Public Abstract
First Name: Alaine
Middle Name: K
Last Name: Arnott
Adviser's First Name: Bradley
Adviser's Last Name: Curs
Graduation Term: SP 2012
Department: Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis
Degree: PhD
Title: A Descriptive Analysis of Fees at Four-Year Public Universities: Differentiating Between Tuition and Fees

Despite the overabundance of data collected and analyzed about tuition as a primary cost of public higher education, little to no attention has been paid to fees as a portion of that cost. Most of the existing research combines tuition and required fees into one entity, rarely separating fees from tuition, and disregarding non-required fees altogether. Framed by the theories of academic capitalism, resource dependency, and neoliberalism (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004), this descriptive analysis examines the use of required and non-required fees as part of the overall price of public higher education institutions, differentiating at both the in-state and out-of-state, and the undergraduate and graduate levels. Further, internal and external institutional factors are compared with the use of fees as a revenue generating strategy to see if differences exist among certain public institutions. Findings suggest that there are differences among fee structures as institutions that are more research intensive tend to charge higher fees than non-research intensive, indicating that research institutions may be using fees as a way to increase revenue, enhance perceived quality, and remain competitive in the marketplace. Results also indicate that the external variables of region, state, governance structure, political culture, and regulation contribute to variations in fee structures exhibiting that fees are not as simple in their creation as one might think. The results could prove valuable in the arenas of finance and policy creation for public higher education institutions by allowing policy to be created that will change the current fee environment from a hidden procedure to a more evident process.