enrollment. Policy advocates used research that showed correlations between high school courses and college outcomes as a basis for arguing for raising graduation requirements for all students within states (e.g., Conklin & Curran, 2005); at the time, there was only limited research that examined the unintended consequences of changes in graduation requirements. For example, Manset and Washburn (2000) found the implementation of mandatory exit exams had caused many special education students to complete high school without diplomas. We review examples of research used in advocacy for new requirements and studies of the consequences of both financial and educational policies for enrollment in 2- and 4-year colleges.

This review examines evidence of empirical linkages between policy changes and degree attainment rates. Much of the discourse on attainment has focused on student preparation, but the impact of ability to pay for college has largely been overlooked until recently, with the publication of the U.S. Department of Education's *A Test of Leadership: Changing the Future of U.S. Higher Education*, a 2006 report that considers both preparation and financial access. An emphasis on funding students has proved difficult to maintain, given the federal budget deficits, so the state role in financial aid takes on more importance. The literature review and the case studies provide further evidence to inform advocacy for a balanced approach.

Degree Attainment

Most of the federal research has focused on degree attainment in higher education. The policy arguments about preparation, financial aid, and support services have all been made, but until recently degree attainment was not a major policy issue. The publication of Bowen, Chingos, and McPherson's *Crossing the Finish Line: Completing College at America's Public Universities* (2009) raised awareness of the role of finances in the policy discourse. These analyses consider not only academic preparation and financial aid but also interventions within higher education. It is an opportune time for higher education policymakers and advocates to consider more-balanced approaches to advocacy for reforms influencing college success. The analyses in this volume add to the newly emerging body of work that links public policies to degree attainment for diverse groups.

BALANCING RATIONALITY AND ADVOCACY

The United States led the global rush to market models in K–12 and higher education at the same time as new conservatives were pushing an accountability-driven approach to reform in K–12 education. This approach limited innovation,[7] arguing that K–12 policy should focus on outcomes rather than equalizing input (Finn, 1990a) and the waste in higher education (Bennett, 1987). These arguments for control and regulation through accountability and reducing costs prevailed, limiting the role of the market forces put into motion by charter schools in K–12 education and the privatization of public higher education.

Given the political constraints on tax increases, it is unlikely the United States will return to a social progressive period in which taxpayers support higher education, a pattern still evident in some European countries. Instead, the potential economies of the market model, at least for taxpayers, need to be weighed against the inequalities of the dysfunctional model that has evolved. Under these conditions, how can higher education adapt and find better ways to emphasize equity once again? Since we don't assume