's P20 Education Council from 2012 to 2014 and successfully co-leading the Education = Job #1 Campaign with his former student and newly appointed President and CEO of the Metro Denver Chamber of Commerce, Maria M. Martinez during that time. The E-J1 Campaign helped

**MEET  
MARIA M. MARTINEZ**

[denvergazette.com](http://denvergazette.com)  
The Denver Gazette

## Martinez—Youngest, First Female, and First Latina—Picked to Lead Metro Chamber

By Jody Phaley  
Denver Gazette Staff Writer  
Article Last Updated: 09/04/2020 03:41:33 PM MDT

The Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors yesterday picked Maria M. Martinez to be its new President and CEO. Martinez, 32, is the youngest person to ever serve in that role, the first female, and also the first Hispanic. Ms. Martinez will replace outgoing President Ron Carter, who announced his retirement in June.

"Martinez brings a wealth of wisdom and experience to this position," offers Chris Barrett, Chair of the MDCC, "She stood out well above the other applicants and both her age and accomplishments are viewed as assets by the board." "Maria Martinez understands every aspect of economic development—from technology advancement to R & D to incentives to product development and especially, education—she has experience in all of it," adds another longtime MDCC board member.

"I think Maria is an excellent choice to lead the Chamber into the future," says Carter, "Who better to execute our vision than this bright, energetic professional who has not only distinguished herself in the fields of alternative energy, nanotechnology, public affairs, economic development, and education but has consistently shown leadership, innovation, and dedication to advancing educational and economic opportunity throughout our state. She is a gift to the state and a true gift to the Metro Chamber."

Maria M. Martinez grew up in a poor, west Denver neighborhood. The daughter of Mexican immigrants, born in Denver in 1988, Martinez graduated from Lincoln High School in 2006, participating in its renowned *College Now* program that helped her earn college credits while in high school, propelling her into college at CU Boulder by 2007. Graduating with honors in 2010, she earned a dual degree in business administration and environmental science. Ms. Martinez served as Policy Director for the Governor's re-election campaign in 2010 before accepting a position as Director of Business and Partnership Development for RENew Energy Company, a Boulder-based firm specializing in the development of renewable energy technologies. During her four-year tenure at RENew, When RENew developed the key to renewable energy through hydrogen fuel sources, Ms. Martinez was the driving force—securing key partnerships and investments with government, universities, and private industry—behind their pioneering efforts to develop the key to hydrogen fuel sources developed through nanotechnology, known as the Hydro-Pod.

When the nation was still embroiled in the Iraq war, in 2011, Martinez, a natural leader, was among the first to organize the nanotechnology, energy, and bio-

solidify public support for a strong educational system to develop the new Hydro-Pod energy economy—and a comprehensive policy and tax structure to support it.

Ms. Martinez together with the Governor will present the award to Sen. Smith tonight at the Seawall Ballroom at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts. A scholarship fund for high school students showing promise in science and technology for the common good has been set up in his honor. Donations can be made online at [www.scienceforgood.com](http://www.scienceforgood.com).

science industries together with government and educational institutions to bring the innovation to scale. In 2013, Martinez went on to serve as Vice President for Public Affairs for the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL). Her success in that and every role as well as her ongoing commitment to the common good made her the Governor's top choice for Director of Economic Development in 2015. In the last five years, she has distinguished herself in this role, yet again, through her unique ability to forge collaboration, public-private partnerships, and solve complex problems for the common good of Colorado.

In addition to her professional accomplishments, Martinez has served on the Governor's P-20 Education Council since 2010 and as one of its Co-Chairs from 2012 to 2014. As Co-Chair, Martinez helped orchestrate the much-heralded turnaround of Colorado's public education system. When the nation could no longer tolerate the Pan-Islamic World War, Martinez knew that stopping the war was contingent on the nation's ability to eliminate its reliance on foreign oil. She also knew that her company's development of the technological solution was only the first step. A strong public education system that not only expands opportunity for all Colorado children, but builds a strong pipeline of educated citizens well prepared in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields was critical to bringing it to scale. In 2012, working in partnership with former State Senator Sam Smith, who is now Special Counsel to the Governor for Higher Education Issues, Martinez launched the Education=Job #1 Campaign (E=J1 Campaign) that helped solidify public support for a strong educational system—and a comprehensive policy and tax structure to support it.

Ms. Martinez will begin her new role as MDCC President and CEO on October 1.

## *Excerpts from the Journal of former Senator Sam Smith, prepared for a forthcoming publication of his memoirs.*

### INTRODUCTION

In preparation for the upcoming memoirs to be published about my life, I have compiled a chronological set of highlights from the journal I have kept since 2007 when I began my public service in higher education as a State Senator.

In 2007 I ran for State Senate and got into politics because I was and still am motivated by the education system in America. As a retired professor it's hard not to be. In my years I have seen the education system and more specifically the community colleges in Colorado go through a lot of changes, however, I started a journal in 2007 to track the events that led to the great success that community colleges and higher education are today in 2020. Let's take a trip from 2007 to 2020 and see how we got to where we are today.....

### JOURNAL HIGHLIGHTS

**January 10, 2007** – I reached for my morning paper and saw the headline “America Slips Behind and Leaders Ask Why.” That, combined with the never-ending headlines about the never-ending war, “285 Soldiers Killed in Iraq Today,” are what motivates me to write this journal. I am a semi-retired professor and because of headlines like this, I made my move into politics last year by running for the state senate, and I am so glad that I won! I start my career as a state senator this day in 2007 to make a difference. I will also continue to work as a Professor, although part-time, for a few more years. As I continue to read and watch media reports, I realize America is losing its place as the world's premier power.

As I watch the media reports on the war, I realize this war is really taking its toll on this country. It has diverted our attention away from important domestic issues. Even the Presidential candidates are not talking about education. I

sure hope this war ends soon. I wish I could do more to bring that about. For now, I think I've found my cause—education. The state of education today is that higher education in Colorado is ranked 48<sup>th</sup> out of 50 on state and local support for higher education per capita and 32<sup>nd</sup> in K-12 per pupil funding. We have emerging institutions like the University of Phoenix, College America, DeVry, and a plethora of other institutions offering highly specialized degrees with a very short time commitment. Everyone is out to find the biggest bang for the buck. Community colleges are doing well. Enrollment and demand is up, but there is concern about the state's ability to sustain them in rural areas. So why do we continue to slip behind? What is going on?

I am at my office and am checking my calendar to meet with some others that may be wondering the same. In this meeting we will discuss some of the up and coming reform initiatives, such as the Governor's P-20 Education Council. I also have meetings with business and community leaders; maybe this is the place to start. After all, these are the people that deal with the consequences every day.

**June 2, 2008** – It's been nearly 1 ½ years since I became state senator and since that time we have made some strides on education, but still not enough. Sometimes it feels like we're just swimming upstream—against a tide of a culture of low expectations. The Governor's P-20 Council has been a success in at least bringing some alignment and new resources to the system, but it is still not enough. After all my meetings today, I opened the paper to finally read what I feared but suspected, “The World Council of Associations for Technology Announces India as World Tech Leader.” I wondered when this would finally happen. This did not come as a shock to me but it might shock many Americans who are used to being number one. In my mind, the fingers point to education. India clearly saw the need for more technology in the classroom as we have failed to see in America. But, obviously India's investment proved to be a good one.

If only we could pull together to create a massive investment in education, especially in the science, technology, engineering, and math fields. We have some pockets of success, of course, as we always do, but to compete with India and China, we really need to expand that to all students. There is so much complacency—if only we could find a way to cut through that. I want to shout, “Wake Up America!” Maybe the next President—whoever that turns out to be—will focus on education on a grand scale. I sure hope so.

**October 14, 2009** – The headlines continue to be bleak, but the smoldering has reached a boiling point – “Americans Fed Up! Stop This War Now!” That combined with yesterday's news, “World Supply of Oil Near End. Iraq Stockpile Remains Last Source for U.S.” is enough to scare the bejeezers out of me!

As I begin my re-election campaign, I certainly thought we'd be finished with this war by now. Instead, we're getting into it even deeper, and it has escalated to the Pan-Islamic World War with multiple Middle Eastern and Asian nations and sects banding together to fight and destroy the Western world. I was hopeful that the new focus and interest on developing renewable energy sources might yield sources of energy that could be produced domestically, that would help eliminate our dependence on foreign oil. But all the efforts that have gone into ethanol production and so forth just haven't been at a scale that has made a significant difference. We need a breakthrough—maybe the hydrogen fuel pods that are currently in development. Still, even if they can develop the technology, whole production systems would have to be built to bring it to a scale that would make a key difference in our consumption choices. China has done a lot already and really ramped up pretty fast. They have the educated workforce, though. That has been the difference. We need to do the same. I know what the priority issue has to be again – education. I am glad to see that the new President is beginning to make this the center point of the new administration—and they've really put together a great team to do it. With their support from the federal level, Colorado could be well positioned to play a leading role on this front for the nation. But we in Colorado can't wait for the Feds to act. After watching the successes of India and China, I realize we need to put an emphasis on accessible higher education opportunities to further educate a strong workforce to ramp up on new energy production and become competitive in the world.

As I speak on the campaign trail, the response seems skeptical. While people in general are somewhat concerned about education, many of their own individual lives are not affected. They seem more concerned about national security, social security, health care, and of course the trappings of entertainment and gaming. Second Life? Huh, how about working on your first life? They still care about education but the other issues present stiff competition.

I am refreshed and even somewhat hopeful, though, as I get to know my new Research Assistant, Maria Martinez, who is helping me with my new study on the impact of nanotechnology on the renewable energy industry in Colorado. Apparently a new firm called REnew Energy Company is using nano-tech to develop a new kind of hydrogen fuel pod. It seems promising. Maria is an inspiration—so different from me and obviously from another age—surprisingly sharp, amazingly skilled at multi-tasking and interdisciplinary analysis and quite mission-driven. Ah, that youth culture, what do they call them, the Millennials? Maybe Neil Strauss’ predictions about this up and coming generation will prove to be true. Who knows, but for now, I am glad to say that I have discovered an as-yet untapped resource.

I’ve decided to also get her involved in the P-20 Council. She seems to be very passionate about education, probably stemming from her own life story. She recognizes how the advanced opportunities she received from that *College Now* program in high school pulled her up and into the path of opportunity. Besides, I’m tired of hearing all of us old folks talk about education—why not include some of the younger people’s voices. After all, it is they we are trying to reach here. Besides, I’m going to need her help to stay on top of things while I focus on my re-election campaign.

**November 10, 2010** – Well, I won but the campaign took a lot out of me. As I begin to settle in, I notice a different feeling. The tensions are building and the issues are being defined. The never-ending war continues. What will it take to bring it to an end? Our aging infrastructures are beginning to fail and new ones are beginning to be developed but without the workforce needed to maintain them. The baby boomers are retiring and not spending like they used to, so our economy is shifting—and experiencing a downturn. Americans are healthy and living longer, and that’s a good thing, but it is also putting so much pressure on the social system. It’s budget cut time again—all across the board. Not a program is spared. I am not looking forward to this legislative session one bit.

In a time when China and other countries are ramping up their domestic and military technology sophistication, not to mention education, ours is sputtering. They have made significant investments across the board and we, well, all we can manage is piecemeal solutions and incremental change. It is quite frustrating, indeed. What will it take to galvanize this country and this state? If we had more investment in science and technology—and nanotechnology—to be more

*November 15, 2010*

*Dear Professor Smith,*

*I mean, Sen. Smith...Congratulations on your successful re-election! I knew you would have no trouble with that one, especially with the way you appeal to the young voters!*

*I know you have some challenges ahead, but if anyone can address them, it’s you.*

*Thank you so much for all that you have done for me. I have learned so much from you and will be eternally grateful. I hope you are not upset that I chose to work in the private sector. I really feel that I need to test the waters there and ReNEW seems like a promising company. As you know, they have been working on the development of a ground-breaking hydrogen fuel pod, using nano-technology. With the war escalating and the end of global oil supplies looming—I really want to make a difference and I know I can do that here. After all, you are the one who taught me about the promise of nanotechnology. Wouldn’t it be amazing if I could play a role in helping eliminate our dependence on foreign oil—and stop the war by helping ReNEW form the best and most strategic partnerships and investments in R&D? There’s just so much I want to do!*

*I am so excited to also be able to continue my dedication to education through a seat on the P-20 Council. Now we will be colleagues (and not just a professor and his student)! How do you feel about that? I am truly honored and cannot wait to do my part to bring the vision for education you’ve always shared with me into reality.*

*See you at the next P-20 meeting!*

*Maria*

specific, we could solve so geopolitical and global environmental problems. We just need the political will, and the educated workforce to get it done.

Maria understands this. I was so pleased with her work during the time that she worked for me and could not be more proud of her today. She graduated this June and worked on the Governor's re-election campaign. She turned down a job with him and has just begun to work for a cutting edge nano-tech firm—RENew Energy Company. I didn't want her to lose her commitment to education now that she'll be so firmly in the private sector, so I suggested that the Governor to appoint her, officially, as a member of the P-20 Council. He agreed that was a great idea. I'm so glad she has accepted.

**May 16, 2011** – Today, I awoke to read the best headline I've seen in years. *ReNEW Finally Cracks the Hydro-Pod Nut!* Of course, I knew this was coming when Maria called me last week to tell me that they had finally done it. Amazing what a lot of hard work and collaboration across multiple sectors and industries can do. Still, I know that this is only the beginning. Now we know how the technology works. But, we have to replicate it, build development plants and new cars and machines that can use them. That will take work—and time is running out. Oil supplies dwindle (and costs go up) and the war just gets worse and worse. If we work fast and together, we in Colorado just might be in the right place at the right time to play a key role, leading the nation on this.

Honestly, I haven't been this excited in years!

**August 20, 2011** – Maria saves the day once again! Over the summer, she has managed to pull together all of the key industries—manufacturing, automobile, energy companies, policy leaders, universities—you name it. She coordinated a summit last week and by golly that group has now produced a plan and the political will is there. They are going to “bundle” industry production together to produce the hydro-pods together with the machines that will use them and plan to build these plants all over the state of Colorado and other parts of the west. Sounds promising... but the only worry now is where are we going to find the workers to take these jobs? We can import some of them in the short term, but I'm not about to stand idly by and let Coloradans lose out—not this time. We've got to get the educational pipeline sharpened up...and fast. I want Coloradans to benefit from these new opportunities.

This morning, the Governor requested that all elected officials debrief and plan the economic opportunity efforts. I plan to deliver the message that education—in the long run—is the key for Colorado's road ahead. We can no longer afford to tinker around the edges. It's time for real change, real investment, and real results in education. I met with Maria yesterday and she agrees. She's ready to step up to the plate, too. With all of the attention she's received as the hero of the new hydro-pod fuel economy, our plan just might work this time. Our plan—to launch the Education=Job #1 (E=J1) Campaign throughout the state and rebuild our education system from the ground up. Let's hope we can convince the Governor and others at tomorrow's meeting.

**September 16, 2011** – Good news! The Governor loved our idea for the E=J1 Campaign and he is rallying the troops to get behind us. Maria and I are ready for action, too. We are going to travel the state together to get everyone involved. One of our key goals of E=J1—in addition to the public campaign—is to shift the way we fund higher education to a more mission-based funding system from the current FTE model. Other states have demonstrated success in this area. Maria has convinced business leaders that this is the way to go and they are on board, too. My dream of Colorado having the best public education system in the country may be finally close to coming true.

**February 1, 2012** – The Governor has appointed Maria and me Co-Chairs of his P-20 Council and has integrated the E=J1 Campaign into its agenda. That will help ensure that policies are aligned to our goals. We are so pleased to learn that the Governor now supports the mission-driven funding model. Everything is really starting to come together.

**September 7, 2012**- Our strategy to include businesses was successful. Business leaders chimed in and a headline reads, “Google Hoo Pressures Lawmakers to FUND Higher Ed: Needs Stronger Workforce”. The internet giant (that emerged from the merger of Google and Yahoo) proceeds to set up, donate, and pressure other companies to donate to the Google Hoo Education Foundation. They also continue to pressure the government to fund higher education. We're on a roll, now!

**March 28, 2013-** With the pressure from local businesses following in the footsteps of the internet giant, my colleagues and I outline a detailed plan to the other policy makers and the public. Using the business coalitions, the educational community, and the many constituency groups that I have built over the years, work begins. Media outreach aids in getting the message out that we are using our resources efficiently; what we could do with more; and what kinds of higher education standards should be set. With the funds from the Google Hoo Education Foundation and the local businesses support the importance resonated to policymakers. We succeeded again, headlines read “Higher Ed Receives Record Funding!!!”

**May 10, 2014-** This legislative session was the best ever—everything we set out to accomplish through the E=J1 Campaign and the P-20 Council has happened. I could not be more pleased as I finish out my last term. This year, we passed a comprehensive P-20 education bill that sets the stage for stable public funding, opens doors to private partnerships and innovation, expands access and quality, and ensures sustainability for the long haul. The public is squarely behind it and both parties are solid in their support. Both candidates for Governor—Riley and Simon have pledged to continue the effort, and to collaborate, no matter who wins the election in November. Even the federal government is helpful—the President has steadily kept the focus on education during his last six years in office—and believe it or not, we are very close to meeting the 2014 goals set out by the original version of No Child Left Behind. Maria and I have made such a wonderful team as Co-Chairs of the P20 Council. I will sure miss working with her –but boy, am I ever proud of her! Times sure are good. I guess it’s time for me to really enjoy my retirement, although what will I do with myself? Maybe Maria will hire me now that she’s such a big-wig over at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL).

**January 16, 2015-** Exciting news! The new governor has appointed me Special Counsel for Higher Education. I wonder if Maria put him up to it? I’ll have to ask her. No matter, I know it will be great to work closely with her again—what a team we make! Everyone says I should be relaxing and enjoying my retirement—but I’d rather stay in the game. There are so many bright, energetic, motivated young people doing great things out there. The new Governor is focused and pragmatic—a typical GenX leader—and wow, entrepreneurs and civic minded youth (when I say youth, I mean the 20-30 somethings... those Millennials) who are really focused on solving public problems, even while being successful in business. Maria is a perfect example of that. Look at all that she has accomplished by age 28. I tell you, this generation is truly an inspiration! In my new role I will be able to continue the work that I have done as senator related to education—and get even more focused on higher ed—the tough nut to crack! I am pleased with the renewed interest

*March 15, 2012*

*Dear Professor Smith,*

*Google Hoo is on board! The Google Hoo Foundation, which was so instrumental in the Chinese education system after the merger of Google and Yahoo will kick in \$30 million to our efforts, even though its focus is public ed. They said they understood the need to strengthen the public system first and foremost and they will help with the tech infrastructure, too. I think this represents a great step forward in engaging other industries in the new hydro-pod energy economy in Colorado. This is multi-sector, multi-industry collaboration at its best!*

*See you soon, Maria*

*PS—It’s so cool being Co-Chair with you!*

*December 3, 2015*

*Dear Professor Smith,*

*How is retired life treating you! I hope you are enjoyed the trout fishing at your cabin on the Frying Pan River this summer! I have been busy of course. I have loved my job as VP of Public Affairs for the National Renewable Energy Laboratory and continuing my role on the P20 Council. I’m so glad that Governor Simon has decided to continue this effort and structure—and I look forward to meeting the new members. It’s been so nice to have such bi-partisan collegiality at the statehouse in the last few years. Do you think it will last?*

*I have some news—the Governor has asked me to serve as his Director of Economic Development and I accepted. What do you think?*

*Maria*

in such a basic tenet of a successful society—quality education for democracy. I am excited to be in this position so that I may help advance the reform. In 2014, we had the framework in place, but we have to keep the focus—it’s too easy to become complacent. With headlines like “Trust in Education Leaders Grow,” I know I have many people who will be an effective network in this new venture.

**August 26, 2017-** Public funding for education at all levels, P-20 is up. Quality continues to rise, too. More and more youngsters are prepared for college-level work by Grade 10, something we thought would be impossible back in 2007. I think the early investments in pre-school are starting to pay off, that’s what I think. The numbers of students choosing to pursue the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields has tripled in the last decade! The economy is finally on an upswing and the war is finally over. Things continue to look up.

As I had only hoped, ideas are now coming to me. More and more leaders are inspired to come up with innovative ways to improve the current system, rather than, as was the case so many years ago, fixing a broken system. Many more individuals are coming to me with new ideas. The headlines such as “Success in Recent Education Reform Inspires New Ideas” validate our success. This is widely due to the confidence in all leadership involved. There is renewed confidence in knowing there will be adequate resources for the ideas and a commitment to support and carry through on these ideas.

Seeing headlines like, “Education Really Has Become Job 1,” affirms our work of the past several years. The once stressed upon idea now runs like clockwork thanks to the ongoing success of the P-20 reforms. Students begin taking global standardized tests and are put in courses according to their Optimum Learning Environment and Style that was proven on their Optimum Learning Environment and Style Evaluation (OLES) Evaluation upon applying for College. Colleges and universities are collaborating more, too. This is the public system that I once dreamed of.

**February 28, 2018-** “According to World Economic Forum Report: America Reigns as Premier Power in World” reads this morning’s headline. What an accomplishment! It has been ten hard years getting there but we have regained our status and the world peace we sought. In regaining our status, there are so many other benefits. National security and our economic position offer our citizens and citizens of our Allies stability and peace of mind. Thanks to Maria and the many partners she pulled together, Colorado ranks among the top five states in the nation, economically. It’s amazing what a solid vision, political will, leadership, talent, and public support can do in the long run!

**May 15, 2019-** My granddaughter graduated from high school today. It amazes me how many college opportunities she has and all the possible careers she could learn to do. She is interested in attending college and at the top of her list is a local community college. When I asked her why she wants to go to a community college she said “Because of the diverse population and ages of students, and the proven ability to get a well rounded degree that any four

.....  
*June 20, 2020*  
*Dear Professor Smith,*  
*Congratulations on your well-deserved retirement! I hope you are really enjoying your time with family. I understand you plan to take a tour around the country (I know your wife has been wanting to do that for years). Enjoy! You deserve it. I have been taking some time off myself (I think I deserve it, too). Can you believe what we’ve been able to accomplish together in the last ten years! Unbelievable! It’s everything we’ve both dreamed of—all of our hard work is really starting to pay off. I am so pleased.*  
*Thank you so much for getting me started down this path. I will never forget everything I learned from you—and the opportunities you gave me, even for someone so young! Thank you for believing in me!*  
*Thanks a million,*  
*Maria*  
*PS-The President of MDCC just announced his retirement from. The MDCC Board asked me to consider the position of President and CEO. What do you think? Should I go for it?*  
.....

year institution or graduate school will accept as automatic admission.” Then she asked me to enroll with her stating “They have all kinds of classes for people your age too, grandpa!”

**September 4, 2020** – Tonight, the Governor presented me with the Governor’s Lifetime Civic Leadership Achievement Award. I am incredibly humbled. I was so glad to have Maria there with me. It’s really something that should be shared with her. But then again, she has many years ahead of her. I am so proud of her accomplishments and now she’s going to become the President of the Metro Denver Chamber of Commerce. Wait until they really see what she is capable of!

**December 1, 2020** – As I tour the nation with my wife, this time really enjoying my retirement, I am met with great enthusiasm for pushing for the one obvious idea everyone neglected until it was almost too late – the fundamental importance of an education and the essential foundation it brings to so many other parts of our society’s functions.

I watch with pleasure as enrollment trends indicate more and more students are enrolling in college to pursue their dreams and protect those of others. Today it was pleasing to see headlines read, “Colleges Bursting at the Seams in Enrollment!”

## Analysis of “Education = Job #1” 2007-2020

### Implications:

In this scenario, the war in Iraq continues and escalates into a Pan-Islamic World War draining focus and resources from domestic issues like education until 2011 when the opportunity to develop and bring to scale a new technology arises in Colorado. While people care about education and various civic leadership efforts such as the Governor’s P-20 Council are underway since 2007, they have had little impact on the overall culture to become motivated to achieve high expectations.

Our main characters realize the opportunity inherent in the development of the “hydro-pod” technology (a version of hydrogen fuel cells). This new energy technology would mean the elimination of the need for foreign (or domestic) oil and other natural resources. They also realize that developing the technology itself was not enough to have the impact on the nation—and the world—that was needed to bring an end to the war. They needed to not only develop the capability for the technology, but rapidly expand its production as well as the designs of cars and other machines currently using oil technologies. To “ramp up” this fast and far-reaching, the nation—with the state of Colorado at the epicenter—needed an educated and motivated workforce—in all fields.

While the elements for success in education are present from the beginning, the turning point in this scenario comes from the somewhat serendipitous alignment of a set of factors and key characters, at the right place and right time. An

*“What if community colleges were THE path to a B.A., rather than just for those who don’t fit up front right away.”*

--Envisioning the Future Participant

alternative title for this scenario might have been, “the stars aligned.” The opportunity to move forward with the technology was one factor as was the existence of a body, or infrastructure (of sorts) and leadership for collaboration in education and between education and industry—the P-20 Council.

The constellation of leaders also played a role in the scenario. First is the aging “baby boomer” professor-turned-state senator who becomes relentless in his focus on education, but also understands the need to “pass the torch” to a new generation of leaders. Second is the rising “hero” archetype found in Maria—a typical Millennial who in her early education was not engaged in school, but later found focus and meaning as her learning was increasingly tied to worldly causes. She’s motivated to keep going and to achieve because she sees her contribution as part of something beyond her own personal success—she’s motivated by the civic purpose inherent in her work and public activities, more than the economic benefits to herself. She wants to make a difference and stops at nothing in order to do so. Third, we have the pragmatic leadership of a Gen-X character in the new Governor who takes office after Governor Ritter’s eight-year term. Although from a different party, this new Governor recognizes the benefits of the P-20 infrastructure and leaders, and opts to keep this in place—and even expand it—during his first term.

The scenario hints at the notion that it took the multi-generational, and multi-sector collaboration that came together during a time of both crisis and great opportunity in order to bring about the successful “Education = Job #1” campaign. Coloradans benefit by being at the center of this national cause and by producing several generations of entrepreneurial leaders who are valued for their economic and civic contributions alike. An overview of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for Colorado community colleges in this scenario is presented below (see Appendix D for a full page image).

**Implications for Scenario A: Education = Job #1**

<b>Public Good</b>		<b>Education = Job #1</b>	
<b>Education</b>	<b>S</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adaptability and flexibility, in the context of what the 4-years do. Competition becomes more with the other public institutions</li> <li>• Network of colleges that is widely, geographically distributed across the state; if colleges become a vehicle for access, etc. cc's more dispersed than other higher eds—provide the best platform</li> <li>• Cc's are more closely tied to the communities, in terms of networking, responsiveness, engagement, and a civic mission</li> <li>• Cc's are teaching focused rather than research focused—we try to impact individual students</li> <li>• Open access</li> <li>• Open entry to a wide variety of programs, CTE and transfer; breadth of mission</li> <li>• Public support by default</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding base...</li> <li>• Stigma of cc's perceived as 2nd class vis a vis research institutions</li> <li>• Identified traditional structure—rigidity in delivery and format; one hand flexible, but on other, not as much (which public entity would be most available to capture the increase in public funds)</li> <li>• Attracting and retaining qualified staff</li> </ul>
	<b>O</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government political support to help stabilize the public support</li> <li>• Develop deep relationships and partnerships with high schools, 4-years, businesses, and nonprofits; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Lifelong learning—opportunity to keep adding value to education</li> <li>– 21st century skills</li> </ul> </li> <li>• New form of education... no longer CTE/liberal education (separately)... no university can do that. Only cc's can do that</li> <li>• Cc's are a middle ground and uniquely positioned to expand in multiple directions</li> <li>• To take our rightful place in P-20...capitalizing on P-20 right now</li> <li>• Community colleges offer more certificates and programs in renewable energy or other high demand industries</li> <li>• Role of system?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High schools do their job...and no more demand for remedial education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>–If cc's don't compete well in areas of value and academic rigor now demanded by the newly well-educated society</li> </ul> </li> <li>• CSU-CU (elite colleges) dominate funding based on perception</li> <li>• The return of the value of high expectations could shift the focus of higher education equating to 4-year institutions and K-12 so community colleges get lost in the shuffle</li> <li>• Private schools...high brand schools</li> <li>• Proprietary schools</li> <li>• Important to position selves as uniquely qualified to do something that no other part of the system can do</li> </ul>
		<b>Culture of Learning</b>	
		<b>High</b>	

## **Options:**

To meet the challenges of this scenario, the CCCS must give greater consideration to the generational challenges and opportunities for learning and achievement. Community colleges would benefit from firmly positioning themselves as a key link in the chain to purposeful careers in technology and civic life. Stepping up efforts to collaborate across the educational spectrum (both with K-12 and four-year institutions) would strengthen community colleges' position within the P-20 system while also establishing the best and most appropriate "niche" for itself. Other strategic options include:

- Compete with the 4-year institutions (if high value on rigor, the 4-years will win out)
  - Find best position within the P20 system and focus on that (distinguish community colleges within P20)—make community colleges THE path to the B.A.
  - Make the case that community colleges provide the best "bang for the buck"
  - Maintain strong public advocacy effort—in this world, public good/legislative role important
  - Further develop business relationships
  - Focus on quality—make sure all systems for community colleges are first-rate and desirable
  - Focus on broad (full) mission—end enrollment-driven funding which limits ability to focus on full mission; must shift toward mission-driven funding
  - Connect program development to emerging industry. Be on the cutting edge rather than the trailing edge.
  - Better integrate career and technical education
  - Reduce and eliminate the silos
  - Implement a system-wide honors education program for community college students
  - Even out entry requirements—agreements with colleges; articulation agreements
- "Community colleges would have to be a place that students want to be as opposed to a place they can be—an institution of first choice."*
- Envisioning the Future Participant

## **Indicators:**

Some possible trends or events that could signal the development of this scenario include:

- The proliferation of the Iraq war and/or its expansion to other nations
- Rising costs of oil and gas
- Continued environmental impacts of global warming, signaling the need for alternative energy sources
- News of potential new energy development sources that could be brought to scale within the next 15 years
- Signs of new styles of leadership, featuring pragmatism, collaboration, and policy entrepreneurialism, from the Gen-X and Millennial generation
- Continued trend of youth being motivated by civic purpose to learning and achievement in order to solve global and local problems

## Scenario B: Uncle Sam Knows Best

### Abstract

In the world of “Uncle Sam Knows Best,” Colorado and the United States are experiencing a recession as a result of global flattening. Many middle-income high tech jobs have moved off shore to China and India.

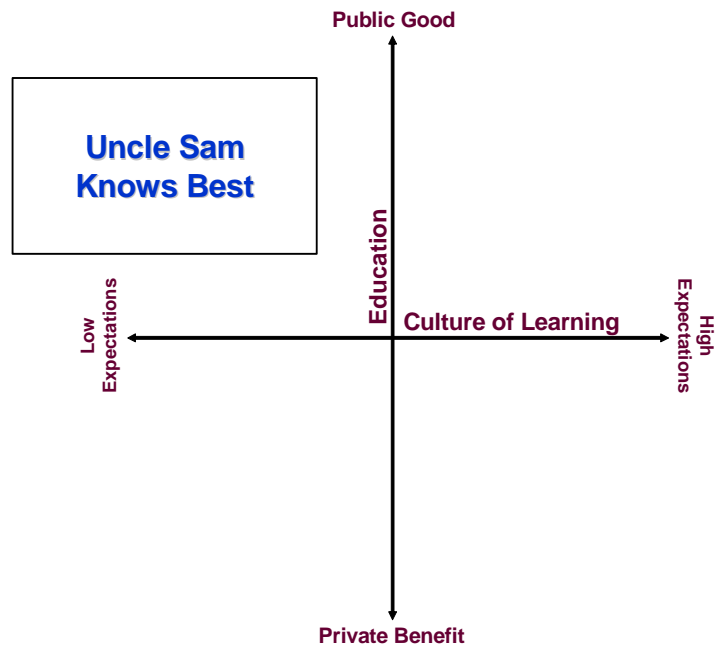
Economic stratification has deepened and the country is losing its middle class. Our workforce is becoming less and less educated and that is worrying policy makers and business leaders who understand the need to compete globally.

Education is high on the public agenda, leading to new mandates and increased micromanagement by concerned policy makers.

Policy makers want measurable outcomes and are tying the demonstration of successful outcomes to continued funding. Most of those outcomes are in the form of test and completion data that measure how well students demonstrate mastery of specific information. The quantity of education is the focus. What is missing is “How” students are being educated: the climate that surrounds learning and the development of the student’s ability to think critically and apply learning beyond the mastery of discreet skills.

According to Thomas Friedman, author of “The World is Flat,” workers in the “flat world” will need to be flexible, innovative, and able to meet a need that cannot be outsourced to a computer or to someone on another continent. While Friedman agreed that generally, more education is good, he also identified four themes that are important for educating a successful worker in the “flat world,” including: instilling a love of learning in students; inspiring curiosity and passion in students; teaching relationship building to students; and developing right-brain skills. Because these competencies are not easily measured, these disciplines were not incorporated into the accountability system that policy makers put into place to measure effective education, and as a result, were not mandated as part of the curriculum.

In this scenario, some of the brightest students and a growing number of the general public find education less and less relevant to the real world. Celebrity – sports and entertainment – is promoted as a way out of the lower class and as the highest accolade of the culture. Basic technology is affordable and available to just about everyone in Colorado. Technology has enabled and supported instant gratification. Students don’t see the reason for working hard to memorize facts or do calculations for tests. There is a large and growing demand for fast and



simple degrees and certificates and there are jobs readily available to workers with these credentials.

Additionally, neither the public nor the policy makers have come to terms with the implications of low academic rigor in public education. Despite the public emphasis on education and its importance for a better life, students and their families are not seeing the connection between academic “rigor” and their own economic and political futures. Policy makers struggle to balance stricter standards with reduced access for the growing numbers of English language learners and other students who come to school unprepared or who are unwilling to put effort into something they see as boring and disconnected to the real world. The “Uncle Sam Knows Best” world is one in which education is a public good and there is a low cultural expectation of learning.

The scenario opens with Madison, a recent high school graduate who is utterly preoccupied with celebrity and the idea of becoming one, reminiscing about her upbringing as she compiles a scrapbook of old blogs. Her experience is contrasted with that of her friend, Maria, who is less taken with the celebrity culture and more interested in pursuing an education. Still, both encounter a bureaucratic educational system, of sorts, that seems out of touch with either of their goals and aspirations.

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## 2020-

Hello all! It’s now been two years since I graduated from high school. Mostly, I’ve been waiting for my big break in the entertainment industry, but yesterday I did something I thought I’d never do – I went down to the community college and enrolled for the fall. Today I decided to put together an online scrapbook of some old blogs and surveys, with some “Maddie” commentaries in between, to look at how I got from there to here. First, here’s a brief Madison update:

As you all know, I have been dancing and singing for 15 years. The only future I ever thought about was as a dancer. “No desk job for me!” was my motto. It made my Mom and Dad crazy worried. They thought the same thing would happen to me that happened to my brother, Robbie. He lived at home for almost four years before he finally decided that maybe his band wasn’t going to make it big right away and maybe Dad was right, he should get a certificate, a job, and his own place. Robbie told me the only way Mom and Dad would stop bugging me was if I got a job or went back to school. I told Robbie, “No way! I am sticking with my dreams,” but then I thought, “Maybe I should get a part-time job or even a full-time job while I keep searching for that big break”.

I’ve been looking for a full-time job in entertainment for about six months now. Careers in entertainment are very competitive and it’s been hard to find that first job. Even other jobs are hard to get. You have to compete with boomers coming out of retirement because they’re bored or running out of money. Dad says it’s because most of the high paying jobs have gone overseas. I got so tired of Mom telling me, “As long as you have an ‘education’ (and I use quotes because it doesn’t matter if you pass by the skin on your teeth), you will have opportunities to succeed – to make more money.”

Me, go to college? I always thought, “Why would you need an education when you can get any answer you need in seconds through the web?” But lately I’ve been thinking about it more. Three months ago I got a part-time job in an after-school program, just to make a little money for clothes and stuff. Then last month I started teaching the kids different kinds of dances from around the world, and it turns out I’m really good at it, plus it was really cool to see the kids get so excited. Now I’m thinking, maybe this is what I should do - go to college and get a certificate or even a degree in physical education so I can teach kids how to dance, maybe open my own dance school. So, yesterday I went down to campus and took a bunch of tests. No surprise, I didn’t do so good. They told me I’d have to take some remedial courses before I could take the stuff I need for dance, like physiology and anatomy. Wow! I never thought I’d be taking that stuff. My advisor said most of the kids have to start in remedial, and as long as I’m ready to work I can catch up. I think I’m ready, but I’ve never really done it and I’m a little scared I might not make it.

My best friend, Maria, got all excited when I told her about college last night. She says we should get a place together near campus. Maria is real smart and she has a job as a CNA in a nursing home, but she doesn’t make enough money to afford her own place. She’s still living with her parents and two brothers. The family does okay because everyone works and they all chip in for the rent, but she really wants her own place. Maria wants to be a nurse, but when she went to take the test to get into the program, they told her that her reading and math weren’t good enough to get in. I told her not to worry, that when I make it, I’ll get us a big place. But maybe Maria’s right, with my part-time job and student loans we could have our own place. My parents would be soooo happy! Hey, maybe I can get Maria to go back to school with me. I wouldn’t be so nervous if she was doing it too, and being a nurse was always her dream. Anyway, I decided to start making a scrapbook of my life before college, just to see how I got from there to here. This was my first blog entry from my first web page, kidzspace.

~ \*Maddie\* ~

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## 2010-

Top headlines this year-

- 30% of Teens Say They Would Seek Plastic Surgery to Look Like Celebs if They Had the Money
- Nursing Shortage Leads to More Recruitment of Foreign Nurses
- Aftermath of Sub-Prime Crisis Lingers in Depressed Home Starts

My name is Madison and I am 10 years old. I have one brother and one sister. My dad manages the paint department at the hardware store and my mom works as a bookkeeper for an auto parts store in the mall. I live in Mediocrity City, Colorado. I am currently in the fifth grade at Average Elementary School. I like school because it’s not very hard. My dog’s name is Cookie and she’s one of my best friends. My other best friend is Maria. Maria loves to sing, just like me. She comes over to the house after school when I don’t have sports or lessons and we watch

television together, listen to music and go on kidzspace. I love soccer and swimming. I also take piano lessons and jazz dance classes. When I grow up, I want to be just like Vanessa Hudgens She is just so pretty and cool, and was so awesome in High School Musical Three. Maria loves animals, like me, and wants to be a vet and have her own animal hospital.

Maria was sad today because last night her brother Pedro left for Texas to look for work. Pedro used to work construction, but his boss stopped building houses, and there's no more work for Pedro. Maria's mom told him he should go for one of those certificates in public safety, but Pedro says he never did well in school, and besides, the jobs don't pay as much as construction. Maria is scared her parents won't be able to pay the rent without Pedro. I told Maria not to worry. When I'm a star I'll pay the rent and maybe even build them a new house, like on Extreme Makeover Home Edition

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## **2012-**

Top headlines this year-

- Free Internet Access to All, With Over 300 Hubs Installed in Metro Denver
- Supreme Court Upholds Constitutional Amendment Banning Bilingual Education.

Today was one of the coolest days ever!! My mom finally said I could be in a dance competition that I've wanted to be in forever! I get to miss a week of school! Mom said she wasn't sure about me missing so much school, but I told her Maria would help me catch up on what I missed. Maria doesn't read that good. She used to be in special classes to help her with reading, but they stopped them when they passed that law and now she just pretends she can read good. But Mom doesn't know that, so she said, "okay". My dance teacher told me I have a really good chance of winning.

Here's the bio that went on the contestant's web page:

"Madison is 12 years old and just started middle school at Teachers-are-Babysitters Middle School in Mediocrity City, Colorado. She has been dancing now for seven years and loves sports of all kinds. Her favorite hobbies include playing soccer, dancing, singing and shopping with her friends."

P.S. Pedro got a job in Texas. He says they're paying for him to go to school and work at the same time as a mechanic on the oilrigs. He is sending money home so Maria is all happy.

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## **2014-**

Top headlines this year-

- US Department of Education Funds Massive Study to Find Solutions to Declining Education Level in the US
- Government Announces New Program to Retrain Engineers, Scientists, and Doctors who have Lost their Jobs to Outsourcing.

- Short-term Certificates Continue to Climb as a Percentage of Higher Education Degrees

This is a survey I put on kidzspace:

**---OVERALL---**

**What grade are you in:** 9<sup>th</sup>

**Do you like school:** Are you kidding me?? My mom doesn't even like my school. She doesn't even go to parent-teacher conferences or Back to School night.

**How did this year compare to others:** It was cool I guess. I'm a freshman and have a ton of friends. We text or stay out till midnight at least five times a week.

**Are you looking forward to next year:** I'm looking forward to getting my driver's permit!

**If you could change one thing about this year, what would it be:** I would be in more talent contests. It got really expensive for my parents cause I had to take summer classes this year and they had to pay.

**---ACADEMICS---**

**What class was easiest?** Computer programming, that's a piece of cake.

**Hardest?** History. Why do they think you need to memorize everything under the sun, its pointless?

**Did you have perfect attendance?** Ha, you're kidding, right? I think I missed 35 days or something for all my games and practices.

**Did you learn anything useful? Do you mean, – “Do I remember anything useful?”** Not really.

**Did you fail any of your classes?** Yes, and now I have to take summer classes, which my parents have to pay for. They're pretty mad at me right now.

**Were your classes hard?** The information isn't really that hard; it's sitting down all the time and them forcing us to memorize stupid dates, that's the hard part.

**Did you take the SAT's?** Dancers don't need to take SAT's.

**Apply for college?** Maria and I talk about it sometimes. Maria wants to be a nurse, so she'll have to go to school some more. Mom wants me to get a certificate or degree so I can have a job to fall back on if I don't make it as a dancer, but I have to try for my dream of being a superstar, at the very least!

**What extracurricular activities did you take part in?** I was in the musical, I play soccer, I swim, I take singing lessons, I take dance classes, and I do pilates and yoga.

**---PERSONAL---**

**Did you have anything really bad happen to you this year?** I failed math and my parents got really mad. Not at me though, at my school. They say the only thing the school cares about is if we're there for the fall count so they get their money, and those stupid test scores. Now I can't get my super-digital all communicating implanted chip for another few months! I'm going to look so lame with this old cell phone.

**What would you say was your greatest achievement?** I'm going to be on this show called *The Young and the Super Talented*. If I win, I sign a talent contract worth \$500,000. My competition is really good though, so I'm a little nervous. I want to win so bad!

**Were you happy to be in school?** I love being with my friends, but the classes are huge and it seems like all we do is sit around and listen to boring teachers talk, or take practice tests. Everyone is so tired of the tests.

**What's your biggest future goal?** I just want to be famous so I can have a big house so all my friends can come over.

**---PERSONALITY---**

**Were you confident this year?** You have to be confident if you want to win.

**Place you feel safest?** We have a shelter under our house that protects against all sorts of terrorism.

**Who changed your life the most?** I really admire all the pop stars that do drugs and drink, then have the will power to stop. I've cut back on my partying habits because Hannah Montana did too.

**---FINISH THE SENTENCE---**

**I believe...**that if I don't give up, my dreams will come true.

**I fear...**that I won't catch my break, and then it will be off to school again for me after I graduate.

**I have faith that...**the US will come out of this recession. Then, everyone will get over pushing this extreme patriotism on us, all the time! We get it. Go America!

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**2016-**

Top headlines this year-

- More Students Boycott CSAP, Up 25% from Last Year
- High Schools Join with Employers to Offer Certificates in Maintenance and Food Services
- Taxes Continue to Soar to Support Boomers; Medicare Benefits Cut

I am so disappointed! I always thought Mom and Dad would buy me a car for my 17th birthday, like they did for Robbie, but it looks like if I want a car, I'm going to have to save up and buy it myself. Mom said that with my dad's pension converting to some new plan, he won't be getting as much when he retires as they counted on, and they have to start saving every penny they can. It's really hard now because they are still helping my sister pay for her place and day care while she tries to find a better paying job. It's not looking so good right now for my brother, either. Robbie's been out of high school for 3 years, but the only jobs he can get don't really pay enough for him to do anything more than pay the rent and buy food and gas. All the good jobs go to the ones with the education. Robbie still plays with his band on the weekends, but he's afraid his girlfriend will dump him for someone else who has a better job. He's thinking of signing up for one of those eight-week training programs that they offer in the summer for line-chefs. He's been looking at ads in the paper and he says line-chefs make "good money".

Bottom line, I've been thinking about the future and what I need to do to get the things I want in life. The smartest thing to do is get as much as education as you can; at least that's what my counselor keeps drilling into me. The message has changed from, "you can go to college, its possible"; to "you have to go to college", but I'm still not sure it's for me. Mom says as long as you have the "education" you can get a job because employers figure you will pick up the experience and skills on the job. So, in the end, maybe education wins.

Anyway, I understand where my mom is coming from. Mom and Dad are trying to get a second job to save for retirement and help out my sister, but it has been hard. With so many retirees in Colorado, boomers are everywhere. Even though they have more education than the job asks for,

employers always choose them over someone younger because they have “the education”. When it comes time to make a choice, my parents don’t have a chance, and neither will I if I don’t get an education, but school is so boring. Some of the really smart kids get really frustrated because the classes are so easy and some of the rich kids are leaving for private schools so they can get into fancy colleges. It makes the rest of us feel dumb, but we don’t really care most of the time. Who wants to study all of the time, anyway?

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## 2018-

Top Headlines this year-

- More 18-32 year olds unemployed and living with parents
- Private and charter school enrollment numbers keep rising; White Flight from Public schools No Longer an Urban Issue
- Legislature Postpones Stronger High School Graduation Requirements Again
- Income Gap between Minorities and Whites Continues to Climb

Today is a very good day, I finally graduated!!! I was scared that I wouldn’t, but I knew that no matter what, I would make it. They don’t call me cocky for nothing. The graduation rate at Typical High School is about 43%. Most kids dropped out and started working; that is the norm these days. When Maria dropped out of school last year after they told her no way she would ever be a nurse, I almost quit too. But Mom and Dad said if I quit school I’d have to get a job or pay for my lessons – so much for that idea.

Everyone tries to explain to us how important an “education” is. But to me and my friends, we don’t get why we have to stay in high school when all you have to know is how to access information on the web. You can know anything, anytime. My generation wants lots of stuff and fast, and that requires money. What’s the easiest way to do that? Start working. Stop wasting your time. Not very many have the patience to make it all the way through.

I decided to stay in school in case I don’t make it big and famous; I will at least have my diploma. In a way, even though you don’t really need an education to perform, it pushed me to graduate as a plan “B”. Having my high school diploma puts me ahead of so many of my friends. It also puts me behind in a sense, because I could have been making money this whole time.

Everyone wants the easy and fastest way out, but I’m beginning to wonder if that will get me what I want in life. I have friends who got certificates and started working. They are making money, but not enough to have their own places and a car. Besides, I don’t think they’re going anywhere, and I’m not even sure there’s some place to go. The good jobs are either outsourced or they ask for more education. So, even if you get a certificate, in the end you still need a degree to get a better job. One of my friends is real good at skateboards and he wants to design skateboards, cool huh? I don’t know anyone who wants to be an accountant or something hard and boring like that. I hope I make it as a dancer.

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## Analysis of “Uncle Sam Knows Best” 2007-2020

### Implications:

In this scenario, the world very much resembles that of today—a large, reluctant-to-change public educational system swimming upstream against a societal and youth culture more interested in Paris Hilton, Britney Spears, and Hannah Montana than in learning or achievement. This world continues without much change from 2007-2020. There is support for the idea of education as a public good and some level of resources to match, but not enough to truly transform the system into one that leverages innovation and creativity to reach the highly tech-savvy, gaming- and entertainment- distracted youth of today and tomorrow. It’s as if society has just resigned itself to accept things the way they are.

Technology itself has expanded and become so inexpensive and available to all that information—what was once the domain of learning in school—is easily accessible to just about anyone.

*“For the system marketing to function really well, colleges will have to work collaboratively, not competitively.”*

--Envisioning the Future Participant

What’s the point of school when

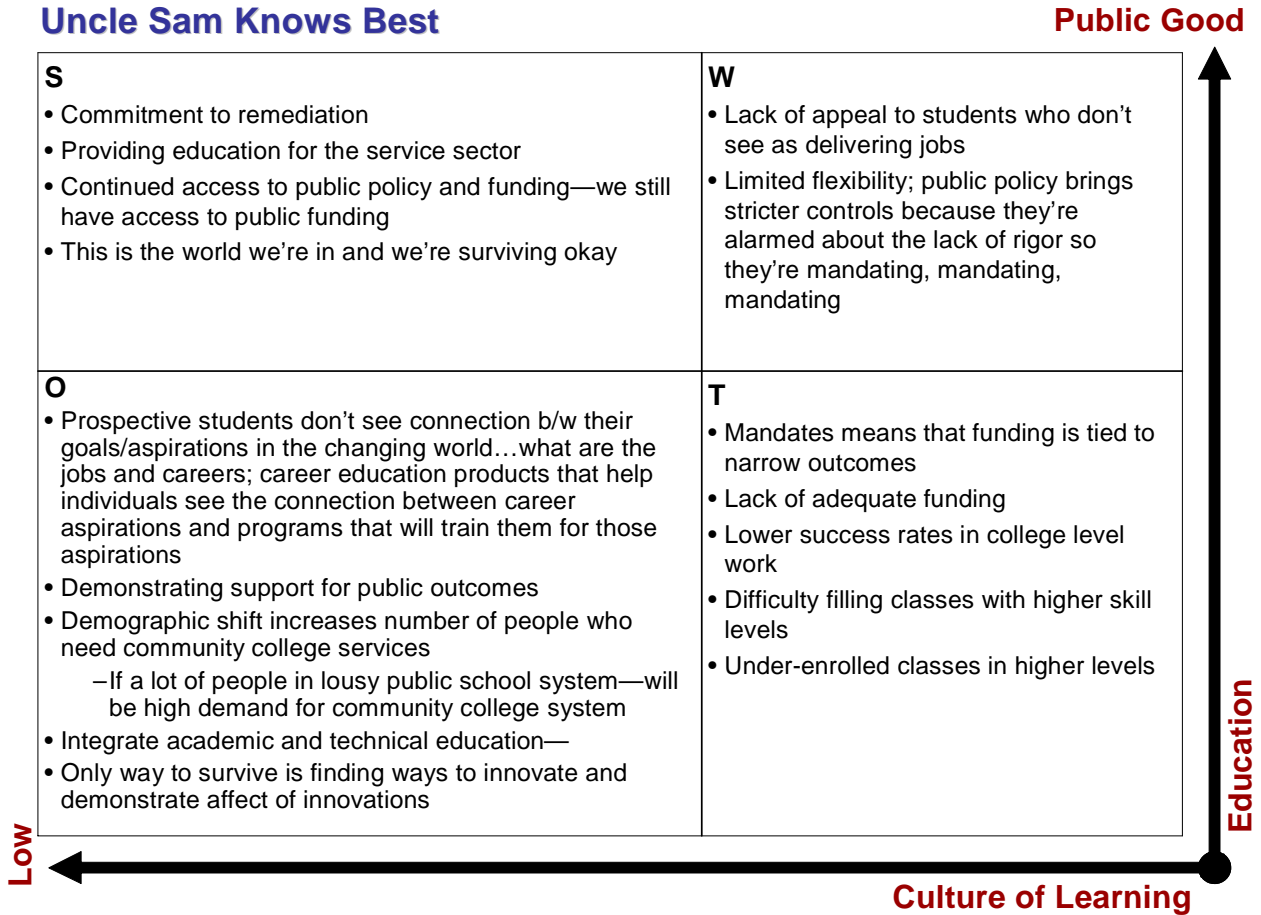
most of the jobs that are available do not require higher learning? Although some of the higher paying jobs do require more education, few youth readily see the relevance in staying in school—it’s flat out boring.

Government keeps on trying, though, but does so through policies of command and control, over-reliance on testing—and testing *all the wrong things*—and the relentless pursuit of mediocrity. Quite frankly, public education exists—and is not under threat in this scenario—but seriously lacks any relevance or creativity to connect with its actual public. One gets the sense of a completely out of touch, and yet still revered, at least by parents, dinosaur institution. Beyond subtle hints and some nagging, parents, though, seem to leave it to the schools to figure out how to motivate their children.

As a contrast, readers get a brief glimpse of what life might be like in other states such as Texas when Maria’s brother goes there and finds a state that is investing in the development of a better-educated workforce by tying degrees to job opportunities in key industries. Readers also hear a small bit about the outlets for creativity that do begin to expand by 2018 with more charter schools taking the best and the brightest into their fold. Still, by 2020, this “competition” does not seem to be enough, on its own, to spur any sort of large-scale reaction on the part of public education. In this scenario, it’s same old, same old, all the way through.

An overview of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for Colorado community colleges in this scenario is presented below (see Appendix D for a full page image).

*Implications for Scenario B: Uncle Sam Knows Best*



**Options:**

To meet the key challenges of this scenario, the CCCS will need to muster up the institutional and political will to lead a change in the current system. Clearly, continuing on in the way things are today will have adverse affects on both the institution and our culture. The system would likely survive in this scenario, but it would not thrive nor contribute to the higher goals its mission sets for the state. In addition to strengthening its ties to career pathways, the CCCS would need to become the “best in the business” at finding ways to truly engage the celebrity-distracted youth culture in a way that motivates them to learn at higher levels. Additional options include:

*“We don’t want to come up with strategies that are forcing the colleges to do things that don’t work. We want to come up with strategies that will help colleges do their job better.”*

--Envisioning the Future Participant

- Improve student engagement to get students to become interested in college

- Improve customer service in the college
- Become a better brand-use celebrity endorsements
- Develop a career-focused curriculum; help students see the connections
- Make the curriculum relevant to their life
- Expand concurrent enrollment statewide
- Implement Career Pathways: Bridge to Opportunity
- Focus on incentives to reach and keep students in school
- Market what the CCCS is doing well
- Pursue strong lobbying agenda
- Position community colleges as having a unique role in P20

**Indicators:**

Some possible trends that could signal the development of this scenario include:

- Efforts to innovate and transform public education not succeeding on a large scale, either through organized resistance or simply through a “regression toward the norm.”
- Continued focus on entertainment and celebrity culture on the part of youth without any connection to larger economic or civic purpose for achievement and learning
- Educational policies that impose rigid accountability measures that limit innovation and creativity
- Competition from retiring baby boomers who take many of the available jobs—especially those that require experience and higher levels of education—displacing the youth and suppressing their need to become educated
- Outsourcing of jobs that require education

## Scenario C: McDegree-You Deserve a Break Today!

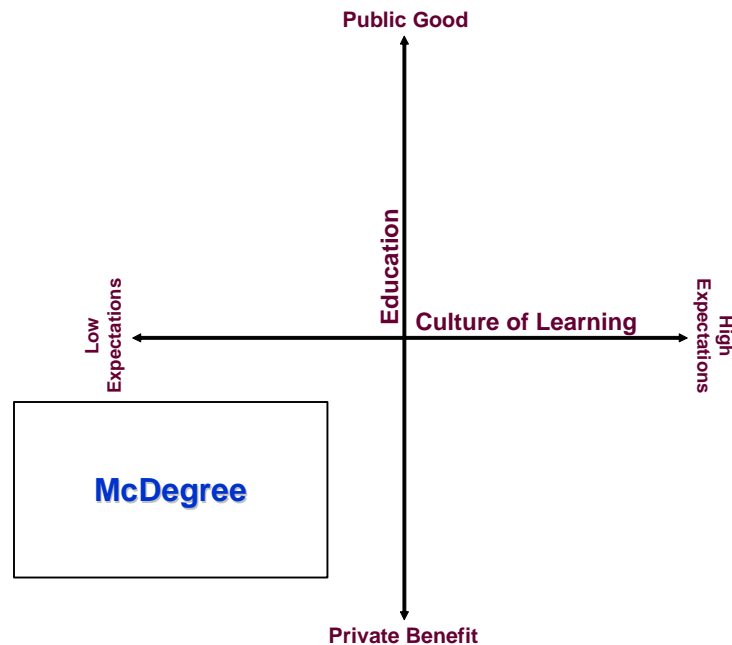
### Abstract

In the world of McDegree, public higher education is belatedly divesting itself of the last vestiges of its traditional mission--serving the public good. It has finally realized that in order to survive, it must emulate the competition and “provide services” to “individual consumers” in all their multiplicity and diversity. For years, colleges have steadily lowered the rigor of their courses and degrees to attract and retain students, but to little avail. Across

the U.S., private education companies have been drawing students away from traditional public institutions for the better part of a decade. In the face of massive baby boomer retirements and continued growth in technology-related industries, businesses are crying for entry-level employees whom they can train in their own cultures and processes. The value of a traditional two- or four-year degree—which once included meaningful general education and citizenship components—has dropped significantly. Though such components still exist, they are for the most part “rubber stamped” in private schools, and public schools have begun to follow suit. In 2020, students demand basic technological skills they can market to waiting industry, and they demand degrees in the shortest possible time, with the least amount of interference in the form of developmental requirements, general education, or face-to-face instruction.

Other factors at play are as follows: 1) Continuation of FTE funding well into the last decade (2010-2020) has resulted in difficulties retaining qualified faculty, especially in high demand fields; they are paid more by private providers and have fewer governance/administrative burdens. 2) Perkins funding has been steadily declining as the public value of education has eroded, resulting in decreasing commitment to CTE, which industry can do quicker anyway by rubber stamping any general education requirements.

In this scenario, Marci (an atypical, traditional college student pursuing a Masters degree in Student Affairs) finds that job opportunities in public higher education have bottomed out as she approaches graduation. She seeks advice from her father, one of the last hold-outs, a Colorado public university administrator still philosophically devoted to the old values of public education. Her father, realizing that he has little to offer in the way of practical advice, introduces Marci to a former colleague who now works for a private higher education provider.



**From:** [Marci5@newworld.net](mailto:Marci5@newworld.net)

**To:** [TeddyB@colo.edu](mailto:TeddyB@colo.edu)

**Subj:** Work

**Date:** Feb. 2, 2020

Dear Dad,

As my graduation approaches, I'm starting the dreaded job search process, and I need your advice. I thought my Master's in Student Affairs would be more in demand, especially here in New York, but I'm disappointed in the lack of interest. My classmates are having the same problem--there seems to be a widespread glut in the student services profession currently, at least on the East coast.

How are things in Colorado? You know, since you sent me to New Hampshire for high school back in 2010, I haven't paid much attention to things out West, but now I'm sort of interested in returning and living close to you and Mom for a while. Are there any jobs at CCU? How about in higher education generally? I could even teach part time until I found something suitable.

What do you think?

Love,

Marci

P.S. I'll just use email since you have so much trouble with the Context Aware device I gave you for Christmas.

**From:** [TeddyB@colo.edu](mailto:TeddyB@colo.edu)

**To:** [Marci5@newworld.net](mailto:Marci5@newworld.net)

**Subj:** Re: Work

**Date:** Feb. 4, 2020

Dear Marci,

Thanks for using email. I know it's old-fashioned, but so am I! Actually, how about switching to your blog? I've called a friend of mine, Jan Alexander, and asked her to join our conversation. She's a recruiter for one of the newer two-year proprietary schools, Great Divide Career and Technical College, and she might have more to say about opportunities for you in Colorado. Here at Colorado Consolidated U, we are still pushing early retirements and eliminating open positions. Anyway, I'll stop here and join your blog in a day or two. Gotta run.

Love,

Dad

**MarciEducation.Blogspot.com**

*Comment (posted Feb. 12, 2020)*

Marci (and Jan),

Sorry it's taken me so long to pick up the thread: lots of overtime dealing with another class-action lawsuit, the second this year: students suing us for not giving them what they pay for—high grades, quickly. We've already made so many concessions to avoid trial in previous cases.... I don't know where this one will end. It doesn't look good.

Are you really thinking of working in public higher ed? Marci, last year Colorado passed an important milestone: 62% of graduating high school seniors chose the “McDegree” option offered by the private providers—increasingly, they are choosing to “flip forward to success,” as one of the marketing campaigns puts it. They can get associates degrees in nine months of focused coursework, and bachelors degrees in 2 years. Plus, the bigger companies are giving precedence to McDegree graduates in the hiring process because those graduates are younger and more “trainable” in technical fields. These companies long ago lost hope in the ability of public education to respond to their need for technically trained workers, so they've developed their own “higher education supplements,” as they call them. This movement is in full swing in Colorado. It offers something for everyone: a quick pass through college for students, easy money for the proprietaries since the legislature is helping students pay tuition, and a malleable labor pool for business and industry.

Even more troubling to me philosophically (though not to my fellow administrators, alas!) is a growing trend: fully personalized higher education (FPHE). Students can now get accredited, guaranteed transfer coursework on their context-aware high-speed wireless-enabled video i-pod implants. One of our own students—a recent transfer from the local community college—is taking a math course from India, a science pre-requisite from MIT (the course itself is free but he has to pay to take the final exam), and an English class from Mexico City! He listens to lectures on his implant while riding his SEGA to campus. More and more public institutions are working with FPHE students to award degrees based on previous study “abroad,” so to speak (a lot of the providers of personalized learning are in India and Eastern Europe). For instance, we are getting rid of our two-semester residency requirement for the bachelor's degree.

Anyway, have you thought about moving to Asia? They are doing a much better job of supporting public education there.... I'm only partly kidding! Enough for now.  
Love,  
Dad

***Comment (posted Feb. 13, 2020)***

Marci (and Ted),

Marci, don't go to Asia! Your dad is hopelessly behind the times (he knows I say that with much affection). He's such an idealist, still committed to the old values of public education. It's charming, in a way, but the public has given up on trying to force improvement and accountability in public education. (Remember that the “public” is increasingly made up of retired boomers, who aren't thrilled when asked to pay for very expensive proposals to improve the system.) Private education in Colorado is booming for one overwhelmingly obvious reason: we respond quickly and flexibly to demand. And let's be clear about the nature of that demand. It comes from two directions: first, a boom in the so-called “NewTech” industries, the maturation

of the “green” sector of the economy, and the explosion of the healthcare sector. These groups combined make up 75% of Colorado’s economic base, and they are crying for workers in an age of mass retirement.

Second, our students.... When they reach college age (which as you know is now 15), they see full and immediate employment on their horizon if they can only “get” a degree! There’s no longer a “culture of learning” associated with high school or college life. It’s now all about getting that first full-time job. Since companies are now finishing off employee education with their own programs, most students just want that ticket, and they want it as quickly as possible.

There are very few students like you anymore, Marci. In fact, you’ve always been in the minority—interested in classical liberal studies and employment in higher ed—but the system has never recognized that fact. Now it does. The old system is breaking up to give the majority of students what they need to succeed in the new economy. Want my advice? Come to Colorado! The field is wide open here. Your grad degree in Student Affairs will easily convert to a management position of some kind. Come see me!

Jan (nice to meet you!)

***Comment (posted Feb. 17, 2020)***

Jan (and Dad),

Thanks for your posting, Jan! It sounds as though private education is an exciting place to be right now. Actually, you’ve inspired me to write a paper on the decline of public education in Colorado (this might turn into my Master’s thesis!), so I’m wondering if you’d both mind expanding a bit on how Colorado got to its current position. Can you follow up a bit on your comments? I’ll use you both as a source in my paper...promise! What happened after I went away to high school in 2010? What did I miss? Here’s another question: weren’t community colleges supposed to fulfill the role that private providers have assumed? What happened with the two-year colleges?

Marci

***Comment (posted Feb. 17, 2020)***

Marci,

I’ll start to answer your question—maybe Jan can fill in if she has some time.

As much as I hate to admit it, Jan is quite right about the current vitality of private higher ed. I guess I’d start to explain it by pointing to the well-known structural weakness in public education that existed a dozen years ago, when some of the new industries started developing and boomers started retiring.

Remember the “Colorado Paradox” we talked about last time you were home? Back in 2007 or 2008, we were just beginning to realize the consequence of importing degreed tech professionals into the state for so many years—we’d been riding that wave to the detriment of our own public education system. After all, public education is expensive, and the payoff is not immediately tangible. In the age of TABOR, especially once the retirement-fueled recession began, higher ed funding was an easy target for legislators.

Instead of more funding, all we got for several years were louder calls for greater efficiency and higher quality throughout the system. This all began with the Spellings Commission report in 2006, but when President Romney refused to nominate a new education secretary in 2009, the commission’s positions were only strengthened. We were able to make some improvements in these areas, but not quickly enough to respond to NewTech demands and the sharp rise in competition from private providers that came to known as the Proprietary Movement.

What happened next surprised everyone: certain legislators started advocating a total end to public education in Colorado—even K-12!—because efficiency and quality were so strongly associated in the public mind with private industry. This was in 2010 or 2011, about the time Colorado Springs made its bid to become the capitol city. Privatization became the watchword for reformers. (As you know, Marci, this is when we sent you off to Sandhurst for high school.)

Now we are struggling to hang on. Bottom line, Marci: I guess I agree with Jan, if not philosophically, at least practically. You won’t find a job in student affairs in Colorado. Here at CCU, the dorms are largely unoccupied—students don’t live on campus anymore since they don’t have to attend classes except for certain special purposes. We’d love to have you living nearby, though.... Keep in touch!

Dad,

Jan, would you like to add anything?

*Comment (posted Feb. 24, 2020)*

Marci (and Ted),

It might help you, Marci, if relate the story of my own career. I started out in academic affairs at CCU as a protégé of your father (it was still called CU back then!). Though I enjoyed my experience at the university level, I’d always been in sympathy with the mission of the community college system—open access and support for all (you see, I’m a bit of an idealist too!)—so after a couple of years, I moved to the community college system as a staffer in the Office of Instructional Affairs. I saw much greater opportunity there to help the greatest number of students achieve a better life. If only things had not started happening so fast, the system might not be struggling as it is now. Here is a brief summary of the events that drove me into the private world:

1. As your dad says, the Proprietary Movement took hold in Colorado when the legislature began withdrawing financial support for public education. There was such a high level of public disgust with the inability of public education to improve its standardized test scores, etc. The private education market grew rapidly, fueled mostly by middle class and wealthy families and by the proliferation of “personalized” (FPHE) education options. By 2018, there were over 1000 P-20 private education providers in Colorado, and that number is still growing. So far, legislative proposals to regulate this growth have fallen on deaf ears—our elected officials seem to want to give privatization the greatest possible chance to succeed.
2. This was not just a Colorado phenomenon. Other states were moving in the same direction. In response, the U.S. Department of Education did away with regional accrediting bodies in favor of a single national accreditation system in 2016. The reason for this move was to stimulate growth in private education by improving transferability of courses between formerly competing types of institutions. Students could now select courses from any number of providers, and those courses would transfer. Kids started “personalizing” their own higher education by taking distance courses not only from around the country, but from foreign universities, mainly in India. The new mega high speed Internet and context-aware technologies made all of this possible. Your dad suggests that FPHE is a fairly recent trend at the university level, but it had an immediate, transforming effect on two-year education: rapid declines in enrollment. We had seen it coming, but we didn’t predict how rapidly it would get here. And now that all colleges have to accept FPHE credits, locally offered courses seem less relevant to students; plus, local courses are sometimes more expensive, believe it or not!
3. Colorado public colleges started closing shop. All the rural community colleges were “consolidated,” and Adams State and Fort Lewis College succumbed to bankruptcy. This actually benefited the rest of us for a while, but the trend never reversed; we kept losing enrollment and, of course, budgetary support. In 2018, the legislature reduced public support to higher education to 50% of operating budgets and required us to raise the rest of the money ourselves. The only thing we really knew how to do was cut costs! Our solution: cut full-time faculty to the bare minimum, cancel all capital construction, and try to compete in the distance education market. Too little, too late....
4. Colorado demographics had changed completely by 2017. The gap between rich and poor had widened even more than in the nation at large, and the poor were increasingly Hispanic, English language learners, and employed in tedious but vital sectors of the economy. Unfortunately, this demographic shift occurred at just the time education was being privatized. As you know, poor families now receive the largest share of state dollars just to keep them afloat and working. We’ve given up on educating them meaningfully. They are certainly priced out of the private market, and that old problem, the “digital divide,” is a further barrier for them.

That was the last straw for me, Marci. If I couldn’t serve those who needed education the most, I knew I’d be frustrated in public education. A year and half ago, I made the switch to Great Divide, and I haven’t looked back. I’ve been too busy! We might be a degree-mill, but we are

helping place students in emerging industries who need them, and you can see the result in Colorado's current economic growth. There's nothing like tangible success to give you an immediate sense of reward, even at some loss of some youthful idealism.

Well, Marci, have you had enough? I think I'll stop now, but if you need any more information for your paper, let me know.

Jan

***Comment (posted Mar. 2, 2020)***

Marci and Jan,

Thanks, Jan, for the re-cap! I'm sure Marci will find it helpful.

By the way, the lawsuit I mentioned? This one's going to trial—we weren't able to concede what they wanted: A-grades assigned at the beginning of the semester with the burden on instructors to prove the validity of any grade reductions thereafter. We'll see how it turns out. You can watch the trial on your "blink and wink" eyeball video receiver, Channel 5049, starting on Monday.

Love,

Dad

P.S. Mom sends her love.

***Comment (posted Mar. 5, 2020)***

Dear Jan and Dad,

Thanks so much for all of the information! This is turning into a major research project. I wonder if I have time for it. You know, Jan, I may take you up on your offer of an interview. I don't *have* to write a thesis; the other option is just to take the master's exam. If I do that, I'll be finished in May and I could go right to work in June. I'm looking forward to talking with you!

I'll call you when I get home. You too, Dad!

Marci

## Analysis of “McDegree” 2007-2020

In this scenario, society has pretty much given up on public education to provide the “fast learning” options demanded by both culture and industry. The void is quickly and easily filled by ready, willing, and able private companies who take the concept of learning anytime, anywhere, and in any way to a whole new level. They provide easy access, cheap tuition, quick degrees, and various “mix and match” options for students. They build on technological advancements to allow multi-tasking and extreme personalization to play a role (e.g., customize your own degree through fully personalized higher education (FPHE)). Public institutions, which have struggled to keep up over the years, are truly left in the dust in this world.

Culturally, the majority of the population, aside from a few holdovers like Ted, no longer values public education, never mind a thoughtful, traditional liberal arts education of any kind. In fact,

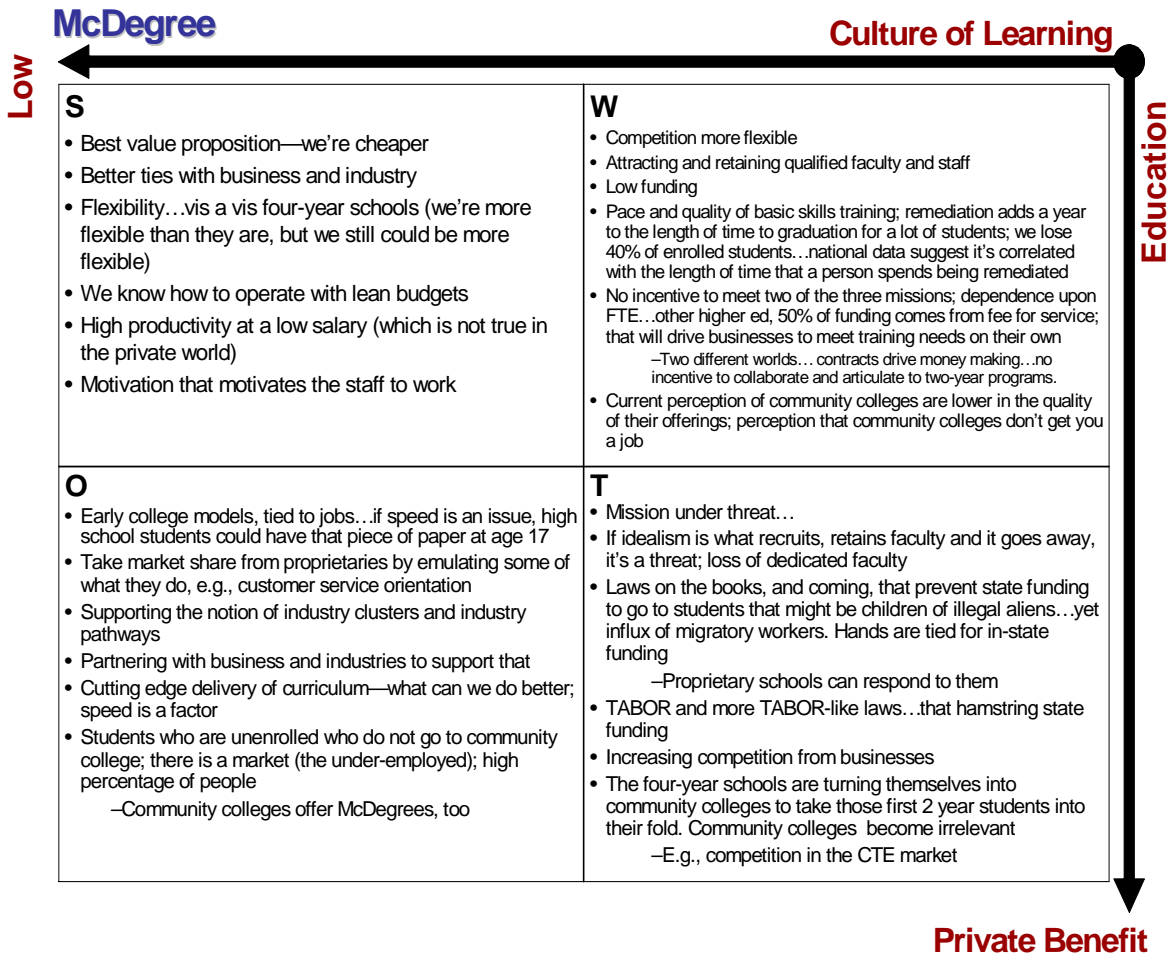
*“The key of it is, we will become McDegree if we keep the same systems and mindsets that we currently have.”*

--Envisioning the Future Participant

getting a degree—for little effort and money—has become so common place, that there is a tendency to sue institutions that resist the quick fix in favor of quality. Grading policies have been turned on their head in order to better meet the demands of “customers” reflecting the extreme distrust for the judgment of educators in favor of the mob rule.

Making matters worse, the tax-paying public—by now mostly made up of retired baby boomers—have little tolerance for continuing to support a publicly financed education system. A series of events unfold between 2007 to 2020 in an effort to help the public institutions compete, but ultimately, they are unsuccessful. An overview of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for Colorado community colleges in this scenario is presented in below (see Appendix D for a full page image).

*Implications for Scenario C: McDegree*



**Options:**

To meet the key challenges of this scenario, the CCCS must truly innovate in order to compete. Not only is this world conducive to profit-making and entrepreneurial approaches, but it favors those institutions that are able to adapt extremely quickly and flexibly to

*“We’re suggesting a complete systems overhaul: outcomes-based. You don’t have to be tied to semester courses, contact hours...”*

--Envisioning the Future Participant

meet the ever-changing demands of a fickle, unmotivated population. Public institutions may be able to compete and maintain their core values and principles if they become just as innovative (if not more so) as their competition. Further, by tapping into the strand of interest in social purposes that may be inherent within the Millennial generation (and of course remaining among

the baby boomers) they might be able to capitalize on the best of both. Other strategic options include:

- Partner with leading industries and modularize job skills
- Partner with industries and allow them to help us develop the curriculum
- Always assess and assure that certificates are outcomes- and competency-based
- Continuously innovate delivery methods to accommodate students who are now the gaming generation (short term, fast, etc.); Put them in an environment where they can succeed
- Redefine the mission—value liberal arts, but blend it in, so they're getting 21st century skills in a package
- Constantly provide training and support to faculty
- Evolve calendar structure and get away from traditional. Think of a business model of continuous enrollment and just-in-time learning
- Develop system and individual college economic development and system-partnerships with local community
- Need to be a vital partner with economic development and business
- Develop early partnerships, P-20-provide some modules in high school
- Reward faculty based on outcomes, teaching & learning, not time
- Reduce barriers to innovation

### **Indicators:**

Some trends or events that could signal the development of this scenario include:

- Increasing popularity and utility of proprietary and/or degree mill institutions
- Continued failure and perceived lack of value in public education
- Policies that limit public institutions' abilities to innovate to compete
- Increased popularity of personalized—anytime, anywhere, in any way—learning
- Increased focus on the purpose of education being to get a job over a broader, more liberal arts or civic purpose

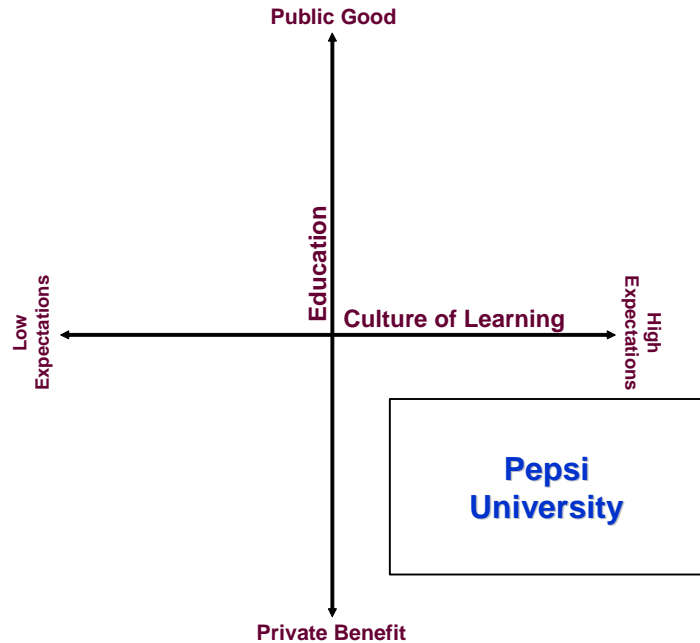
## Scenario D: Pepsi University

### Background:

In 2007, Dennis Prease, CEO of the multi-national PepsiWorld—headquartered in Denver—realized that America’s public education system would fail to produce enough qualified workers to replace his aging and retiring workforce. Therefore, he devised a way to attract young talent to his corporation by offering more than just salary and bonus incentives. He went several steps further, pioneering the Corporate College approach that is now so popular

worldwide. After college prep became a universal goal for all students, districts tried to meet this goal, but found themselves woefully under-staffed and under-capacity to do so on their own. States did not have the resources or the political will to help, and the feds were preoccupied with international and national security concerns. Thus, many “innovative” school districts and colleges who took the goal seriously turned to corporations for help. By 2009, as an extension of this approach, corporations began setting up their own colleges and “early colleges,” recruiting students even before they graduated from high school and training them across the curriculum using highly focused, year-round, modular methodologies. By 2015, students were able to complete high school and college degrees (two- and four-year) in half the time of traditional education. School districts were relieved to receive this help. In recent years, PepsiWorld has begun offering graduate degrees as well, and its educational arm is now called PepsiUniversity. Upon successful completion of their degrees, students are offered full-time positions with PepsiWorld at whatever level they have shown themselves proficient: executive, sales, technical, maintenance, etc.

These changes came at just the right time in America’s generational “moment.” For several years, America’s “Millennials” had been graduating from traditional high schools and going off to college with an increasing sense of dissatisfaction and frustration. They were anxious to lead and make a difference in the world but did not feel adequately prepared by traditional educational experiences. They wanted a faster start, more emphasis on technological and practical training, and more rigor in their coursework. For these reasons, they began flocking to corporate colleges.



Finally, the world of this scenario really consists of two distinct worlds: the relatively well-off, for whom the value of quality has taken hold, and the underserved, large numbers of whom are first or second-generation immigrants for whom the value of quality is only a dream.

- ***Benefits to the company:*** Engaged employees who are loyal to the company with little turn-over; a workforce being trained specifically to their needs, terms, and expectations; minimal outside interference (as long as benchmarks set by state educational agencies are met, Pepsi University maintains accreditation).
- ***Benefits to students:*** Guaranteed employment, less time wasted in educational settings, free tuition, a faster and more focused start on their own careers.
- ***Benefits to taxpayers/legislators:*** More tax money can now be devoted to decaying infrastructure, retiree entitlements, and public support for a rising underclass.

The scenario opens in June 2020, when ABC News is devoting a week of coverage to the remarkable success of the Corporate College model and the attendant decline in public support for traditional high school and college education. We join their June 13 morning coverage....

### ***Good Morning America Feature Story, June 13, 2020:***

Robin Robbins: Thirteen years ago, PepsiWorld announced its intention to enter the educational arena. This June, the tenth college graduating class is about to enter the world of work, and we are devoting exclusive coverage to a phenomenon that has changed the face of American education and is rapidly becoming standard practice around the world. Joining us from Denver, Colorado is Jackson Riley, with Dennis and John Prease. Dennis is the retired CEO of PepsiWorld, and John, his son, is now Chancellor of Pepsi University. Good morning, Jackson!

Jackson: Robin, good morning! With me are Dennis and John Prease on this momentous occasion. Today the 10<sup>th</sup> graduating class walks across the PepsiWorld Auditorium stage and, after a three-week break, will begin their pre-arranged jobs in PepsiWorld offices all over the world. Some of these college graduates are as young as 18; remarkably, very few of them are older than 21! The original class—which graduated in 2010—was only 15 students strong. Those original 15 are with us today, standing behind the Preases, but this afternoon, 860 students will cross the stage having earned a high school diploma along with a combination of technical certification, bachelor's degree, or graduate degree. Dennis, this was your brainchild. Can you tell us what led you to even consider such a bold move?

Dennis Prease: Well, Jackson, back in 2007 I had known for some time about a number of disturbing trends that would affect PepsiWorld: failing public schools, colleges that couldn't seem to produce highly trained graduates, massive retirements of the baby boomers, and so on.... But the seriousness of all this never hit me until my granddaughter, Julia, and grandson, Tyler, stayed with my wife and me for a weekend. In June of that year, Tyler was in second grade and Julia would have been about four. I sat down with Tyler to read him a bedtime story, and I asked him to read to me – as I used to with John. Tyler tried every way possible to get out of reading out loud to me, and I soon discovered he couldn't read very well.

Well, when John and Lisa came back to collect the kids, I asked them if they had noticed that Tyler wasn't reading up to age level. They had, and they had discussed their concerns with the teacher. Unfortunately, the school was understaffed, resources were limited, and because he didn't have a "special need" or disability, he was one of many who would never receive the help they needed. This didn't sit too well with me. Then a few days later, after I'd been moping around, my wife said, "Why don't you just start your own college at PepsiWorld? Hire the best teachers. Run a year-round school. Select the most talented students and guarantee them jobs when they graduate. That way, you can control the outcome. Won't that solve PepsiWorld's staffing problems and give kids the attention and focus they need?" Well, sir, she was right!" That's how it all started. Today...we have seen this model succeed not only for PepsiWorld, but for other corporations and communities as well.

Jackson: One of the graduates today is your grandson, Tyler. Dennis, tell me what this day means for you?

Dennis Prease: (Choked up – tears in his eyes, looking at Tyler.) This is a dream come true. Not only do I know that we have provided a change in the educational arena in the state of Colorado, I know that my grandchildren and others are ready to face the challenges of succeeding in a global economy.

Jackson: John, has it been difficult to carry on your father's vision?

John Prease: Not at all. When he proposed this bold initiative, there were many skeptics. Now, there are many corporations patterning their corporate schools after PepsiUniversity. I'm very proud of his vision and boldness, and of our success. This is a great day for me and my family, for more reasons than I can identify.

Jackson: Join us tonight on *20/20 – Primetime* where we will highlight the last thirteen years of PepsiU from inception to success. Pepsi—more than a refreshing drink—now a leader in the educational arena as well. Back to you, Robin.

Robin: Thank you, Jackson. We note that there are many Corporate Colleges in the US—167 by one count, and many more corporations are signing on every year. Google University got in the game by 2010 to focus on Cyber-Education programs, and Harpo University followed shortly thereafter to provide an avenue for students interested in social and civic fields of study. Tonight at 9:00 p.m., 8:00 Central, Jackson Riley sits down with some folks in Colorado to talk about the future of education in America. Tune in.

### ***20/20 Primetime Round Table, June 13, 2020***

Reporter: Jackson Riley

Riley: Tonight we are joined by four individuals who have been a part of major changes in Colorado's educational, social, political, and business life in the last decade. We have with us

John Prease, Chancellor of PepsiUniversity, Dr. Farley Dickens, former college history professor and now Speaker of the Colorado House of Representatives, Dr. Selbe Coverdale, Colorado Commissioner of Public Education, and Roseanna Archuleta, advocate for Human Cause, the national social action network.

Dr. Dickens, let me start with you. 13 years ago, Colorado CSAP scores indicated no improvement in proficiency levels of K-12 students despite several years of intense effort to improve those outcomes. The governor at the time called for studies and set up commissions, but the result of it all was a striking realization and admission: our public schools would never significantly improve without prohibitively expensive restructuring. What was the legislature's role in arriving at this conclusion?

Dickens: Naturally, Jackson, we were all concerned about the flat performance of our public schools. However, this issue floated between a Scylla and Charybdis of public policy, if you will. On the one hand, Colorado's anti-tax, TABOR advocates (at the time about 52% of the legislature) refused to support funding for untested restructuring ideas, and on the other, our highways, bridges, and urban utility delivery systems were beginning to fall apart, and our tax base was diminishing because of all the retirees moving to Colorado. Combine all of those factors with the lack of federal funds due to the war, and we had powerful forces working against affordability of traditional colleges. When Dennis Prease announced that he wanted to set up a Corporate College that PepsiWorld would fund 100%, we all sat back and listened carefully. Not a year later, the legislature gave him the green light on a trial basis—it turned to be one of the best votes we ever took.

Riley: Mr. Prease, you were involved early on with your father in setting up the college. What were your guiding principles back then?

Prease: I still remember my father saying in speech after speech to any audience he could find, "We just don't have time to wait. The public sector can't do it, not for lack of will but for lack of resources." He was especially concerned that India and China were producing the educated workers needed for the 21<sup>st</sup> century global economy and that the time would soon pass for large-scale corporate investment. Corporate America is the most dynamic engine of efficiency, quality, and success the world has ever known. If we care about this country and about our kids, we need to at least give the corporate approach a fighting chance. My father was not an educator; he was a businessman. But he developed a powerful vision for education by imagining the world he wanted his grandchildren to live in one day. I'm proud to say his vision is proving hugely successful. We are all in his debt today.

Riley: Ms. Archuleta, do you agree?

Archuleta: Jackson, it is true, many corporations are benefiting from "growing their own" employees beginning in their future employees' mid-teen years. And many middle class families are quite happy to have their children directed from an early age into focused learning and productive employment.

But one feature of Corporate Colleges we have not discussed is that these “institutions” are able to select the best and brightest students at very young ages, and reject those who might take longer to educate: the traditionally underserved, the academically challenged, those from poor homes or who do not speak English as a native language. This segment of our population is growing every year, not decreasing. I couldn’t be happier for the successes of PepsiWorld and other corporate educators, but I’m very concerned about the vast majority of our students and their families in this world of rising inequality. What hope for upward mobility can we offer them?

Riley: Dr. Coverdale, as Commissioner of Education, do you have a response to that question?

Coverdale: Absolutely. To tell you the truth, I share Ms. Archuleta’s concern 100%, but the truth of the matter is that the Corporate Colleges—and their associated Early Colleges—have taken an enormous weight off the shoulders of public education. Fifteen years ago, we were under such strains that we could barely function. The calls for increased quality were coming from all directions, yet we were being asked to serve the widest range of students in the history of our country—demographically, linguistically, socio-economically. Without major funding increases from the legislature, we weren’t going to be able to improve overall quality, and we knew it.

In the few years following PepsiU’s startup, we in public education gladly began sharing responsibility with the corporate colleges, giving up more and more of our better students to corporate education. This has had a wonderful effect on us. We can now focus almost entirely on the mission Ms. Archuleta, and I, believe is so important: providing free public education to the underserved. And at the very least, the public demand that we improve quality has subsided tremendously. Now we can focus on our job....

Archuleta: And where is the quality, Dr. Coverdale? The challenge and the assistance that propels students out of poverty and into the American Dream?

Riley: Perhaps that is a subject for another time, Ms. Archuleta. Let’s move on. Let’s talk about the intervening years. Panelists, how do you account for the success of the Corporate College movement, especially in the last 6 or 7 years, when it has seemed to sweep the national scene and is expanding to the rest of the world? Mr. Prease?

Prease: It’s very simple, Jackson. Unlike the public sector, PepsiWorld had the resources to hire the best of the best, train them and retain them—best instructors and professors, counselors, technological expertise, and so on. It’s true that we selected our own Early College students, but we did that solely on the basis of merit as determined in Colorado’s own CSAP process. Colleges have always been selective—except community colleges, of course—so we were no different in that respect. And once we got students in the classroom, we focused on the reason they were there: to learn and demonstrate proficiencies in vital skill areas. We didn’t waste anyone’s time, either in the College or Early College settings. Students were in learning settings all day long, their learning was hands-on, and after a year of college study, they were already interning in the careers they’d be pursuing later on. I can’t imagine a better recipe for success,

and it is obviously the very same recipe other corporations are following around the world even as we speak.

Riley: Dr. Coverdale and Dr. Dickens, one of the major innovations of Corporate Colleges—and now the pioneering Corporate University that PepsiWorld has started—is in the very way classes are taught. In fact, perhaps the term “classes” doesn’t apply anymore. The old concepts of “seat time” and lecture, note-taking and “boning up” for exams have never been part of the mix at PepsiU. Both of you have years of experience in traditional education. How do you feel about these innovations?

Dickens: If I may, Jackson, the innovations you mention are just the ones called for by the 2007 Commission on Achievement Now through Teaching Change (CANT-C). These were the restructuring ideas Colorado couldn’t afford back then, and still can’t. In my view, Corporate Colleges saved the day for all of us—students, parents, taxpayers, legislators, and most importantly, American businesses that need those educated young people.

Coverdale: You know, I can’t see anything negative about the Corporate College movement. Their pedagogical innovations are propelling students through the system quickly and successfully. In Colorado public schools, we’ve been trying some of these approaches to the extent that we can, but the fact remains that we just don’t have enough money to fully implement similar techniques, and even today, only about 1/3 of our teachers have had the professional development training that would enable them to use such techniques.

Archuleta: Pardon me, Dr. Coverdale, but aren’t you admitting what I said before? In the last decade, K-12 education has remained behind the times—it’s still mostly babysitting. Some high performing districts have figured it out, but many still have not. Corporate Colleges and Early Colleges are doing the job that needs to be done. How are we going to expand the promise to all of our citizens?

Riley: Unfortunately, ladies and gentlemen, our time is running out. John Prease, as you look back on the last decade, what strikes you as the most important benefit of the Corporate College movement?

### The Case of Antoine Frazer

Antoine Frazer, a 15-year-old from La Junta, Colorado, has arrived at the crucial decision point of his adolescence: it is time for him to choose a career path. After analyzing Antoine’s psychological profiles, merit test scores, and academic history, his Corporate College Advisor suggests that he enroll in PepsiU’s executive training track. Antoine, however, wants to devote his organizational and communication skills to finding solutions to global warming. His idealism is pushing him towards Harpo University’s Political/Non-profit track, a year-old program. Once he makes his decision, he knows it will be next to impossible to change his mind—one feature of the corporate college system is its unwillingness to allow transfers between corporations unless they fall under the same multinational umbrella. Both institutions offer full tuition (underwritten in part by the Colorado Corporate Colorado Opportunity Fund), as well as room and board. Both institutions offer virtually guaranteed success (due to focused, day-long, modular instruction and readily available internships) and immediate employment upon graduation. But Antoine just can’t decide whether to stick to his ideals or “take the high road,” as his parents call it, and “go corporate.” If you were Antoine, which direction would you choose?

Prease: To be honest, Jackson, it's a private, personal benefit. I look in awe at my father, this unassuming visionary who started the ball rolling back in 2007, and I notice the pride he feels in the assured success of his grandchildren, and in the future of the company he has given his life to. That's very gratifying and inspiring to me. Dad, hats off to you on this very special day.

## Analysis of "Pepsi University" 2007-2020

### Implications:

In this scenario, the 800 pound corporate gorilla dominates the education scene in every way, shape, and form. Brought on by declining affordability of public higher education, lack of quality in K-12, growing demands for a more highly-educated workforce due to globalization, and the slowness of public systems to adapt to changing times—big business gives up trying to “help,” and simply moves in for its own benefit. Large corporations like Pepsi are able to set up shop, branches, franchises and establish well-regarded corporate “identities” within the education world, and society (and learners) eagerly respond. Pepsi University, Google University, Harpo University all represent the “in” brands of the decade and competition heats up among selective students to choose to attend the “best” brand. Corporate universities have the prerogative to be selective as the demand for their “product” is very high. Over time, they become increasingly selective and reach further into the educational pipeline to “lock in” the high achievers at early ages. Their influence begins to spread to K-12 education as well.

Public institutions are left to focus on the poor, under-served students who cannot pay much and public dollars are even fewer and further between. How can community colleges compete against these Goliaths, especially at a time when, socially, there is little regard for what used to be a civic purpose to education?

An overview of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for Colorado community colleges in this scenario is presented below (see Appendix D for a full page view).

*“In 2020, is there such a thing as 13 colleges or is there one system with all these branches...Or, are there 6 or 7 colleges that have done things better than the others?”*

--Envisioning the Future Participant

*Implications for Scenario D: Pepsi University*

	<b>Culture of Learning</b>	<b>Pepsi University</b>	
<b>Education</b>			<b>High</b>
	<p><b>S</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cc's more flexible and adaptable than universities</li> <li>• Access to all</li> <li>• System is a strength—some unification of lobbying to the legislature, trying to put together a single message in funding rather than one that is different for all</li> <li>• Integration of technology to help students learn</li> <li>• Improving collaboration among colleges</li> <li>• Caring for all of our students</li> </ul>	<p><b>W</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hard time keeping up with technology to be on the cutting edge</li> <li>• Lack of merit scholarships</li> <li>• Dependent on grant funding for a lot of things</li> <li>• Losing talent to corporate America</li> <li>• Public perception of cc's as being 2nd class</li> <li>• Lack of support for the public system—some don't like moving forward as a collective</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>O</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnerships</li> <li>• Career pathways</li> <li>• Stop competing for funding; individual cc's find what you do well, find niche</li> <li>• Improve collaboration so we have a better image with the public and can compete with corporate</li> <li>• This is the battle against the 800 pound guerilla... The strength is as a system... is in being a strong system, you might have a chance to compete. Your status as a system is evolving and growing and moving and changing...</li> <li>• Cc's could be like small niche...</li> <li>• If the system were driven by market-driven values driving the system coming together...</li> <li>• Collaboration with the private sector? Don't have to be in competition with Pepsi university; you partner with. You become one of the 800 pound guerillas</li> <li>• Could set self up as a nonprofit or corporation...</li> </ul>	<p><b>T</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased tuition—not affordable</li> <li>• Funding</li> <li>• United we stand, divided we fall</li> <li>• Negative media attention (role of media...; whole issue of branding and proactive marketing)</li> <li>• Cc's don't do a good job with branding and marketing</li> </ul>	

**Private Benefit**

**Options:**

To meet the key challenges of this scenario, the CCCS needs to decide whether to compete directly with the 800 pound gorillas, possibly by becoming one, or to identify another market niche upon which to focus. Chances are that although some of the largest worldwide corporations would be likely to create a higher education “brand,” not all will. Smaller, mid-sized companies may look to partner and collaborate with public institutions to offer more variety in the available educational opportunities. Some set of learners may seek to gain multiple skill sets and experiences rather than become “locked in” at such an early age. Perhaps community colleges can compete by being more agile and flexible than the corporate behemoths that are big and bold, but slow to move or change once established? Additional strategic options for community colleges in this scenario include:

*“Halliburton has an extension school and you—in Trinidad—are a franchise. You rent space. You’re the platform. Corporate Universities provide the content.”*

--Envisioning the Future Participant

- Be aggressive and clear on marketing strategies
- Focus on best niche—can't be everything to everyone
- Collaborate to form a more unified, seamless system; operate as a system of coordinated parts; possibly join together as one system, with branches, to survive and compete
- Partner with smaller companies (that don't want to start own university) and other higher educational institutions—fill that niche that's not getting filled by corporate U's (perhaps industry clusters or cc's operate as franchises of the corporate universities)
- Community college system transforms into a nonprofit as a platform that can receive government grants, but not dependent on government funding
- Focus on new/emerging market: baby boomers seeking new careers, but not interested in the corporate track—focus on the “senior brand”
- Look out for global opportunities to partner with higher education institutions from other countries

*“Redefining ourselves is what we have to do in this world. If you're not going to compete, you're going to “niche-out.” But, what you don't want to do, is simply be the place of last resort.”*

--Envisioning the Future Participant

### **Indicators:**

Some of the trends and events that could signal the development of this scenario include:

- Increased demand for industry-focused higher education that public institutions cannot by themselves meet
- Establishment or expansion of corporate sponsorships in higher education and/or corporate universities
- Decrease in public funding for higher education



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