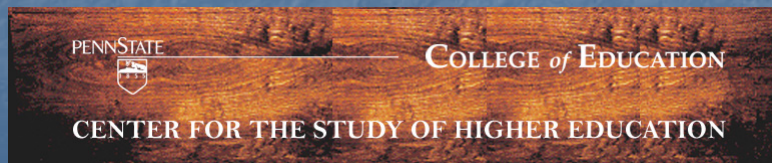


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May 22, 2008

## The State of College Access

Donald E. Heller



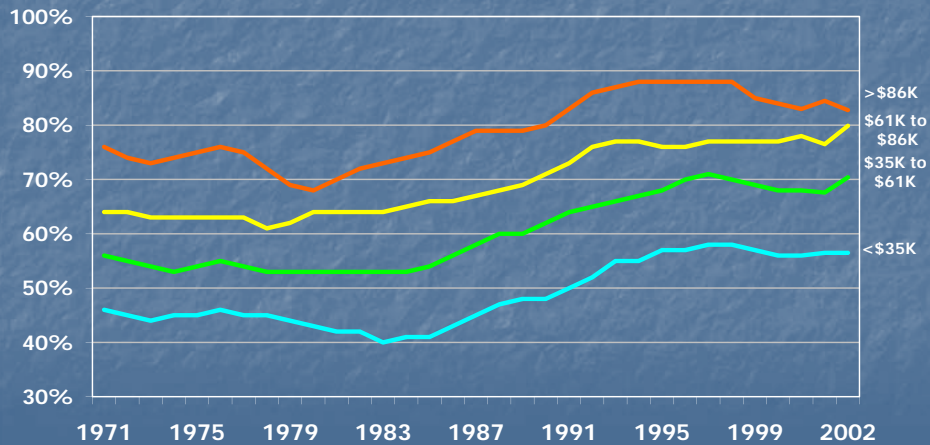
## Overview

- Measures of college access
- Determinants of college access
- The role of EOPs
- Act 101 evaluation
- Questions & discussion

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**Why worry about college access?**

College participation rates of unmarried 18-24 year old HS grads,  
 by family income quartile



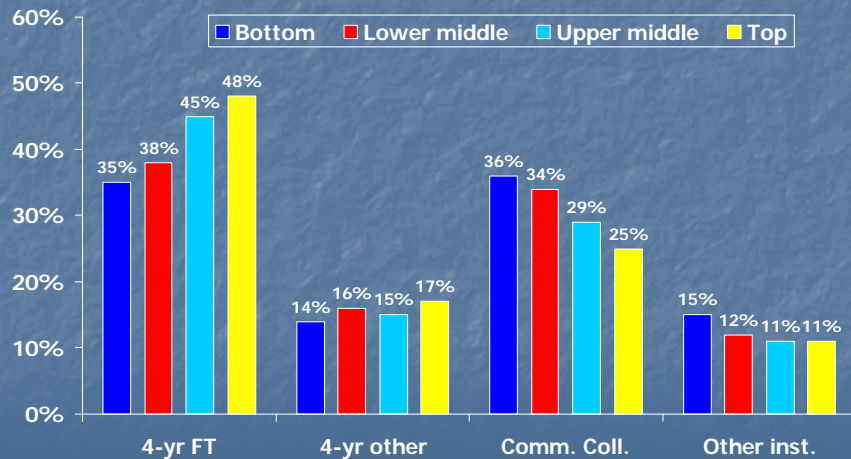
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Postsecondary Education OPPORTUNITY

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**Stratification in higher education**

Distribution of each income quartile by sector and attendance  
 2003-2004 dependent students

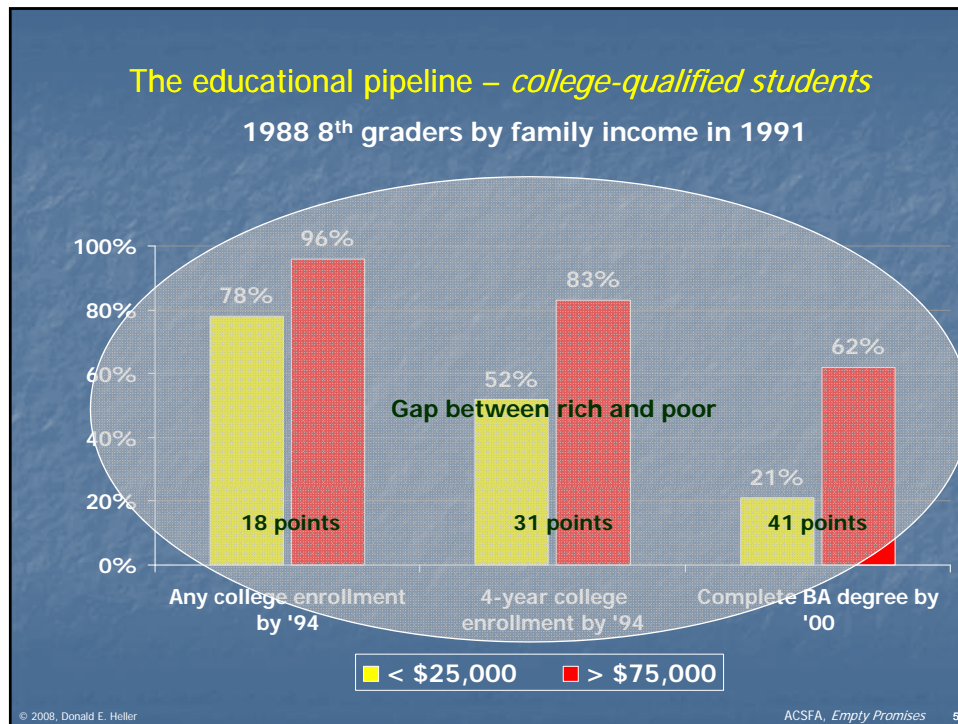


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Author's calculations from NPSAS:2003

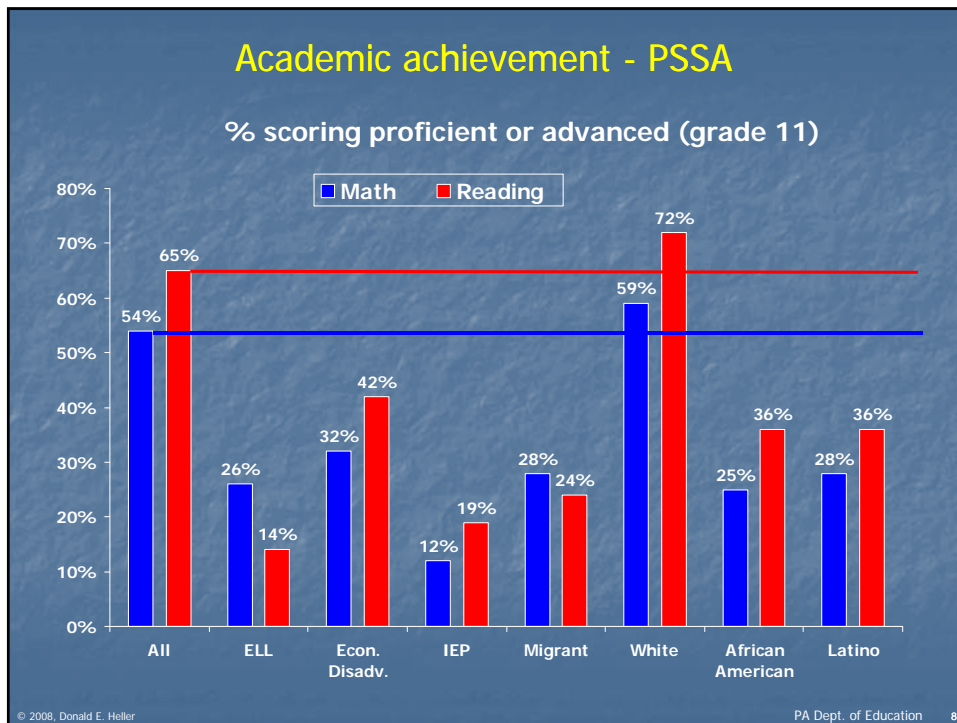
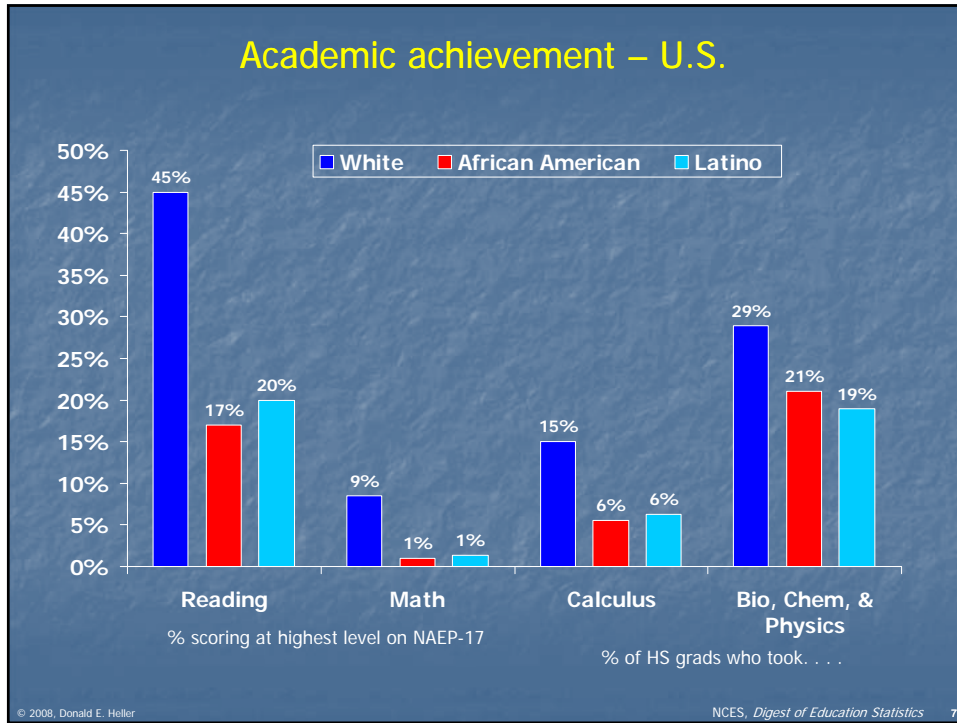
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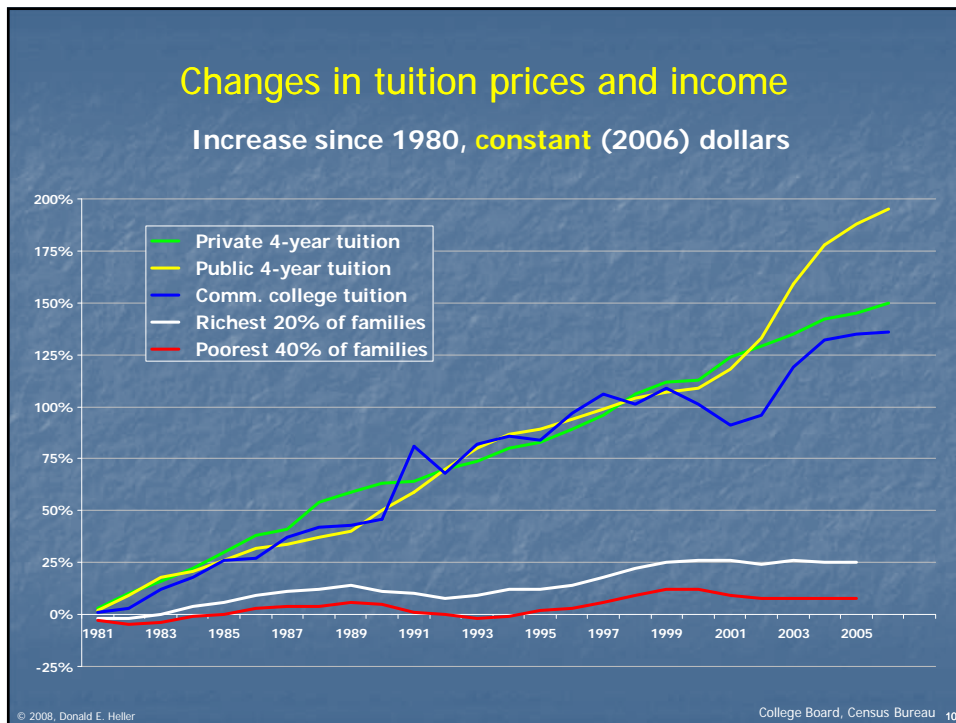
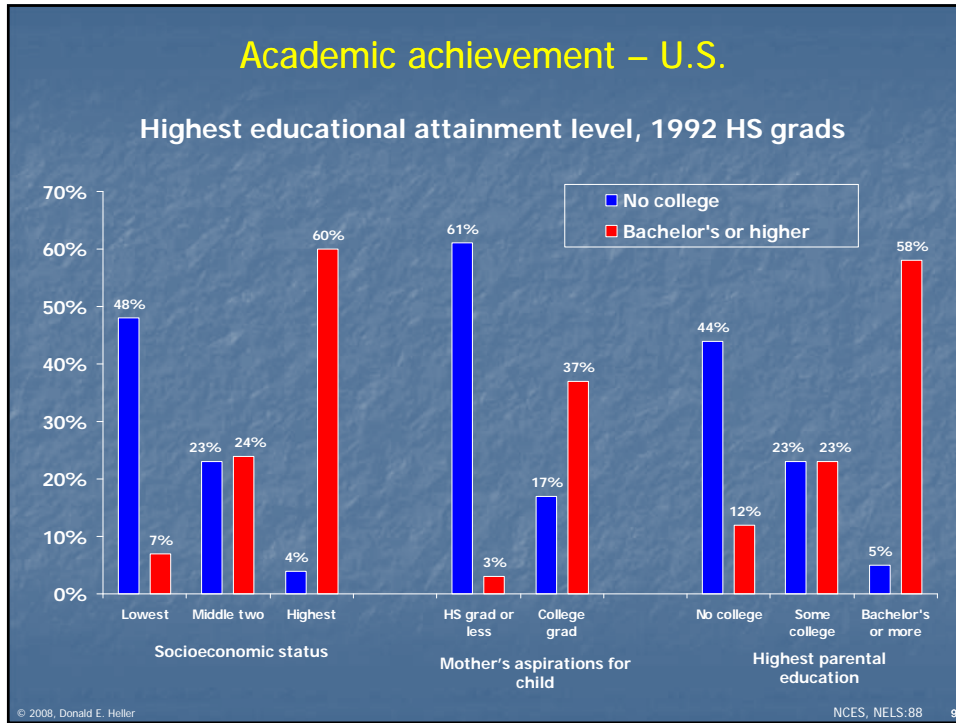


- Determinants of access**
- Academic
  - Social and cultural
  - Financial
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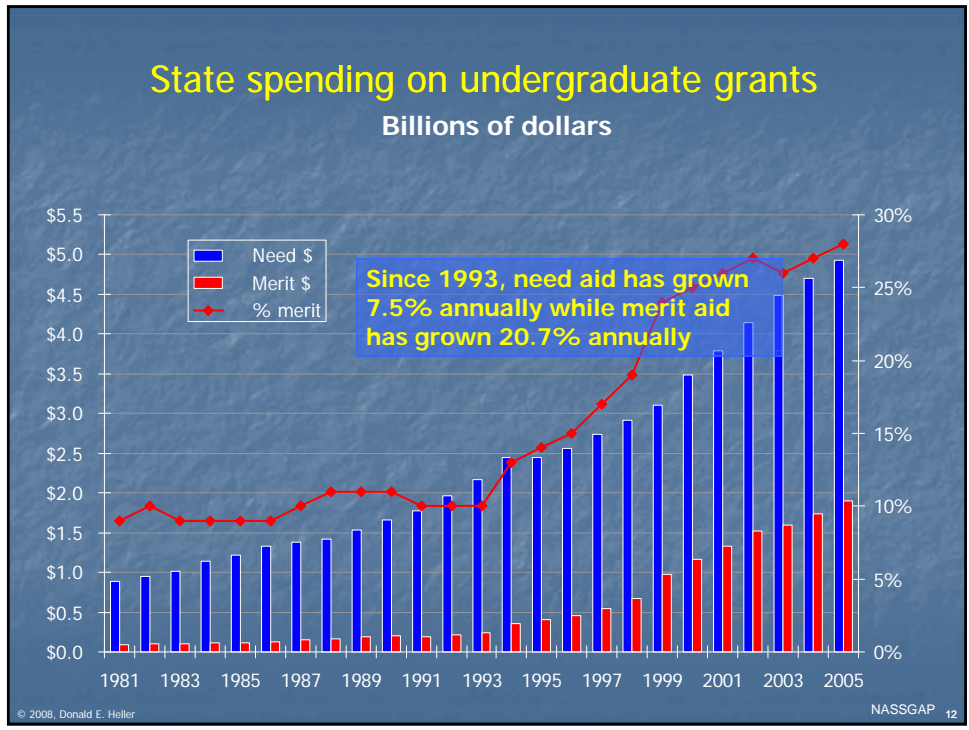
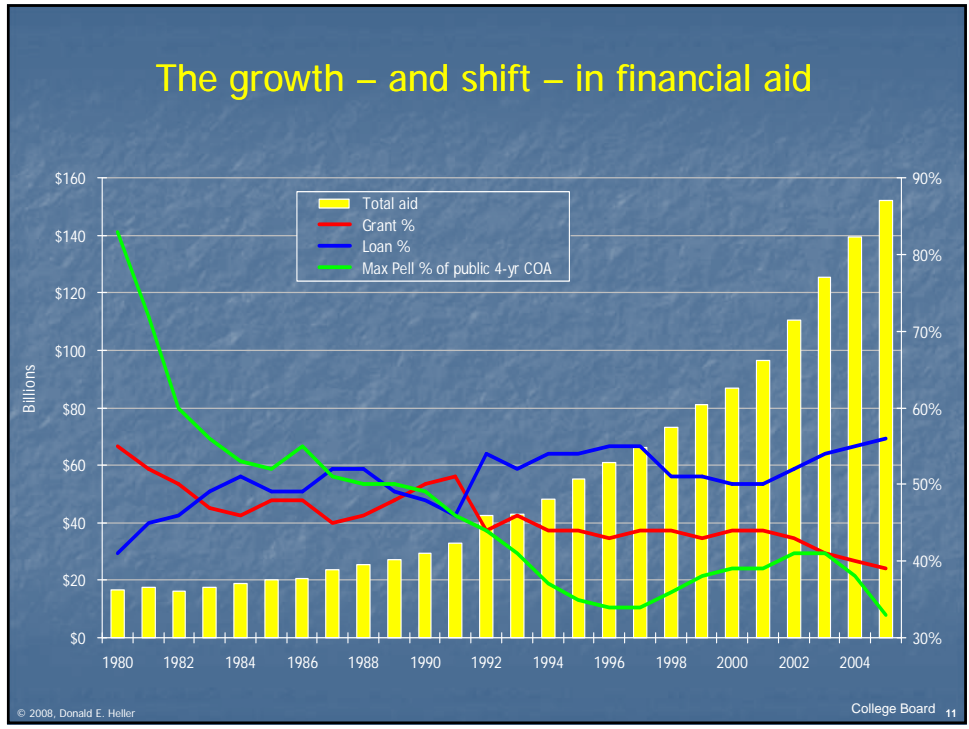
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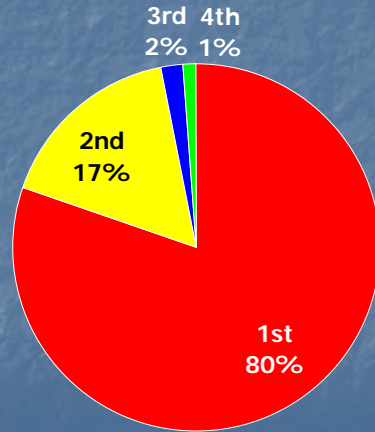


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**Distribution of grant dollars by income quartile**  
 2003-2004 dependent students, all institutions

- Family income quartiles (2002)
  - 1<sup>st</sup>: < \$33,346
  - 2<sup>nd</sup>: \$33,346 - \$60,175
  - 3<sup>rd</sup>: \$60,176 - \$92,433
  - 4<sup>th</sup>: > \$92,433
- Census benchmark – Median income of all families with at least one child ages 6 to 17 in 2002: \$54,249

Federal grants, \$4.0B

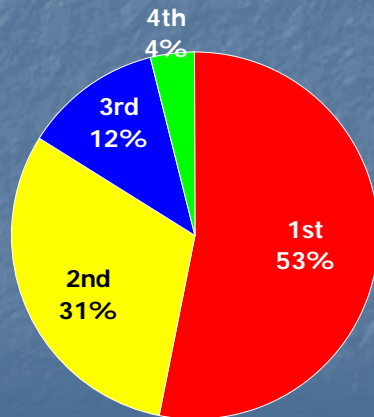


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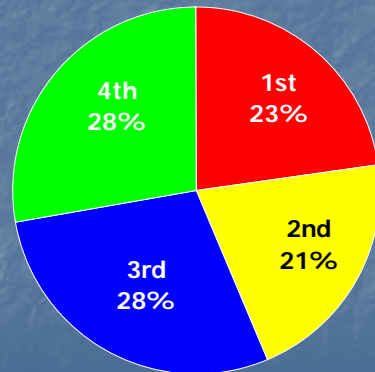
Students attending a single institution full time 13

**State grant dollars by income quartile**  
 2003-2004 dependent students, all institutions

Need grants, \$2.3B



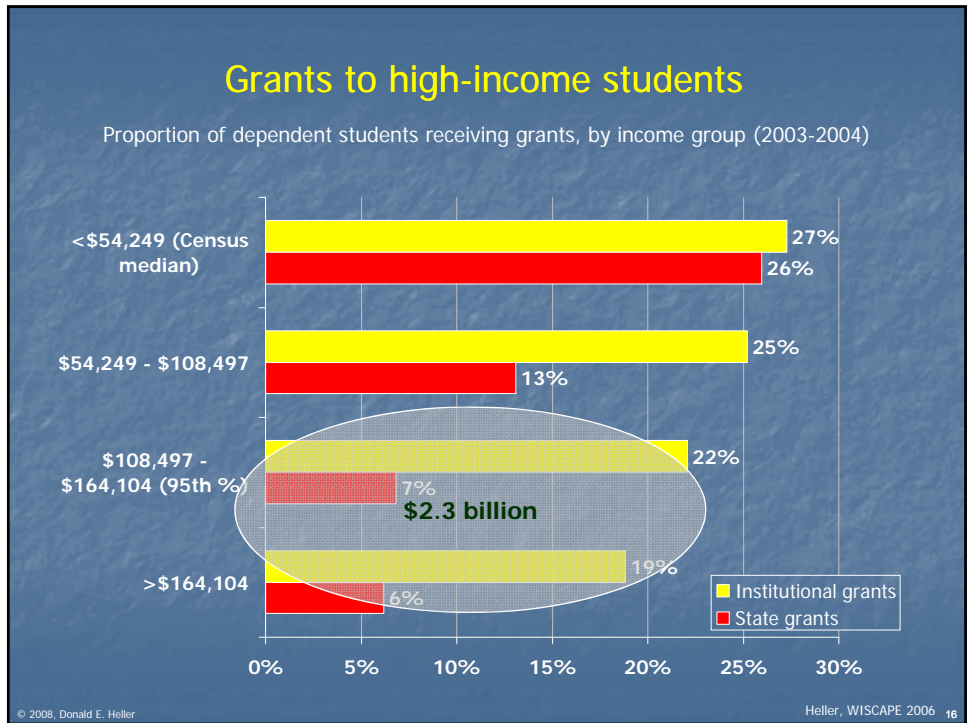
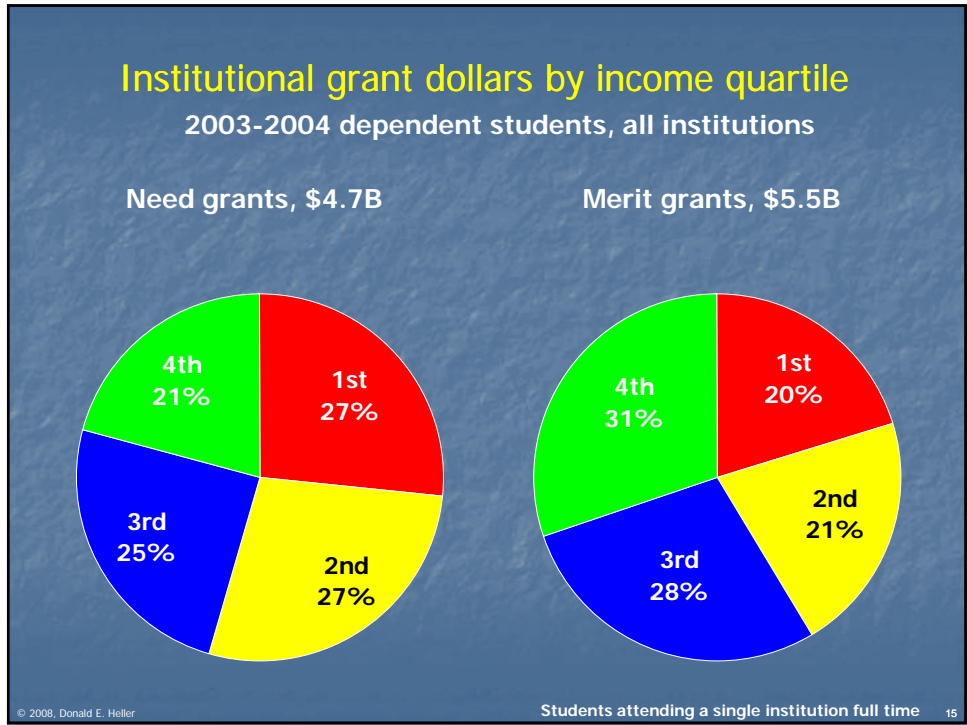
Merit grants, \$0.7B



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Students attending a single institution full time 14

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## The role of EOPs

- Academic preparation
  - Course taking
  - Test taking
  - Study skills
- Financial preparation
  - Information about college costs
  - Information about financial aid
  - Navigation through the financial aid process
- Social and cultural preparation
  - Appreciation for college
  - College visits
  - College success

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## Act 101 Program Evaluation

- Conducted by CSHE
- Three primary activities
  - Analysis of quantitative data submitted by programs to determine what program interventions and policies are related to student success
  - Qualitative case studies of specific institutions to highlight best practices
  - Programmatic and policy recommendations, including a proposed plan to expand or alter Act 101 based on the findings of the evaluation
- February, 2008 through December, 2008

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## Act 101 Program Evaluation

- Outcomes of interest
  - Ranges of program participation
  - Year-to-year college retention rates
  - Degree attainment rates
  - Other academic outcomes (i.e., GPA)
- Mixed methods design
  - Analysis of quantitative data, including data submitted by programs and surveys of student participants
  - Interviews with program staff
  - Case studies to identify best practices
- Concurrent session for Directors next to discuss further

## Conclusions

- Gaps in college participation are attributable to academic barriers *and* financial barriers
- Tuition prices have been – and likely will continue – to grow faster than ability to pay
- Institutional aid has become the largest source of grant aid
- Both states and institutions are shifting from need to merit criteria
- Grants are shifting up the income ladder

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Questions and discussion

<http://www.personal.psu.edu/deh29>