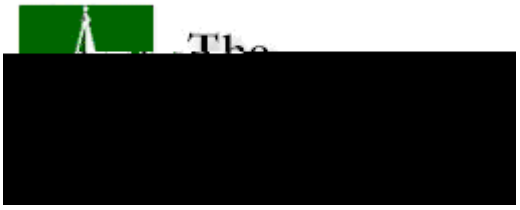

Vermont Legislative Research Shop

Higher Education: Increasing Access and Retention of Students

As public thinking about higher education shifted from seeing it as a public benefit to a private benefit, students saw coinciding increase in their share of the costs.

> As a result, students and their families have increased their share of the cost of higher education from about 35% in the late 1970s to 48% in the late 1990s. Between 1990 and 1998, for example, tuition and fees as a component of higher education revenue rose from $44 billion to $71.8 billion, an increase of $27.8 billion

Foundation, p. 6, 2009) without improving at the expense of the quality of education and accessibility.

> Nearly 58,000 working‐age adults — 18 percent of those in the workforce — have already earned some college credit. By focusing first on these residents, officials and educators should be able to make relatively rapid progress toward increasing the state's college‐attainment rates (Lumina Foundation, p.113, 2009).

To gain a clearer understanding of the state of education in Vermont, Table 1 presents educational attainment by county for Vermont.

Table 1: Percentage of young adults (ages 25‐34) with a two‐ or four‐ year degree by County for Vermont

1

loans are awarded to students based upon their predicted future income, not upon their current family economic situation. This makes the playing ground more equal for students who have economic barriers to higher education. Students have the option to pay yearly with a 15% discount, or