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THE IMPACT OF COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY FACULTY COLLECTIVE BARGAINING ON STATE APPROPRIATIONS TO PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION

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Many public college and university faculties have unionized since public employees gained the right to bargain collectively in several states. Most studies of the effects of faculty unionization have been at the institutional level and have included faculty compensation, workload, and other conditions of employment. Although results of these studies are mixed, unionized faculties at four-year institutions experience greater compensation increases in their early years of collective bargaining, but this early advantage subsequently tails off until there is no difference from nonunion counterparts. Conversely, nonunion faculties at two-year institutions experience greater compensation increases compared to union faculties. Few studies have investigated faculty unionization and institutional income in general or state allocations to public universities in particular. Increased institutional revenues are needed for faculty unions to successfully negotiate increases in compensation, and the largest source of current funds revenue for public colleges and universities is state appropriations. An analysis of the percentage changes in state higher education appropriations from 1990 through 1999 in the 50 states suggests that changes in state economic environment are more correlated with increased appropriations to public higher education than is faculty unionization. Results are presented for public higher education taken as whole and for both four-year and two year institutions. For all public higher education throughout the decade and for four-year public institutions during a portion of the decade characterized by stagnant or receding state economies, faculty unionization was negatively correlated with changes in state

appropriations. The correlation was significant, but weak, and contrary to the premise of the study. Whether state higher education governance was centralized or decentralized was not correlated with changes in appropriations during any portion of the study period.