

American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU)

2012 Public Policy Agenda

Synopsis

2012 Public Policy Principles

1. Common Good/Individual Benefits

“Higher Education is a common good that provides significant benefits to individuals and society as a whole.”

2. Embodiment of democratic ideas

“America’s public higher education system stands as an embodiment of the nation’s democratic ideals. ...”

3. Promised return on America’s investment in Education

“State colleges and universities are committed to delivering America’s promise through quality

4. Accessibility

“No American should be denied the opportunity to pursue higher education for lack of financial resources

2012 Public Policy Priority Areas

- *Affordability (AFF)*
- *Access and Completion (AC)*
- *Accountability (ACC)*
- *Competiveness©*

Some of the specific priorities include the following:

Area	Priority
AFF	Baseline Pell Amount of \$4,860.
AFF	Pell Grant amounts are based on income.
AFF	Make Tax Credits for college tuition permanent.
AFF	Exempt Pell Grants from a factor in determining the amount of the tax credit.
AFF	Make permanent the opportunity to transfer (up to \$100K) from an IRA tax free, to charitable and other non-profit organizations.
AC	Direct support to public higher education institutions that enroll a high percentage of low income students.
AC	Increase funding to help states align P-12 and higher education curricula, standards and assessment.
AC	Support continued appropriation levels for Title III of the Higher Education Act.
AC	Support and promote the benefits provided to veterans.
ACC	Support the continued development of comprehensive data systems based on common data elements.
ACC	Hold states accountable for appropriation levels.
ACC	Work to devise more accurate student progress and completion measures.
C	Support the strengthening and funding of high-quality clinical experiences in all traditional teacher preparation programs.
C	Support meaningful partnerships between state and local education agencies and higher education to support teacher education.
C	Secure a dedicated funding stream to support reform in university-based teacher preparation.



2012
Public Policy
Agenda

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American Association of State
Colleges and Universities

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2012 PUBLIC POLICY PRINCIPLES

AASCU's *Public Policy Agenda* is rooted in an uncompromising commitment to opportunity for the nation's students and expressed through the following core principles:

- ◆ **Higher education is a common good that provides significant benefits to individuals and society as a whole.** While the personal gains from higher education are widely acknowledged, the societal benefits are even more significant and lasting, thus warranting continued public investment. These include tangible returns through economic productivity and increased tax revenues, but even more fundamentally, through the promotion of an enlightened citizenry and greater social cohesion and inclusion.
- ◆ **America's public higher education system stands as an embodiment of the nation's democratic ideals.** State colleges and universities accomplish this by promoting broad access to education for all students, regardless of socioeconomic background, thus transforming society and setting a global standard. Amid fundamental changes in the state–campus relationship, this principle must not be compromised.
- ◆ **State colleges and universities are committed to delivering America's promise** through quality undergraduate and graduate programs that reflect responsible stewardship of the public investment; meaningful engagement with the social and economic issues facing their states, regions and communities; and the promotion of global awareness, understanding and competitiveness.
- ◆ **No American should be denied the opportunity to pursue higher education for lack of financial resources.** Affordable public sector tuition and need-based federal aid are the two requisite ingredients for realizing this ideal.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Colleagues:

I am pleased to present to you the American Association of State Colleges and Universities' 2012 *Public Policy Agenda*. This annual statement of policy principles and positions guides the association's advocacy on current and developing issues at the federal and state levels.



Continuing economic challenges and intense, often rancorous political debate leading up to the 2012 presidential election form the backdrop for this year's *Public Policy Agenda*. As recovery from the Great Recession continues to proceed more slowly than expected, public colleges and universities remain hampered by reduced state revenues and little hope for additional, substantive federal support. As a result, students continue to face significant tuition increases, as well as larger class sizes and reduced program and course offerings. Finding ways to assure affordability, meet increased demand for services, maintain quality and boost college completions remain important—and often daunting—goals for public higher education.

The administration's college completion agenda, calling for the United States to lead the world in educational attainment by 2020, has reinforced interest in college retention and graduation rates and brings important focus to the role of affordable, accessible public colleges. The Race to the Top grant competition has prompted governors to adopt common standards for K-12 education and is stimulating interest in the evaluation of teachers on the basis of performance. 2011 also witnessed continued scrutiny of for-profit higher education, with discussion underway of proposed rules to safeguard the federal student aid program from fraud and abuse. Congress and the administration continued bipartisan discussions around the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which may be completed sometime in 2012. All of these activities set the stage for AASCU's advocacy work in the coming year.

AASCU will work in the coming year to maintain the vibrancy of, and seek full funding for, the Pell Grant Program. We will strengthen our efforts to support effective P-20 partnerships and high-quality teacher education. We will continue our economic and workforce development efforts by ensuring that urban and rural institutions have funding opportunities available. As policymakers at

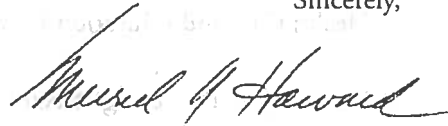
FROM THE PRESIDENT

all levels of government place demands on institutions to seek more efficient delivery and higher educational attainment, AASCU will work to ensure that metrics are appropriate and realistic.

AASCU calls on policymakers to honor their commitments to the nation's students and their families, and to work together to ensure that the doors of college opportunity remain open for all. Investment in human capital, by laying the foundation for state and national economic prosperity, is in the long-term best interests of all our citizens.

The 2012 *Public Policy Agenda* is intended to serve as a point of reference for the association's members and other interested organizations, as well as federal and state policymakers. The association and its members stand ready to do their part to ensure a higher education system worthy of the public's hope and trust.

Sincerely,



Muriel A. Howard

2012 PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES

AASCU's advocacy efforts in 2012 will focus on the theme of Delivering America's Promise in four broad policy arenas: Affordability, Access and Completion, Accountability and Competitiveness. AASCU will continue to promote public policy that honors long-standing commitments to the nation's students and their families. What follows are key public policy priorities for the association in the year ahead:

Affordability Priorities

- ◆ Advocate for sufficient funding to sustain the value of Pell Grant awards by ensuring an appropriations base of \$4,860 given the escalating demand for awards. This amount will ensure the path of predictable and continuous growth laid out by President Obama as realized through the passage of the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act.
- ◆ Focus any restructuring of Pell Grant Program eligibility, in large measure, on income, since the program is fundamentally a financially-based access program.
- ◆ Ensure that the Department of Education delivers high quality service through the Direct Loan Program process, especially with regard to adequate and timely information, early outreach to delinquent borrowers and more accommodating recovery efforts for borrowers in default.
- ◆ Encourage the Department of Education to promptly contact delinquent borrowers in the Direct Loan Program, as well as borrowers whose loans were directly or indirectly purchased by the federal government, to avoid default. The department should put these borrowers in an appropriate repayment plan, including Income Based Repayment (IBR) and Income Contingent Repayment (ICR), and set up special handling for those borrowers who have recurring repayment problems.
- ◆ Encourage the Department of Education to utilize all necessary federal and institutional sources to maintain contact with borrowers during the six-month post-graduation grace period so that they can successfully enter repayment. According to department data, lack of up-to-date contact information is the major cause of loan default.

- ◆ Support a legislative change to require mandatory use of institutional certification of private loans by lenders. This will help ensure that students and families fully utilize state and federal grants and less expensive financing options such as subsidized and unsubsidized Stafford Loans and PLUS Loans before securing more costly private loans.
- ◆ Support the extension or permanency of the American Opportunity Tax Credit (AOTC) as established in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act in order to assist needy students, which provides a tax credit up to \$2,500. Taxpayers receive a tax credit based on 100 percent of the first \$2,000 of tuition, fees and course materials paid during the taxable year, plus 25 percent of the next \$2,000 of tuition, fees and course materials. Up to a maximum of 40 percent of the amount of the credit is “refundable.”
- ◆ Advocate for a provision in AOTC that exempts Pell Grants from being applied toward tuition and fees used to determine the tax credit, in order for low-income individuals to take full advantage of the credit.
- ◆ Support the establishment of a federal tax exemption for loan forgiveness proceeds for borrowers in the Income Contingent Repayment and Income Based Repayment programs.
- ◆ Support the permanency of the Individual Retirement Account (IRA) Charitable Rollover, which expired at the end of 2011, permitting individuals 70½ and older to transfer up to \$100,000 from an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) tax-free to charitable and other nonprofit organizations. This will help colleges and universities generate new or increased contributions to maintain benefits to students, particularly financial aid.

Access and Completion Priorities

- ◆ Advocate for direct support to public institutions of higher education that enroll a high percentage of low-income individuals.
- ◆ Support funding directed toward states in their efforts to align P-12 and higher education curricula, standards and assessments to ensure that students are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in postsecondary education and the workforce.
- ◆ Support continued appropriation levels for Title III of the Higher Education Act, which supports the development and strengthening of: Historically Black Colleges and Universities; Predominantly Black Institutions; American Indian

2012 PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES

Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities; Alaska Native and Hawaiian Serving Institutions; Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions; and Native American Serving Institutions.

- ◆ Advocate for sustained funding for Title V of the Higher Education Act, which supports the development and strengthening of Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) in order to address the nation's changing demographics and increasing enrollments at HSIs.
- ◆ Support continued legislative changes and/or technical corrections to the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 in order to make procedures simpler and more transparent, as well as standardize benefit processing in accordance with accepted higher education practices.
- ◆ Assure that veteran students receive their full education benefit entitlement for military service, irrespective of other forms of financial assistance. Continue collaborating with appropriate stakeholders to attempt to mitigate the confusion for veteran students and increased administrative burden for institutions created by the “payer of last resort” and other amendments to the Post-9/11 GI Bill.
- ◆ Oppose unfunded mandates imposed by the VA or Congress on institutions without regard to established higher education processes and funding streams. Tuition and fees paid by the VA defray the cost of veteran students' classroom education—as all other students' tuition and fee payments defray the cost of their classroom education. These monies cannot be diverted to other veteran support services, such as psychological counseling or veterans' centers, without jeopardizing the academic enterprise.
- ◆ Support clarification of existing federal immigration law to allow states to determine the tuition status of qualified undocumented students, as espoused in previous iterations of the proposed Development, Relief and Education of Alien Minors (DREAM) Act. AASCU believes that states' authority over tuition policy must be preserved and respected.
- ◆ Support access to federal loan and work study programs for qualified undocumented students, as espoused in previous iterations of the DREAM Act. Student qualifications may include those who were brought to the United States under the age of 16, have resided in the U.S. for five or more years, have graduated from a U.S. high school, and are individuals of good moral character who are pursuing postsecondary education to qualify for permanent residency status.

Accountability Priorities

- ◆ Support the continued development and utilization of comprehensive state data systems, and the advancement of an integrated network of state data systems, based on common data elements, to serve as a privacy-protected state-based system of student level longitudinal data.
- ◆ Advocate to hold states accountable for maintaining specific state appropriation levels to public higher education whenever the federal government provides additional, general support funds beyond historical, programmatic funding to ensure that federal dollars are not used to supplant existing state operating dollars.
- ◆ Oppose any attempts to impose federal cost containment measures on institutions.
- ◆ Encourage federal recognition of voluntary reporting structures such as the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA).
- ◆ Focus national educational completion goals and federal evaluation efforts on the absolute number of Americans with a degree or certificate, rather than solely on institutional graduation rates.
- ◆ Work to devise more accurate student progress and completion measures that encompass the persistence and success of all students, including transfer and part-time students.
- ◆ Support integrity in federal student financial aid programs and strengthen the original intent of the “90/10 Rule.” This can be done by including all federal sources of income in the 90 percent calculation.

Competitiveness Priorities

- ◆ Support strong, meaningful partnerships between state and local education agencies and institutions of higher education to support teacher education; standards, curricula and assessment alignment; and accountability.
- ◆ Support the strengthening and funding of high-quality clinical experiences in all traditional teacher preparation programs and require that all federally funded alternative teacher preparation programs include high-quality clinical experiences. Clinical experiences are essential components in preparation programs, especially when preparing teacher candidates to teach diverse students in high-needs rural and urban schools.

2012 PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES

- ◆ Secure a dedicated funding stream to support reform in university-based teacher preparation.
- ◆ Ensure that any federally funded grant program supporting reform in teacher preparation programs requires a meaningful and sustained partnership with a high-needs P-12 school district and places a strong emphasis on clinical training.
- ◆ Provide appropriations for the Rural Development Grants for Rural Colleges and Universities program. These grants encourage partnerships between rural colleges and universities and local entities that promote greater access to college for rural high school students, increase the number of adults in rural communities with a bachelor's degree or higher, enhance training opportunities and stimulate technological innovation.
- ◆ Support efforts to reauthorize, authorize and fund programs that encourage research and partnerships between urban and metropolitan anchor institutions and their communities. These efforts are designed to promote economic and workforce development, community revitalization, teacher recruitment and greater access to college for urban high school students.
- ◆ Advocate for reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) to more fully include and recognize the role of public four-year colleges and universities in workforce education and include state college and university leaders in planning and decision-making processes for state utilization of federal WIA funds.

AFFORDABILITY

American families continue to identify college affordability as one of their biggest concerns. AASCU, representing more than 400 institutions and heads of systems on behalf of over 3.9 million students who attend these institutions, advocates for a higher education finance model that ensures every student can afford a college education without the burden of undue debt. This model recognizes the interplay of federal, state, institutional and family funding sources, with a reliance on significant federal student support as its base, in order to meet the need of low-income individuals.

Student grants, student loans and tax policies all contribute to college affordability. AASCU believes that while each is an important piece of financing a college education, limited public resources should be targeted to the neediest students in the form of direct grant aid. Student debt should be limited, student loan repayment options flexible and manageable for students in all income categories, work-study opportunities available and financially feasible for students, and education tax benefits transparent.

Federal policymakers have remained focused on higher education, mainly due to the funding demands of the Pell Grant Program. A result of current economic conditions is that more individuals are seeking some form of postsecondary education. As such, more individuals are eligible for and are receiving the Pell Grant award. The success of the program has increased the amount of funds needed to support a maximum award of \$5,550 in an environment of fiscal restraint. The Budget Control Act, passed last year, provided additional funds to address the funding gap, but only on a short-term basis.

The transition to the issuance of all federal education loans by the federal government through the Direct Loan Program has seemingly been smooth. AASCU has and will continue to closely monitor this program to ensure that students experience a streamlined conversion, as well as informed servicing. Many borrowers are not aware of the new payment options and benefits available to them. This leads many to become “defaulters” with harsh financial penalties and no statute of limitations. AASCU believes that the goal now should be to streamline and reform borrower repayment in federal student loan programs to ensure that all borrowers are able to repay their loans using an appropriate repayment plan without incurring penalties.

Moving forward, it is important to strengthen and build on these improvements. AASCU believes in a student-aid financing model heavily based on federal grants supplemented with a combination of state grants and institutional aid in order to cover a significant portion of the financial need for a low-income student attending a public institution. The remaining costs should attempt to exhaust federal loan resources, if necessary. This model is predicated on the premise that states and institutions should work to ensure affordable tuition via adequate state operating support and grant aid for students.

FEDERAL ROLE IN COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY

AASCU POLICY STATEMENTS

Federal Grants

Pell Grants

- ◆ Advocate for sufficient funding to sustain the value of Pell Grant awards by ensuring an appropriations base of \$4,860 given the escalating demand for awards. This amount will ensure the path of predictable and continuous growth laid out by President Obama as realized through the passage of the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act.

In the 2010-2011 academic year, AASCU institutions enrolled over 1.4 million Pell Grant recipients who received more than \$5.6 billion in Pell Grant funds.

The 2011-2012 maximum Pell Grant award (\$5,550) covers approximately 33 percent of the 2011-12 in-state cost of attendance at public four-year institutions (\$17,131) and approximately 67 percent of in-state tuition and fees (\$8,244).

- ◆ Focus any restructuring of Pell Grant Program eligibility, in large measure, on income, since the program is fundamentally a financially-based access program.
- Should it be necessary to find savings from the Pell Grant Program, prioritize funding for the neediest individuals, and focus changes in a manner that will have minimal impact on average award size and number of recipients.

Campus-Based Financial Aid Programs

- Support continued funding for the Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant Program (FSEOG), Federal Work-Study Program (FWS) and Perkins Loan Program.

Federal Student Loans

- ◆ Ensure that the Department of Education delivers high-quality service through the Direct Loan program process, especially with regard to adequate and timely information, early outreach to delinquent borrowers and more accommodating recovery efforts for borrowers in default.

Loan Repayment

- ◆ Encourage the Department of Education to promptly contact delinquent borrowers in the Direct Loan Program, as well as borrowers whose loans were directly or indirectly purchased by the federal government, to avoid default. The department should put these borrowers in an appropriate repayment

plan, including Income Based Repayment (IBR) and Income Contingent Repayment (ICR), and set up special handling for those borrowers who have recurring repayment problems.

- ◆ Encourage the Department of Education to utilize all necessary federal and institutional sources to maintain contact with borrowers during the six-month post-graduation grace period so that they can successfully enter repayment. According to department data, lack of up-to-date contact information is the major cause of loan default.
- Encourage Congressional oversight of loan servicing to identify any legislative changes needed to promote the use of income-related repayments and avoid the use of excessive forbearance, which greatly increases student interest charges.
- Require that any federal Stafford Guaranteed Loan that is past due for a specified period of time be immediately assigned by the lender to the Department of Education. The department should immediately inform the borrower of the full range of repayment options and assist in selecting an option most appropriate to the financial circumstances of the borrower.
- Support a change in federal student loan collection policy to collect only what is currently due and manageable instead of adhering to a practice of declaring the entire loan to be due and payable. Such a change in policy would allow borrowers to cure their past-due status and mitigate the accumulation of excessive collection charges and fees when collection agencies are able to assess penalty fees based on the entire loan rather than just the payments due to date.
- Advocate for new federal capital, continued institutional discretion to determine student awards based on need, and maintenance of at least current institutional award level in any Perkins Loan Program restructuring.
- Fully reimburse institutions for loan cancellations related to service-related activity in the military, teaching, public service, law enforcement, corrections and firefighting.

Private Loans

- ◆ Support a legislative change to require mandatory use of institutional certification of private loans by lenders. This will help ensure that students and families fully utilize state and federal grants and less expensive financing options, such as subsidized and unsubsidized Stafford Loans and PLUS Loans, before securing more costly private loans.
- Support revising the bankruptcy code to permit the discharge of private educational loans in bankruptcy proceedings to provide greater protection to borrowers faced with unmanageable student loan debt burden.

According to the College Board, estimated private education loan volume declined to 8 percent of the total education loan volume in 2009-2010 and 7 percent of the total education loan volume in 2010-2011. Private loan borrowing totaled approximately \$6 billion in 2010-2011 (66 percent lower than in 2005-2006).

For the first time since Sallie Mae's national study *How America Pays for College* began, more families reported filing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) than in the previous study year. Eighty percent of families surveyed filed the FAFSA in 2010-2011, as opposed to 72 percent in 2009-2010. But the study also indicated that the low-income families surveyed paid 14 percent more for college in 2010-2011 than in 2009-2010—and paid more for college than the middle- and high-income families surveyed.

Private non-federal student loans (also known as "alternative loans") are offered by private lenders, institutions and state guaranty agencies and are not backed by the federal government. These private loans often have much higher fees and interest rates than federal loans, and may lack many benefits such as cancellation provisions and alternative repayment plans offered to federal student loan borrowers.

Tax Policy

Student-Related Tax Policy

- ◆ Support the extension or permanency of the American Opportunity Tax Credit (AOTC) as established in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act in order to assist needy students, which provides a tax credit up to \$2,500. Taxpayers receive a tax credit based on 100 percent of the first \$2,000 of tuition, fees and course materials paid during the taxable year, plus 25 percent of the next \$2,000 of tuition, fees and course materials. Up to a maximum of 40 percent of the amount of the credit is "refundable."
- ◆ Advocate for a provision in AOTC that exempts Pell Grants from being applied toward tuition and fees used to determine the tax credit, in order for low-income individuals to take full advantage of the credit.
- ◆ Support the establishment of a federal tax exemption for loan forgiveness proceeds for borrowers in the Income Contingent Repayment and Income Based Repayment programs.

According to the College Board, the refundability of the AOTC meant the percentage of total tax savings (from both education credits and deductions) for filers with an Adjusted Gross Income below \$25,000 increased from 5 percent in 2008 to 17 percent in 2009.

- Support the reinstatement of the above-the-line tax deduction for up to \$4,000 in tuition and fee expenses, which expired in 2009.
- Continue support for a refundable tax credit for student loan interest paid by low-income borrowers.
- Oppose any proposed modification of the Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) exemption for students working on college and university campuses.

Institution-Related Tax Policy

- ◆ Support the permanency of the Individual Retirement Account (IRA) Charitable Rollover, which expired at the end of 2011, permitting individuals 70½ and older to transfer up to \$100,000 from an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) tax-free to charitable and other nonprofit organizations. This will help colleges and universities generate new or increased contributions to maintain benefits to students, particularly financial aid.
- Oppose any proposal to restrict deductions for noncash gifts to the amount paid for such property, rather than the current standard of fair market value.
- Support legislation that would allow taxpayers who do not itemize deductions on their federal income tax returns to claim a deduction for charitable contributions.
- Oppose a permanent extension of the federal estate tax repeal, and call on Congress to instead consider estate tax reforms that balance the needs of farmers and small business owners with those of states and charitable organizations.
- Support the active enforcement of existing laws and regulations governing the tax-exempt status of nonprofit and charitable organizations over the expansion of these laws and regulations. Specifically, AASCU supports current law that places the burden of proof for reasonable compensation under the intermediate sanctions law on the Internal Revenue Service.
- Oppose any attempt to repeal the existing exemption of tuition remission for college and university employees.

FEDERAL ROLE IN COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY

- Oppose any proposal to increase the federal tax liability of public college and university employees by changing the treatment of their contributions to state retirement plans.
- Oppose IRS attempts to create standardized definitions for early or normal retirement age with regard to state and local governmental plans; rather, IRS should defer to applicable state or local laws, regulations and policies governing the plans.
- Oppose any proposal to make the Medicare Payroll Tax mandatory for all public sector employees, regardless of hire date or participation in another insurance plan.
- Oppose any proposal to restrict or eliminate the ability of state and local governments to advance refund their tax exempt bonds; i.e., refinancing of outstanding bonds before they reach their call date.
- Oppose any legislation mandating institutions of higher education to spend down their endowment assets.

According to the College Board, in 2009-2010 the estimated median average amount of endowment assets per FTE student was about \$12,770 at public four-year doctorate granting universities and about \$2,280 at public four-year master's universities, compared to an estimated median average of about \$58,800 at private four-year doctorate-granting universities and about \$10,410 at private four-year master's universities.

STATE ROLE IN COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY

AASCU POLICY STATEMENTS

Public Colleges and Universities as Critical Public Investments

- Encourage state lawmakers to view their public colleges and universities as economic assets that provide critical competitive leverage, even in recessionary periods; thus, operating support for public postsecondary institutions and per-student appropriations should be elevated as a state policy priority.
- Support states' utilization of equitable performance funding incentives that promote institutional efforts to boost degree completion, and which account for the diverse missions within the public higher education sector.

In 1985, tuition income represented 23 percent of public postsecondary institutions' operating revenues, with the balance of 77 percent covered by state and local appropriations. By fiscal year 2010, the tuition share of revenues had climbed to 40 percent while the state appropriations share had declined to 60 percent. The state-to-student cost shift in who pays for college is especially evident at public master's universities, where in 2009 tuition revenues accounted for 48.7 percent of Education and Related (E&R) spending, with the state funding share down to 51.3 percent.

State Financial Aid: Strengthened Investment in Need-Based Aid

- Encourage states to bolster their investment in need-based grant programs that promote increased access for low-income undergraduate students, especially those who are Pell-eligible.
- Encourage states to support programs that facilitate the completion of postsecondary credentials for nontraditional student populations, such as those who are over the age of 25 and those who attend part-time.

Education Tax Credits

- Support provision of state income tax credits for students' and parents' investment in higher education, to include tuition, fees and related expenses.
- Support tax credits for employers who provide tuition reimbursement or other incentives to employees to promote postsecondary enrollment.

College Savings Plans

- Support state efforts to provide and sustain fiscally sound state prepaid tuition plans. Encourage states to make every effort to keep enrollment open to future enrollees.
- Encourage state policy reforms of 529 savings plans to increase future savings for lower-income families. Consider “seed” funding initiatives that provide an initial contribution and/or matching monies up to a specified dollar amount. Provide greater individual protection of 529 savings plans from creditors. Urge states to extend tax benefits to families using any state’s 529 plan.

Recognition of Inflationary Pressures Impacting Higher Education

- Encourage states to recognize the higher-than-average relative price level of the goods and services purchased by colleges and universities, and to choose appropriate inflation indexes when drafting state policy that affects tuition pricing, state operating support and grant aid programs. Alternative indices to the CPI include the Higher Education Price Index (HEPI), administered by the Commonfund Institute, and the Higher Education Cost Adjustment (HECA), administered by the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) association.

Inflationary costs for the typical market basket of goods purchased by higher education institutions were 2.3 percent, more than doubling between FY 2010 and FY 2011, according to the Commonfund Institute. This reversal of recent trends was driven by increases in every market basket cost factor except administrative salaries and service employee salaries.

Improved Transparency of Tuition Cost Changes

- Urge states, coordinating boards and other agencies to improve transparency and comparability by expressing tuition changes in dollar terms as opposed to percentage terms—especially as it may relate to formal policy affecting state institutions, such as the provision of state operating support.

Reporting tuition cost changes in dollar figures rather than in percentages leads to greater transparency and clarity. For example, according to the College Board, in-state tuition and fees rose by an average of 8.3 percent in 2011-2012 at state public four-year colleges, higher than the 4.5 percent increase at the nation’s private four-year not-for-profit colleges and the 3.2 increase at for-profit institutions—yet, the actual dollar increases paid by students were \$631, \$1,235 and \$447, respectively.

Mandated Tuition Caps

- Discourage mandated tuition caps on state colleges and universities that are set by state legislatures. Externally imposed tuition caps may lead to decreased academic quality, reduced ability to respond to market opportunities, and reduced institutional student financial aid. Exceptions may exist in cases where state appropriations sufficiently offset losses in tuition revenues.

Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR)

- Discourage efforts to amend state constitutions to place arbitrary limits on revenues and expenditures through Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABORs) or similar means. Inadequate funding of institutions of higher education penalizes students. The imposition of arbitrary limits on revenues and expenditures constrains the flexibility of state elected leaders to respond to changing needs and circumstances and to invest strategically in the state's economic future, and they have proven devastating to higher education funding.

ACCESS AND COMPLETION

Access to college means ensuring that all students who wish to pursue a higher education have the opportunity to do so, regardless of their socioeconomic, demographic, geographic or academic backgrounds. It includes the opportunity to earn admittance, experience a supportive environment during their studies, and graduate from college prepared to succeed in the workplace and participate as a citizen of the world.

While state and federal governments, as well as institutions, play a role in ensuring that the path to college is as smooth as possible for all students, state and federal governments play an especially important role in ensuring equal access to college. The states and federal government, in partnership with the nation's P-12 system, have a responsibility to focus the most effective strategies for access and inclusion on the precollege years and work to reduce barriers in the transition from secondary to postsecondary education. AASCU is assisting institutions through two initiatives focused on college readiness that offer insights for policymakers.

The Department of Veterans Affairs has begun to implement changes to the Post 9/11 GI Bill Program. AASCU is actively monitoring this implementation and the effect it is having on veterans and campuses. AASCU and its member institutions continue to be asked to testify before Congress to provide observations and share perspectives. As Congress continues to revamp and review the implementation, AASCU will remain actively engaged in discussions with policymakers, advocating positive change that will reduce confusion and lead to a more simplified process.

AASCU institutions enroll significant numbers of low-income and first-generation students. Ensuring that these students are college ready is important, but just as important is having a substantially supportive environment at the postsecondary level. To this end, AASCU has historically supported institutional funding that rewards enrollment and success of this population of students.

Looking forward, Congress will be reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. AASCU will work to strengthen teacher development programs and prioritize critical applications learned from our college ready efforts in order to better prepare high school graduates not only with an understanding of curricula, but also armed with the skill sets needed to achieve college success.

FEDERAL ROLE IN COLLEGE ACCESS AND COMPLETION

AASCU POLICY STATEMENTS

Institutional Support

- ◆ Advocate for direct support to public institutions of higher education that enroll a high percentage of low-income individuals.

K-12 and Postsecondary Education Alignment

- ◆ Support funding directed toward states in their efforts to align P-12 and higher education curricula, standards and assessments to ensure that students are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in postsecondary education and the workforce.
- Support state efforts in the implementation of the Common Core State Standards in mathematics and English language arts.

Diversity and Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs)

- Support higher education policies that ensure equal access to educational opportunities for all students.
- ◆ Support continued appropriation levels for Title III of the Higher Education Act, which supports the development and strengthening of: Historically Black Colleges and Universities; Predominantly Black Institutions; American Indian Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities; Alaska Native and Hawaiian Serving Institutions, Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions; and Native American Serving Institutions.
- Advocate for sustained funding for Title V of the Higher Education Act, which supports the development and strengthening of Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) in order to address the nation's changing demographics and increasing enrollments at HSIs.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), between 2008-2019, college enrollment is expected to increase 7 percent for white students, 30 percent for black non-Hispanic students, 45 percent for Hispanic students, 30 percent for Asian/Pacific Islander students, and 5 percent for Native American/Alaskan Native students.

Federal Early Outreach and Student Services Programs: TRIO and GEAR UP

- Protect funding for TRIO and GEAR UP, and oppose any proposal to scale back or eliminate any significant component of the programs.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, in FY 2010 there were 2,962 TRIO projects, 840,863 total participants (not including TRIO Training participants), and a total funding allocation of \$904,285,427 for TRIO. The FY 2011 appropriation for the Federal TRIO Programs was cut by approximately 3.1 percent for a total appropriation of \$826,521,644. According to other data, two-thirds of TRIO participants come from households where neither parent graduated from college and where family income is under \$30,975.

Veteran Students, Students Called to Active Duty and Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) Students

- ◆ Support continued legislative changes and/or technical corrections to the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 in order to make procedures simpler and more transparent, as well as standardize benefit processing in accordance with accepted higher education practices.
- ◆ Assure that veteran students receive their full education benefit entitlement for military service, irrespective of other forms of financial assistance. Continue collaborating with appropriate stakeholders to attempt to mitigate the confusion for veteran students and increased administrative burden for institutions created by the “payer of last resort” and other amendments to the Post-9/11 GI Bill.
- ◆ Oppose unfunded mandates imposed by the VA or Congress on institutions without regard to established higher education processes and funding streams. Tuition and fees paid by the VA defray the cost of veteran students’ classroom education—as all other students’ tuition and fee payments defray the cost of their classroom education. These monies cannot be diverted to other veteran support services, such as psychological counseling or veterans’ centers, without jeopardizing the academic enterprise.
- Support efforts to have school certifying officials given appropriate, secured access to VA data systems that will contain timely information on veteran students’ remaining education benefit eligibility. Institutions need appropriately limited access to this data in order to better serve veteran students.

The Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 or “Post-9/11 GI Bill” also has a Yellow Ribbon component, where institutions whose tuition and fees are higher than the base Post-9/11 GI Bill benefit (in-state tuition and fees at the most expensive public college or university in that veteran’s state) can sign agreements with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to contribute up to 50 percent of tuition and fees toward the remaining cost. The VA will match up to 50 percent of the school’s Yellow Ribbon contribution. According to September 2010 VA testimony, in the 2009-2010 academic year VA paid out \$41.7 million under the Yellow Ribbon Program.

FEDERAL ROLE IN COLLEGE ACCESS AND COMPLETION

- Support efforts by the VA and Department of Defense (DoD) to collect, publish and make available data on enrollment, year-to-year retention and graduation of military and veteran students. Collecting data will assist higher education, the VA and DoD in determining better ways to serve these students, as well as aid in program accountability.
- Fund Model Programs for Centers of Excellence for Veteran Success, authorized under HEA, to award competitive grants for model programs that support veteran student success in postsecondary education.
- Benchmark Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) benefits (pre-9/11 GI Bill) to the cost of attendance at public four-year institutions for those servicemembers who served prior to September 11, 2001. Servicemembers eligible under the current MGIB who served on or after September 11, 2001 will have an irrevocable decision point to choose either set of benefits.
- Ensure that no student-reservist is required to repay any unearned federal student aid received for an academic term in which they are called to active duty.
- Advocate for more advantageous tuition rates for MGIB Selected Reserve (Chapter 1606) benefits; also advocate for portability equity for MGIB-SR benefits earned during mobilization for a period of 10 years after leaving service (equal to MGIB Active Duty portability rates).
- Boost funding for the Upward Bound TRIO programs that prepare low-income, first-generation military veterans for college.
- Support ROTC programs on campus that allow students to develop both academic and leadership skills in the service of their country.
- Discourage attempts to federally mandate institutional refund policies for veteran and active-duty military students; national survey data indicate that nearly 80 percent of responding campuses had already established refund policies for military activations and deployments.

MGIB-SR benefits effective October 1, 2011 for members of the Selected Reserve attending college range from \$86.25/month for less than half-time study to \$345/month for full-time study; reservists who voluntarily separate from the Selective Reserve lose their educational benefits immediately upon separation.

Undocumented Students

- ◆ Support clarification of existing federal immigration law to allow states to determine the tuition status of qualified undocumented students, as espoused in previous iterations of the proposed Development, Relief and Education of Alien Minors (DREAM) Act.

AASCU believes that states' authority over tuition policy must be preserved and respected.

- ◆ Support access to federal loan and work study programs for qualified undocumented students, as espoused in previous iterations of the DREAM Act. Student qualifications may include those who were brought to the United States under the age of 16, have resided in the U.S. for five or more years, have graduated from a U.S. high school, and are individuals of good moral character who are pursuing postsecondary education to qualify for permanent residency status.

Since 2001, 13 states have passed legislation allowing undocumented students to receive in-state tuition, and this issue continues to be hotly debated in many states. In 2011, the U.S. Supreme Court provided support for the argument that in-state tuition laws do not violate federal immigration laws when it let stand a decision by the California Supreme Court that high school attendance can legally replace the residency requirement for receiving in-state tuition. Another issue for states is whether undocumented students should have access to enroll in public postsecondary institutions, and three states currently deny enrollment for such students at some or all of their public institutions.

Funding for Advanced Degree Programs

- Support federal scholarship and fellowship programs, such as the Javits Fellowship and GAANN programs, as important means of building a pipeline for historically underrepresented groups into academia and advanced graduate studies.
- Advocate for funding to the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program through the TRIO programs in order to increase the number of undergraduate students who participate in advanced degree programs. Funding is used to encourage enrollment in advanced degree programs through mentoring, test preparation for the Graduate Record Exam (GRE), tutoring and assistance in applying for graduate school. Students who benefit from this program are tracked and supported as they progress through their advanced degree programs.

STATE ROLE IN COLLEGE ACCESS AND COMPLETION

AASCU POLICY STATEMENTS

Undocumented Students

- Encourage states to provide eligibility for in-state tuition rates to qualified undocumented students. Qualifications may include graduation from a state high school, state residency and intent to obtain U.S. citizenship.
- Discourage state efforts to prohibit or restrict undocumented students from enrolling in public institutions.

Tuition Benefits for Active Military Personnel and Veterans

- Encourage states to support programs that facilitate veterans' entry into and success in postsecondary education.

Affirmative Action and Diversity

- Discourage state actions that would limit the ability of public colleges and universities to engender a diverse student body and campus workforce. This would include state actions that would negatively affect institutional/system admissions, hiring and other policies designed to promote diversity.

Aligning and Strengthening the Education Pipeline

- Encourage states to involve public institutions of higher education in the implementation of new Common Core State Standards in mathematics and English language arts to ensure that high school graduates are college or career-ready.
- Support state efforts to increase the preparedness for, and transition to, postsecondary education through strong P-20 partnerships and coordination initiatives. Such initiatives may include:

STATE ROLE IN COLLEGE ACCESS AND COMPLETION

- State-directed active participation of postsecondary education in the alignment of secondary and postsecondary curriculum, standards and assessments.
- Providing early assessments along the secondary education continuum to ensure preparedness for entry into and success in college or the workforce.
- Clarifying and raising expectations for entering college freshmen by articulating a rigorous statewide high school core course of study that prepares students for college and the world of work.
- Developing policies that promote access to accelerated learning options and that encourage participation of middle- and lower-achieving groups in programs such as advanced placement, international baccalaureate and dual/concurrent enrollment.
- Supporting early outreach/commitment programs that incentivize middle and high school students to plan and prepare for college.

Seamless Student Transitioning

- Encourage states to develop effective policies to support the transfer of credit and streamline credit transfer, including statewide articulation agreements, while recognizing that academic matters are most appropriately handled through the collaborative efforts of accreditors and statewide, system and institutional boards.
- Urge adoption of policies that promote completion of baccalaureate programs for students who have earned an associate degree.

Nontraditional/Adult Learners

- Urge states to develop policies that facilitate adult learner re-entry into college and toward degree completion, such as assessment of prior learning and initiatives designed to help adults meet the logistical challenges of balancing occupational, parental and college responsibilities.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Public colleges and universities have an obligation to be responsible and trusted guardians of the public's resources and to communicate clearly and effectively about their stewardship of the public's investment in them. AASCU is committed to greater public accountability and has been a leader in promoting improved data systems, greater transparency and increased focus on student learning outcomes. AASCU calls on its members to participate in the AASCU/APLU Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA), designed to improve transparency of institutional and student data, core educational outcomes and student engagement. To date, 60 percent of AASCU members have signed on to this initiative.

The recent amendments to the Higher Education Act required colleges and universities to be more accountable, particularly in relation to transparency in college costs. Specifically, the Department of Education now publicizes data on its College Affordability and Transparency Center, listing institutions with the highest and lowest tuition and fees and net price. AASCU worked with Congress to ensure these new lists took into account the unique nature of costs in public higher education and tuition-setting authority of public colleges. For example, AASCU helped to secure several provisions, including recognition of the measure of tuition in dollars and not just percentages; the impact of state appropriations on tuition levels; and the role of tuition-setting authority on the price of tuition. As a result, the College Affordability and Transparency Center also publicizes changes in state appropriations and state aid to students. AASCU believes that the federal effort to engage states in the higher education debate through maintenance of effort and supplement, not supplant, requirements is an important piece in the college cost equation and will continue to advocate for strengthening these provisions.

President Obama has called for the United States to be first in the world in the number of people with a postsecondary degree by the year 2020. AASCU applauds this focus on producing more graduates, as well as shifting the accountability focus to increasing the number of graduates produced by institutions, rather than just on graduation rates. AASCU will support efforts to strengthen government oversight and institutional accountability to eliminate fraud and abuse in federal student aid programs.

FEDERAL ROLE IN ACCOUNTABILITY

AASCU POLICY STATEMENTS

P-20 Student Data Systems

- ◆ Support the continued development and utilization of comprehensive state data systems, and the advancement of an integrated network of state data systems, based on common data elements, to serve as a privacy-protected state-based system of student level longitudinal data.

According to a July 2010 study of state postsecondary data systems by the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) association, 45 states (including the District of Columbia) have at least one student unit record system. While the data contained in these systems varies widely both between and within states, a data element inventory revealed that of the 36 postsecondary data elements surveyed, 16 states collect between 32 and 36 of these elements. Further, 32 states collect and store K-12 academic history data, and 23 state agencies link or share data with K-12 state education agencies.

- Discourage federal efforts that require states to collect overly burdensome or intrusive student data, while supporting data collection that directly informs key educational outcomes.
- Encourage the federal government to issue clarifying guidance on permissible data sharing that does not undermine the integrity of the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Maintenance of Effort

- ◆ Advocate to hold states accountable for maintaining specific state appropriation levels to public higher education whenever the federal government provides additional, general support funds beyond historical, programmatic funding to ensure that federal dollars are not used to supplant existing state operating dollars.

Consumer Information and College Costs

- ◆ Oppose any attempts to impose federal cost containment measures on institutions.

Public institutions of higher education in only 11 states have full independent authority to set their own tuition rates. These include Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Indiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio, South Carolina, Virginia and Wyoming.

- ◆ Encourage federal recognition of voluntary reporting structures such as the Voluntary System of Accountability.

Increases in tuition at public colleges are strongly related to declines in state appropriations; that is, when state appropriations decrease, tuition and fees must be increased—sometimes significantly—to make up the shortfall. While the recession has sharply exacerbated disinvestment in state operating support for higher education on a per-student basis, enrollment is surging at many state colleges. According to College Board data, state appropriations per \$1,000 of personal income dropped from \$8.22 in 1990-1991 to \$6.33 in 2010-2011. State funding for higher education, excluding federal stimulus funds received by states, was only \$6.11 per \$1,000 in personal income in 2010-2011.

Degree Attainment Reporting

- ◆ Focus national educational completion goals and federal evaluation efforts on the absolute *number* of Americans with a degree or certificate, rather than solely on institutional graduation *rates*.
- ◆ Work to devise more accurate student progress and completion measures that encompass the persistence and success of *all* students, including transfer and part-time students.
- To the extent that graduation rates are used as a metric in institutional evaluation, improve their value using students' federal financial aid status as a proxy for income, and assure that these disaggregated rates are reported in IPEDS. These graduation rates were identified in the HEOA for the following groups: Pell Grant recipients, Subsidized Stafford Loan recipients who are not Pell Grant recipients, and students who do not receive any federal aid or who receive only unsubsidized loans.

Accreditation

- Support mandatory public disclosure and dissemination of findings from final accreditation reports.
- Encourage the six regional accrediting associations to clearly define and broadly communicate their expectations for assessing and reporting student

learning in a manner that is aligned with the AASCU/APLU Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA).

- Encourage federal policy to recognize the appropriate role of accreditors as preserving and improving academic quality and not as enforcers of regulation that should be conducted by the Department of Education.

Fraud and Abuse in Federal Student Financial Aid Program

90/10 Rule

- ◆ Support integrity in federal student financial aid programs and strengthen the original intent of the “90/10 Rule.” This can be done by including all federal sources of income in the 90 percent calculation.

The “90/10 rule” currently in the Higher Education Act weakened the original intent of the provision by allowing for-profit institutions to include private institutional loans and the extra unsubsidized Stafford Loan eligibility authorized by the Ensuring Continued Access to Student Loans Act (ECASLA) in calculating the minimum required 10 percent of revenue that is to be derived from sources other than federal student financial aid.

Loan Program Integrity

- Encourage and support federal loan program policies that discourage institutional manipulation of students and loan program data in order to hide fraud and abuse. An example of this manipulation is placing students in deferment solely in order to improve an institution’s Cohort Default Rate.

Campus Safety, Security and Emergency Preparedness

- Oppose onerous, costly and unfunded campus security mandates from the federal government.
- Encourage and fund federal, state and institutional partnerships that enhance campus safety and security.

STATE ROLE IN ACCOUNTABILITY

AASCU POLICY STATEMENTS

Improved Student and Institutional Data

- Support state efforts to work with the higher education community, state agencies and the federal government to improve and expand student data systems to inform educators and policymakers on strategies for improving college attendance, retention and completion. Statewide and multistate student data systems enhance the ability to identify challenges associated with, and solutions for, improving student success.
- Encourage states to align data systems to better recognize efforts by institutions and systems in the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA), a joint initiative between AASCU and the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) that provides greater transparency of student demographic information and core student educational outcomes.

Consumer Protection

- Encourage state oversight over all institutions to ensure adequate student-consumer protection and the prevention of fraud and abuse of student and public resources.

Upholding Ethical Standards

- Promote state level collaborative efforts to ensure that appropriate policies are in place that promote ethical behavior, ensure appropriate transparency and accountability for institutional financial transactions and seek to prevent conflicts of interest that may arise between institutions and third-party vendors.

Public Safety, Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Response

- Support state-coordinated efforts to help higher education institutions plan for, respond to and recover from natural disasters and other public safety emergencies.

- Support existing state law and proposed legislation that: 1) bans concealed weapons from public college campuses or 2) provides for institutional and system autonomy with regard to concealed weapons policy. Discourage new legislation that would overturn or weaken concealed weapons bans on campus.

Governing Board Selection, Preparation and Institutional Relations

- Continue to endorse the selection/appointment criteria put forward by the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, among them: a commitment to education, enthusiastic understanding and acceptance of the university's mission or the mission of all system institutions; an understanding of the role of their institution or university system within the broader higher education system in the state; a willingness to commit the time and energy necessary to fulfill the responsibilities of a board member; and overriding loyalty to the institution (or university system) and to the public interest rather than to any region or constituency.
- Encourage the formation and maintenance of appropriate and constructive relationships between institutions, their governing and coordinating entities and states' elected leaders. The terms of these relationships must be absolutely clear. AASCU opposes changes in these relationships that muddle or politicize the decision-making process or compromise the autonomy or integrity of institutions.
- Continue to endorse the Association of Governing Boards of Colleges and Universities' statement, *Governing in the Public Trust: External Influences on Colleges and Universities*, as a constructive articulation of the roles and responsibilities of those charged with governing the nation's higher education institutions.

Academic Freedom

- Encourage opposition to state legislation mandating intellectual diversity, course curriculum content, or ideologically- or politically-based faculty quotas on campus.

COMPETITIVENESS

Public colleges and universities play a central role in expanding the nation's human capital and boosting our competitive advantage in today's global marketplace. This is accomplished, in part, by providing quality preparation for the majority of the nation's P-12 teachers. It is also accomplished by producing graduates in a variety of fields who have the necessary knowledge and skills to meet the needs of business, nonprofit and public sector employers. This includes health care workers, scientists and engineers, business leaders and others essential to the nation's economy.

AASCU believes that the federal government must play an essential role in supporting institutional efforts to meet national, state and local workforce needs. The federal government can provide incentives for individuals to enter high-demand fields and to work in hard-to-staff areas, support scientific research and education, and streamline efforts to attract international talent. State and local governments, as well, can support institutional efforts to educate teachers, health care workers, scientists and engineers and others. The nation's economic competitiveness, security and prosperity depend in large measure on how well the nation's colleges prepare citizens for a knowledge-based economy.

In the coming debate on the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, AASCU will advocate for strategies to improve teacher quality efforts and strengthen the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs begun in the last reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. With regard to Workforce Investment Act debates, AASCU will look to improve the standing of AASCU institutions as integral players in key state and local economic development initiatives. This includes efforts strengthening rural and urban programs. In order to be successful in today's economy, an understanding of how one fits into a world economy is essential. AASCU will look to improve programs that provide a more contextual awareness of our role in the world, including stewardship of the environment.

FEDERAL ROLE IN COMPETITIVENESS

AASCU POLICY STATEMENTS

Reauthorization of Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

- ◆ Support strong, meaningful partnerships between state and local education agencies and institutions of higher education to support teacher education; standards, curricula and assessment alignment; and accountability.

Teacher Preparation

- ◆ Support the strengthening and funding of high-quality clinical experiences in all traditional teacher preparation programs and require that all federally funded alternative teacher preparation programs include high-quality clinical experiences. Clinical experiences are essential components in preparation programs, especially when preparing teacher candidates to teach diverse students in high-needs rural and urban schools.
- ◆ Secure a dedicated funding stream to support reform in university-based teacher preparation.
- ◆ Ensure that any federally funded grant program supporting reform in teacher preparation programs requires a meaningful and sustained partnership with a high-needs P-12 school district and places a strong emphasis on clinical training.
- Support efforts to better align Title II of the Higher Education Act and Title II of the ESEA to strengthen recruitment; pre-service preparation; induction and mentoring; and in-service professional development of teachers, principals and other K-12 school leaders.
- Support a requirement that all teacher candidates complete and pass a performance assessment prior to becoming a licensed teacher. By passing the performance assessment, teacher candidates demonstrate that they are equipped with the skills and knowledge to effectively lead a classroom.
- Secure appropriations to assist states in meeting the updated teacher quality requirements set forth under the reauthorized ESEA.

- Oppose federal legislation that infringes on state authority in the regulation of teacher preparation programs. The certification and regulation of teacher education programs is most appropriately handled through the collaborative efforts of accreditors and appropriate statewide entities.

Accountability of Teacher Preparation Programs

- Provide federal funds for research and evaluation of teacher preparation programs, including improvement of state P-20 data systems through the linkage of teachers with student outcomes in order to inform and improve program performance, productivity and impact on student learning. Ensure that preparation programs have access to data by which they are being evaluated.

Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategies

- Provide federal funding to increase the number of educators from underrepresented and nontraditional teaching populations through various incentive structures, including centers of excellence based at institutions of higher education.
- Support service-payback models, such as the TEACH Grant program, to recruit students who agree to teach in targeted school districts, especially schools that are difficult to staff or where salaries are often not comparable to those of more affluent school districts.
- Support loan forgiveness for teachers who work in high-need schools or teach in high-need subject areas.

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Education

- Support continued incentives for partnerships among institutions and states to strengthen traditional and nontraditional pathways for qualified candidates to teach in STEM fields.
- Boost appropriations to support recruitment, training, placement and retention of STEM teachers in areas of greatest need and to encourage federal incentives to improve their compensation.
- Invest in research initiatives for the National Science Foundation, National Institutes of Health and other agencies that support institutional research efforts.

Economic and Workforce Development

Rural Institutions

- ◆ Provide appropriations for the Rural Development Grants for Rural Colleges and Universities program. These grants encourage partnerships between rural colleges and universities and local entities that promote greater access to college for rural high school students, increase the number of adults in rural communities with a bachelor's degree or higher, enhance training opportunities and stimulate technological innovation.
- Support continued funding for rural broadband enhancements that provide greater access to postsecondary education.

Urban Institutions

- ◆ Support efforts to reauthorize, authorize and fund programs that encourage research and partnerships between urban and metropolitan anchor institutions and their communities. These efforts are designed to promote economic and workforce development, community revitalization, teacher recruitment and greater access to college for urban high school students.

Workforce Investment Act (WIA)

- ◆ Advocate for reauthorization of the WIA to more fully include and recognize the role of public four-year colleges and universities in workforce education and include state college and university leaders in planning and decision-making processes for state utilization of federal WIA funds.
- Advocate for increasing the allowable time limits under which welfare recipients can pursue a higher education as a direct work activity, given that the current 12-month limit forces many welfare recipients to leave college before receiving the needed education and training.

International Education

Student/Faculty Exchange

- Support the Lincoln Commission recommendations to establish a national study abroad program, particularly for students from underrepresented institutions and populations.

- Support the removal of barriers to the open exchange of scholars between all nations and oppose limitations on student and faculty study abroad, except in instances of personal health and security issues.
- Expand student exchange programs with foreign countries for colleges and universities, and further ease travel restrictions imposed by the Department of Treasury that serve as barriers to student/faculty exchanges with Cuba.
- Support funding for international programs managed by the Department of Education: Title VI of the Higher Education Act: International Education Programs, Fulbright-Hays and the Institute for International Public Policy.

Immigration and Visa Control of Foreign Students

- Relieve problems associated with the valid acquisition of H-1B visas and EB green cards.
- Protect provisions under current law that permit exemptions from the annual visa cap on H-1B visas for the academic community.
- Support changes in legislation that would raise the current limitation on new visas per year imposed on employers from the business community.
- Support the VISA process that increases access into the U.S. for legitimate international students and scholars, in part through the effective utilization of biometric technology employed by U.S. VISIT.

Applied Research

STEM Research and Workforce Preparation

- Increase funding for the programs in the America COMPETES Act and support specific funding designations to public four-year institutions for research and workforce development in energy and sustainability fields, including the Professional Science Masters program.

In 2009-2010, according to the most recent IPEDS data, AASCU institutions awarded approximately 32 percent of bachelor's degrees in the United States in mathematics and statistics, 24 percent of bachelor's degrees in computer and information science and 16 percent of bachelor's degrees in engineering.

- Recognize the contributions of each sector of higher education in the strengthening of STEM fields—the resources of the entire community must be tapped when creating, funding and implementing STEM programs that

FEDERAL ROLE IN COMPETITIVENESS

educate future scientists, engineers and mathematicians, as well as create research opportunities for students studying in the STEM fields.

- Support and improve basic and applied scientific research and education activities for undergraduate programs in order to complement established graduate and research programming.
- Advocate for programs that recruit and support traditionally underrepresented populations into STEM fields, such as students of color, low-income students and women.

Federal Research and Development

- Continue support for undergraduate research and mentoring in science, technology, engineering and math fields, and for STEM pipeline programs promoting P-20 partnerships and articulation agreements.
- Support programs that meaningfully engage students in applied research addressing the nation's innovation plan for health care, energy and national security.
- Support technology transfer and workforce training programs that link institutions of higher education with the manufacturing sector and incentivize corporate and private sector investment in these partnerships.
- Fund the development and renovation of laboratory facilities and support equipment acquisition that will promote innovative, collaborative scientific and technical research at all institutions of higher education.

Sustainability and Energy Efficiency

- Expand federal efforts to support institutions of higher education in improving efficiency in the physical plant, campus transportation and other institutional operations.
- Advocate for grant funding at the Department of Energy, the Environmental Protection Agency and other federal agencies that support university research in sustainability, renewable energy and green technology.

STATE ROLE IN COMPETITIVENESS

AASCU POLICY STATEMENTS

Higher Education's Role in Statewide Economic Development Initiatives

- Urge states to include the higher education community as an essential partner in statewide economic development efforts.
- Call for state policies and programs that promote the role of higher education, including public four-year institutions, in the development of the human capital essential to advancing state and local economic development and meeting workforce needs.
- Include all public four-year institutions in formal state-sponsored programs designed to facilitate applied research and development activities and regional economic development.

Kentucky's Postsecondary Education Improvement Act is illustrative of a successful and inclusive state initiative. The Kentucky Strategic Investment and Incentive Funding Program and the Regional University Excellence Fund serve as good examples of how states can effectively leverage state monies, allowing all public four-year institutions to fully tap their economic development capacity

Preparing, Developing and Retaining a Quality Teacher Workforce

- Support state efforts to establish and implement rigorous standards of learning for students in teacher preparation programs. These standards should address both specific content area comprehension and knowledge of appropriate methods of instruction and should be used to promote public accountability.
- Encourage states to involve public institutions in the integration of the Common Core State standards in teacher education programs in states that have adopted these standards.
- Encourage states to develop comprehensive teacher workforce strategies that address teacher quality, recruitment, distribution and retention. These strategies might include:
 - Strengthened teacher preparation, induction and mentoring, and professional development programs;

STATE ROLE IN COMPETITIVENESS

- Efforts to increase the number of educators from underrepresented and nontraditional teaching groups;
- Increased coordination between two-year and four-year colleges to facilitate seamless transfer of teacher preparation students;
- Financial incentives for educators, including increased salaries and merit pay based on student learning outcomes;
- Intensified partnerships between teacher preparation programs and school districts, featuring formal, structured interactions between teacher preparation programs and schools;
- Increased professionalism and improved working conditions (enhanced license reciprocity and pension portability, opportunities for advancement, reduced teaching loads and extra support in hard-to-staff schools);
- Comprehensive teacher data systems and research on program effectiveness;
- Increased importance of mathematics education for all teacher preparation students; and
- Alternative certification programs aimed at high-need areas with assurance that these programs have sufficient rigor, including clinical preparation.

State Investment in Capital Outlay and Infrastructure Maintenance Needs

- Urge states to make a greater commitment to the infrastructure and facility needs of their public colleges and universities to ensure high-quality instructional and operating capacity. Further, encourage states to provide grants to address sustainability efforts aimed at decreasing energy consumption.

Human Capital Investment in High Demand Occupations

- Support state programs that provide in-school tuition reimbursement or on-the-job student loan forgiveness aimed at incentivizing students' interest in and training for high-demand professions, such as teaching and nursing, who upon graduation, may be obligated to work in underserved urban and rural areas.

Enhanced Preparedness for STEM Occupations

- Support state initiatives designed to prepare students' interest in and training for careers that involve STEM disciplines, both at the K-12 and postsecondary levels.

Attracting and Retaining a Talented Postsecondary Workforce

- Support state efforts to provide resources and policies that aim to attract and retain a highly capable, diverse and competitive postsecondary workforce. This includes the use of incentives and progressive benefits packages, such as, but not limited to, domestic partner benefits.

Workforce Investment Act (WIA)

- Encourage states to diversify their Workforce Investment Boards to assure that a broad range of appropriate state entities are included as active participants, among them public four-year colleges and universities.

ENDORSEMENTS

AASCU's 2012 *Public Policy Agenda* is endorsed by the following organizations:

- ◆ American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE)
- ◆ Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU)
- ◆ Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities CUMU)
- ◆ Council for Opportunity in Education (COE)
- ◆ Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU)
- ◆ National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education (NAFEO)
- ◆ State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO)

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