



2006
PUBLIC POLICY
AGENDA

aascu

American Association of State
Colleges and Universities

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ABOUT AASCU

The American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) represents more than 430 public colleges, universities, and systems of higher education throughout the United States and its territories.

The association has a four-fold purpose:

- To promote appreciation and support for public higher education and the distinctive contributions of our member colleges and universities;
- To analyze public policy, and to advocate for member institutions and the students they serve;
- To provide policy leadership and program support to strengthen academic quality, promote access and inclusion, and facilitate educational innovation; and
- To create professional development opportunities for institutional leaders, especially presidents, chancellors and their spouses.

Enrollment

- AASCU institutions enrolled over 3.7 million students in fall 2004—55 percent of enrollment at all public four-year institutions.
- Total enrollment is largely undergraduate (84 percent) and full-time (70 percent). One quarter of undergraduate students are older than age 24.
- Students from racial and ethnic minorities represent more than a quarter (28 percent) of all enrollments.

Degrees

- In 2003–2004, member institutions conferred more than half a million baccalaureate degrees, 34 percent of those awarded nationwide. This includes half of all bachelor's degrees in education and 34 percent of all baccalaureate business degrees

Student Charges

- Undergraduate tuition and fees for resident students averaged \$4,918 in 2005–2006, and the majority of full-time undergraduates (54 percent) enrolled at campuses charging less than \$5,000.

Institutions

- The average enrollment of AASCU member institutions is 9,300 students.
- AASCU's membership consists of 155 metropolitan institutions (40 percent), 139 rural institutions (36 percent), and 94 urban institutions (24 percent).

FROM THE PRESIDENT

January 2006

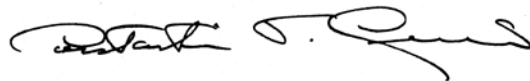
Dear Colleagues:

I am pleased to present you the American Association of State Colleges and Universities' 2006 *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.

The ongoing reauthorization of the federal Higher Education Act as well as federal and state responses to an unprecedented series of natural disasters, form the backdrop of this year's edition of the *Public Policy Agenda*. Amid debates on recovery, reconstruction and other fiscal priorities, 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 hundreds of thousands of students in the affected areas. Proven long-term investments in our human capital such—as need-based student aid, resources to prepare high-quality teachers, and commitments to affordable tuition—must not be sacrificed for short-term fiscal or political gain.

The American people have voiced confidence in their colleges and universities, but have articulated high expectations of them as well. Meeting those expectations, as well as taking up the gauntlet thrown down by our global competitors, demands shared responsibility from the halls of the campus to the halls of Congress. The values and priorities outlined in the *Public Policy Agenda* speak to those responsibilities, and offer a point of reference for the crucial debates that lie ahead. 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,



Constantine W. Curris
President

2006 POLICY PRIORITIES

AASCU's advocacy efforts in 2006 will focus around the idea of "Delivering America's Promise"—promoting public policy that honors long-standing commitments to the nation's students and their families. Following are key public policy priorities for the Association in the year ahead.

Student Financial Aid

Pell Grants

- ❖ Increase Fiscal Year 2007 appropriations to fund the \$4,500 maximum grant.

Student Loans

- ❖ Support the maintenance of both the Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) and Direct Loan programs and oppose the establishment of policies that would impose artificial disadvantages for the efficient operation of each.
- ❖ Promote more realistic first and second year undergraduate borrowing limits within the existing aggregate limit.
- ❖ Support flexible repayment terms and incentives for timely repayment for borrowers, and oppose increases in borrower fees.

National Security

International Exchange

- ❖ Support the implementation and full funding of the recommendations of the Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program.

Aid Benefits for Students Called to Active Duty

- ❖ Hold students called to active duty harmless from aid repayment requirements.

Tax Policy

Federal Reform Proposals Affecting Students and Institutions

- ❖ Support proposed changes in the HOPE and Lifetime Learning Tax Credits that make them more accessible to the neediest students, including expansion to non-tuition expenses.
- ❖ Oppose proposed changes in federal tax policy that will adversely impact institutions in demonstrating or maintaining their eligibility for tax-exempt status.

Science and Technology

Undergraduate Programming

- ❖ Support increased funding for undergraduate programming by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Science Foundation (NSF).

Technological Assistance for Law Enforcement

- ❖ Support changes in the Communications Assistance for Law Enforcement Act (CALEA) that promote the timely provision of necessary information to law enforcement officials and reasonable compliance costs for colleges and universities.

Teacher Preparation, Development, and Support

Higher Education Act (HEA) Title II—Partnership Grants

- ❖ Provide adequate resources to state-based partnerships that include higher education institutions (Teacher Quality Enhancement Grants and Centers for Excellence), with a special focus on high-quality clinical experiences, aiding high need and hard to staff schools, and preparation of school leadership and paraprofessionals.

HEA Title II—Reporting

- ❖ Advocate for the reporting of existing state-established scaled scores regarding program pass rates to the public.

Access and Inclusion

HEA Programs—Minority-Serving Institutions

- ❖ Boost funding for Titles III and V of the HEA (Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, and Alaska Native and Hawaiian Serving Institutions) and remove unnecessary barriers to institutional participation in these programs.
- ❖ Extend eligibility requirements in Title III and provide additional funding to public Historically Black Colleges and Universities that have created new graduate programs in the sciences and change funding restrictions to allow for the development of new qualified graduate programs.

HEA Programs—Students

- ❖ Increase support for TRIO and GEAR UP, specifically for expansion of those programs to reach community-based institutions and other groups that serve underrepresented students.

Economic and Workforce Development

Workforce Investment Act (WIA)

- ❖ Amend the law to include leaders of public four-year institutions in planning and decision-making processes.
- ❖ Provide for the allocation of disaster relief grant funds to four-year institutions for education and training of displaced workers.

Welfare Reform

- ❖ Remove student aid from eligibility determination for public assistance.
- ❖ Increase time limits for education as countable work activity.

Governance and Accountability

Student Outcomes Data

- ❖ Authorize a multi-state pilot test to explore the feasibility of a unit-record data system covering all institutions of higher education.

INTRODUCTION

The American Association of State Colleges and Universities' primary public policy function is to promote communication between its members and policymakers. On federal policy issues, AASCU works with and on behalf of member campuses and systems in relations with Congress and the executive branch, keeping members apprised of recent and forthcoming actions and ensuring that member views and concerns are clearly articulated in the legislative and regulatory processes. At the state level, AASCU monitors, analyzes, and selectively advocates on current and developing trends, guided by the core principles espoused by the membership.

AASCU's 2006 public policy priorities focus on the fulfillment of core commitments to the nation's students and their families amid an expanding number of competing demands, including disaster relief. At the federal level, the Association is dismayed at the relatively low priority assigned to expanding human capital and boosting competitiveness in areas such as mathematics and science, as seen in Congress' decisions to allocate a disproportionate share of cuts in mandatory spending to education programs. Similarly, the continuation of the boom-bust higher education funding dynamic at the state level, combined with a growing interest in highly restrictive tax/spending caps, underscore state colleges' and universities' fiscal vulnerability. Through the federal Higher Education Act and other means, AASCU will advocate aggressively for those most at risk of being left behind—or left out—in the emerging knowledge-driven society.

The 2006 *Public Policy Agenda* summarizes AASCU's principles and priorities in key areas of higher education policy. The document is intended to serve as a point of reference for federal and state policymakers, the association's members, and other interested organizations and individuals.

AASCU's public policy values are 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, and even more fundamentally, through the promotion of an enlightened citizenry and greater social cohesion.

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 station or circumstance, 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 of 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.

The responsibility for investing in public higher education should be assumed equitably by all beneficiaries. Students, their families, and federal and state governments share this responsibility.

STUDENT FINANCIAL AID

Access to higher education must not be limited to those with the ability to pay. To ensure that this does not happen, federal and state governments must pursue appropriate policy directions, specifically, a commitment to affordable public sector tuition and need-based student aid.

The responsibility for financing higher education must be shared by its beneficiaries.

- The primary purpose of federal financial aid is to guarantee access to higher education. This aid should be directed to individual students and is exemplified by programs such as the Pell Grant.
- The primary purposes of state higher education appropriations are to keep student tuition at a reasonable level and to ensure program integrity. States should endeavor to coordinate their policies with those of the federal government and higher education institutions, especially on issues pertaining to student access.
- Families should be encouraged and empowered to save for and assume their share of the higher education expenses of their student(s).

FEDERAL ISSUES

Student financial aid programs authorized by the HEA are part of the federal domestic discretionary budget. These programs will help students only if they receive adequate funding through the annual appropriations process.

Pell Grants

2006 PRIORITY AASCU will continue advocating for significant increases in the Pell Grant maximum award as the most effective way to ensure access for the nation's neediest students and to address the growing imbalance between grants and loans as a percentage of total federal financial aid awarded.

Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant (SEOG), College Work Study (CWS) and Perkins Loans

AASCU will continue advocating for significant increases in SEOG, CWS and Perkins Loan programs as essential elements of federal need-based aid. Further, AASCU encourages its member institutions to maintain their commitment to applying a portion of their CWS funding to support the America Reads program.

Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA)

Pell Grants

2006 PRIORITY AASCU calls for HEA amendments that change the way the Pell Grant program is managed and funded. Specifically, AASCU will advocate for three principles that should govern the Pell Grant program:

- (1) Congress will determine annually the maximum award for the Pell Grant program;
- (2) Congress will fund the cost of the Pell Grant program at the level of maximum award they determine; and
- (3) The U. S. Department of Education will pay all eligible recipients the amount that the student is entitled to receive.

Year Round Pell Grant Awards

2006 PRIORITY AASCU supports legislation that permits the awarding of multiple academic year Pell Grants within a single calendar year to students enrolled in qualifying academic programs, with appropriate review and safeguards to contain long-term program costs.

Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnerships (LEAP) [formerly State Student Incentive Grants—SSIG]

AASCU believes that LEAP should be continued, but should be refocused on its original purpose—providing real incentives for states to strengthen or create need-based student aid programs. Priority for aid awards using LEAP matching funds should be given to the neediest (i.e. Pell eligible) students. Fewer than half the Pell Grant recipients receive a state grant at all types of institutions.

AASCU will advocate for the continuation and refocusing of the LEAP program, specifically, provisions requiring states to give funding priority to Pell Grant recipients.

Student Loans

Federal Family Education Loans (FFEL) and Direct Loans: General

2006 PRIORITY AASCU advocates the continued availability of both Direct and government-guaranteed Federal Family Education Loans (FFEL), based on school choice on the front end and on borrower's choice upon entry into repayment. AASCU will advocate appropriate improvements that would render these programs more beneficial to borrowers and less cumbersome for institutions. In addition, the association will oppose all efforts to undermine either program through legislative and regulatory provisions that impose artificial disadvantages on their efficient operation.

Borrowing Limits

Loan limits differ depending on whether a borrower is dependent, independent, a graduate student or a parent borrower. Under current law, if dependent students do not have adequate unmet need to borrow the full amount in the subsidized loan program, they may borrow the remainder in the unsubsidized program. Independent students may borrow an additional \$4,000 in the first two years, and \$5,000 in subsequent years.

2006 PRIORITY AASCU believes that the current annual borrowing limits in the subsidized Stafford loan program are unrealistically low for many students (\$2,625 in the first year and \$3,500 in the second year). AASCU supports an amendment of the HEA allowing institutions to certify subsidized Stafford loans for students in their first and second years of college in the FFEL and Direct Loan programs up to \$5,500 per year, the same as current law for subsequent years. AASCU supports maintaining the existing \$23,000 cumulative limit for dependent undergraduate students in the subsidized Stafford loan program.

Terms and Conditions

2006 PRIORITIES AASCU favors legislative changes that make interest rates for all new student loans, both Stafford and Consolidated, in the FFEL and Direct Loan programs variable, not to exceed 6.8 percent. AASCU believes that variable rates provide the best protection for borrowers.

AASCU will advocate for policy allowing borrowers that have already consolidated with a fixed interest rate to reconsolidate once more with a variable interest rate.

AASCU, with the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA), advocates that interest rates and fees in the FFEL and Direct Loan programs be made comparable, with borrowers receiving the same federal benefit in both programs. Lenders should no longer be allowed to charge borrowers a lower interest rate than that authorized in the statute.

AASCU calls for policy that would provide borrowers in both the FFEL and Direct Loan programs a 0.25 percent interest rate reduction when the borrowers make direct, on-time loan payments automatically deducted from their checking or savings account, and a 2 percent interest rate reduction for on-time repayment of their loans if (a) the borrower makes 48 consecutive on-time payments, and (b) continues to make such on-time payments.

Origination and Guaranty Fees

2006 PRIORITIES AASCU advocates the total elimination of origination fees for student borrowers, which represent an unfair tax on student borrowers and the elimination of all other up-front fees for borrowers in both loan programs.

AASCU calls for the elimination of the option of guaranty agencies to charge borrowers a 1 percent premium in the FFEL program. AASCU believes that the federal government, not borrowers, should pay both the operating and default costs of guaranty agencies.

Counseling and Consumer Information

2006 PRIORITIES AASCU supports extensive loan counseling before a student begins borrowing, including regional data on starting salaries in all major fields, details on amount of annual and aggregate debt needed to complete the student's academic program, sample payments for that amount of debt, the impact of forbearance and capitalization of interest on unsubsidized loans and forbearance, and repayment options (including the availability of income-contingent repayment).

AASCU favors actions that place more responsibility on the Department of Education to make repayment information more broadly available and easily accessible. Institutions could then use this information to help ensure that student borrowers understand the obligations they are assuming. AASCU also calls for periodic communication from lenders, servicers, and the Department of Education to student borrowers in repayment, recommending that they review their payments relative to their current financial circumstances.

Student Options for Repayment

2006 PRIORITIES AASCU supports changing the FFEL Stafford program to provide extended repayment with years of repayment correlated to amounts borrowed, thus providing reasonable flexibility in payments without excessive debt service. Borrowers in the FFEL Stafford program should have the same options for extended repayment as are available in the Direct Loan program and in the FFEL Consolidation loan program. Current law restricts extended repayment to borrowers with loans exceeding \$30,000.

AASCU supports the Income-Contingent Repayment Program (ICRP) currently available under the Direct Loan Program to provide equitable repayment for borrowers who cannot afford to cover interest payments. AASCU proposes the extension of the ICRP program to the FFEL program, and continuation of the option of FFEL borrowers to consolidate into the Direct Loan program if the lender does not offer income-sensitive repayment terms acceptable to the borrower. All other federal repayment plans require the borrower to pay at least all interest owed to avoid negative amortization. ICRP is a major tool for both borrowers and the Department of Education in ensuring the manageability of student debt.

Defaults

2006 PRIORITIES AASCU supports changes to the federal loan programs to eliminate default by ensuring that the Department of Education, the guaranty agencies, and the lenders maintain contact with all borrowers after they leave college and place borrowers in an appropriate repayment program.

AASCU calls on Congress to remove the adverse incentives for guaranty agencies in current law that pays guarantors more money if a borrower defaults than if a borrower remains in good status. Results from the use of Voluntary Flexible Agreements (VFA) for guaranty agencies, authorized by Congress in the 1998 Amendments to the Higher Education Act, provide a useful

model for exploring new financing structures for guaranty agencies. AASCU supports renewal and expansion of the VFA authority in the HEA.

AASCU advocates that borrowers unable to make payments covering at least interest be placed in the Direct Loan Consolidation program, rather than forbearance, so that they have the option of repaying their loans on an income-contingent basis.

AASCU believes that the primary mission of guaranty agencies should be advocacy for borrowers who are having difficulty making loan payments, helping them when they first become delinquent on loans to understand the repayment options available to them, and expediting the process of revising repayment plans as needed.

AASCU supports legislative changes, if necessary, to locate borrowers in repayment who are delinquent on their student loans. If the Department of Education determines that lack of current borrower addresses is causing borrowers to default, AASCU would support making the “New Hires” database available to the Department of Education for the purpose of locating borrowers in delinquency or default status so that borrowers do not build up large penalties for non-payment.

Federal Subsidies to Lenders

2006 PRIORITY AASCU supports an ongoing review of the special allowance payments formula to ensure that lenders are appropriately but not excessively compensated. AASCU supports capturing excessive lender subsidies by eliminating the current “floor” on lender special allowance payments. This floor permits lenders to receive higher student interest payments than the statutory return they are guaranteed.

Nontraditional Programs

AASCU calls for the re-evaluation of the current need analysis statute to eliminate any bias against older students and against working students, particularly those with dependents.

NATIONAL SECURITY

In recent years, American colleges and universities have faced increasing demands to become more internationally oriented. Rapidly emerging technologies, evolving trade relationships, and growing cultural awareness have accelerated these demands.

The specter of terrorism requires that the nation take unprecedented measures to protect its citizens while remaining globally engaged. Higher education institutions, with their historical commitment to plurality and diversity, as well as their long-standing contributions to the nation's defense, stand at the crossroads of these demands.

AASCU's analysis and advocacy on national security and internationalization center on the following basic beliefs:

- The nation's security is best served by an educated, globally engaged population. As a result, remedying talent gaps in fields such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) should be viewed as a national security priority.
- Foreign exchange opportunities enhance campus life, contribute to international understanding, and offer life-enriching opportunities for individuals. AASCU strongly supports opportunities for students and faculty to study and work abroad and for international students and faculty to study and work on our campuses. During the 2002-2003 academic year, AASCU institutions hosted 118,463 international students, 21 percent of all international students enrolled in U.S. institutions.
- AASCU institutions have a role to play making the nation safer against terrorist threats, particularly as Congress moves to implement the recommendations of the 9-11 Commission Report and focus national security issues within the Department of Homeland Security.
- AASCU favors targeted expansion of law enforcement authority to access information that will aid security efforts, provided that such authority does not unduly compromise privacy rights, impair civil liberties, or create a climate that suppresses scholarly inquiry or free expression.
- AASCU believes that legal immigration contributes an essential resource for human capital and that the steady flow in and out of the U.S. by legal means is essential for building and enriching our society.

FEDERAL ISSUES

Internationalization

AASCU supports the open exchange of scholars between all nations and opposes any limitations on student study abroad except when personal health and security may be at stake.

AASCU will continue to actively participate in the Coalition for International Education to support legislation and increased appropriations for three important international programs managed by the U.S. Department of Education: Title VI (International Education Programs), Fulbright-Hays, and the Institute for International Public Policy.

AASCU supports federal legislation that gives authorizing and funding priority to programs that facilitate student, faculty, and administrator exchanges and study abroad such as the International Academic Opportunity Act. This act created the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program, which authorizes grants of up to \$5,000 to American college students of limited financial means for study abroad.

The bi-partisan Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program was appointed by Congress and the President to recommend a national program to greatly expand study abroad opportunities for students at American colleges and universities, particularly those from underrepresented institutions and populations.

2006 PRIORITY AASCU endorses the findings of the Lincoln Commission, and will advocate for the full funding of its recommendations.

Immigration and Visa Control of Foreign Students

2006 PRIORITIES AASCU will continue to work with the Office of Border and Transportation Security at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security as it modernizes the nation's visa system through the adoption of the US VISIT program. AASCU supports the use of the biometric technology employed by US VISIT, making it simpler for legitimate foreign students and faculty to enter the country.

AASCU will continue to advocate for legislation and regulations that streamline the visa process for students, faculty, and administrators. Similarly, AASCU will work with appropriate federal agencies to simplify federal regulations that hinder the successful development of international programs or severely restrict the access of foreign students to American institutions.

AASCU will closely monitor immigration reform bills expected to be considered in the next Congress, as overhaul of the nation's immigration system will widely impact America's campus communities. AASCU will oppose any legislation that unduly impedes immigration in or out of the U.S.

Support for Students Called to Military/Protective Duty

2006 PRIORITY AASCU will seek to change federal policy to 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. States and institutions should not suffer adverse financial consequences as a result of federal action.

AASCU will continue to support efforts by the Partnership for Veterans' Education to set payments for recipients of the Montgomery G.I. Bill using a formula that calculates that payment on the average tuition/fee cost of a resident student attending a public four-year institution.

USA Patriot Act

AASCU will work with Congress and relevant federal agencies to monitor the execution of this reauthorized legislation, particularly in areas of concern. Specifically, AASCU will insist on stronger accountability and oversight regarding law enforcement access to records pertaining to higher education institutions or their students.

STATE ISSUES

Tuition Benefits for Military Personnel

AASCU supports access to in-state tuition for active-duty military personnel and their dependents when serving under military orders in a state other than their home state.

TAX POLICY

Against the backdrop of a burgeoning federal deficit and a gradual return to fiscal health in the states, policymakers will consider a number of revenue issues affecting students and the institutions that serve them in 2006. In Washington, attempts to finance existing and proposed federal tax cuts will affect campuses and their students, possibly in adverse and far-reaching ways. For their part, governors and state lawmakers continue to grapple with structural imbalances between revenue and spending, compounded in some states by a push for tight restrictions on both.

AASCU's analysis and advocacy on tax policy questions in the year ahead will center around the following basic beliefs:

- While the federal tax code can—and does—play a constructive role in promoting college affordability, it is not the most efficient or effective means of aiding college students, especially the neediest students. Direct student aid should command higher priority in the policy process, and tax benefits should never be viewed as a substitute for direct aid to students.
- Where tax benefits are employed, application and delivery mechanisms should be simple and transparent to filers. Additionally, compliance and record-keeping related to student tax benefits should be focused on the responsible government entities, rather than on students or institutions.
- Federal and state governments should carefully consider the impact of their revenue decisions on institutions and the students they serve. This includes avoiding actions that raise the cost of providing or pursuing a college education, and ameliorating the effects of actions that do adversely impact campuses or students.

FEDERAL ISSUES

Policy Affecting Students and Families

HOPE Scholarship and Lifetime Learning Tax Credits

2006 PRIORITY AASCU supports changes in the HOPE and Lifetime Learning Tax Credits that will make them more accessible to the neediest students, including refundability, expansion to non-tuition expenses, and for removal of the offset against Pell and SEOG awards. Additionally,

AASCU will continue to push for streamlining of the programs' institutional reporting requirements.

Student Loan Interest Benefits

AASCU, working with the U.S. Public Interest Research Groups (PIRG) and the United States Student Association (USSA), will actively pursue legislation to provide a tax credit for student loan interest paid by low-income borrowers.

AASCU supports efforts to indefinitely extend the current repeal of the 60-month limit on the student loan interest deduction. The limit, currently suspended in the Economic Growth and Tax Relief and Reconciliation Act of 2001 (EGTRRA), is set to expire in 2010.

Student Loan Forgiveness

AASCU supports the establishment of a federal tax exemption for loan forgiveness proceeds for borrowers in the income-contingent repayment program.

College Savings Provisions

AASCU supports the recommendation of The President's Advisory Panel on Federal Tax Reform to replace existing education savings plans (Coverdell, Section 529, and qualified tuition plans) with a Roth IRA-type "Save for Family" account that would provide for tax-free earnings and tax-free withdrawals for qualified health/medical and educational expenses.

Policy Affecting Institutions

State/Local Retirement Plan Contributions

2006 PRIORITY AASCU will 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.

Medicare Payroll Tax Extension

2006 PRIORITY AASCU will 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.

Bond Refinancing

2006 PRIORITY AASCU will oppose any proposal to eliminate the ability of issuers of government and tax-exempt bonds to do one advance refunding (i.e. refinancing of outstanding bonds before maturity or callability).

Non-Cash Gifts

2006 PRIORITY AASCU will oppose any proposal to restrict deductions for non-cash gifts to the amount paid for such property, rather than the current standard of fair market value.

IRA Provisions—Charitable Giving

AASCU will support legislation that would permit individuals to transfer proceeds from an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) tax-free to charitable and other non-profit organizations.

Non-Itemizer Deduction for Charitable Giving

AASCU will support legislation that would allow taxpayers that do not itemize deductions on their federal income tax returns to claim a deduction for charitable contributions.

Permanent Repeal of Federal Estate Tax

AASCU opposes a permanent extension of the federal estate tax repeal, and calls on Congress to instead consider estate tax reforms that balance the needs of farms and small business owners with those of states and charitable organizations.

Non-Profit Regulation

2006 PRIORITY AASCU supports the active enforcement of existing laws and regulations governing the tax-exempt status of non-profit 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.

Policy Affecting Students and Institutions**Student Employment Earnings**

2006 PRIORITY AASCU will oppose any proposed modification of the Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) exemption for students working on college and university campuses.

Tuition Remission

2006 PRIORITY AASCU will oppose any attempt to repeal the existing exemption of tuition remission for college and university employees.

STATE ISSUES

In a majority of the states, it has become abundantly clear that there is a growing gap between public service demands and the capacity of tax systems to satisfy those demands. Unfortunately, some states may only exacerbate this gap by pursuing strict limits on revenues and expenditures or by refusing to explore alternate approaches to taxing and spending.

Taxation of Electronic Commerce

AASCU urges Congress to recognize state efforts to modernize their tax systems and pass legislation recognizing the Streamlined Sales and Use Tax Agreement (SSUTA), which requires remote sellers to remit applicable taxes in participating states.

Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR)

AASCU opposes efforts to amend state constitutions to place arbitrary limits on revenues and expenditures (Taxpayer Bills of Rights, or TABORs) on the grounds that they rob elected leaders of the flexibility to adjust resources to reflect changing circumstances and the accountability for good stewardship of public resources.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Over the past half-century, colleges and universities have played a crucial role in expanding the horizons of the known and improving quality of life through advances in the development and application of knowledge. Indeed, the nation's security and prosperity depend in large measure on the scientific and technological initiatives of its higher education institutions.

AASCU's analysis and advocacy on science and technology emanate from the following basic beliefs:

- AASCU believes that policymakers must recognize the contributions of each sector of the higher education community when making policy decisions concerning science and mathematics research, education, and information technology. The resources of the entire higher education community must be tapped when gathering and using data, establishing advisory boards, and creating and implementing science, mathematics, engineering, and technology programs.
- AASCU believes that the federal government must play a strong role in funding activities to support and improve basic and applied scientific research and education activities for undergraduate programs in order to complement established graduate and research programming.
- AASCU supports the commitment of the federal government to remain a world leader in scientific and technological innovation by investing in education programs in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. While positive trends are developing for undergraduate education in these fields, yield at the graduate level continues to lag. Degree production at both levels must continue to rise in order for the United States to maintain a technological competitive advantage.

FEDERAL ISSUES

National Science Foundation (NSF)

AASCU supports NSF's commitment to science and mathematics teacher preparation through the Mathematics and Science Partnerships (MSP) Initiative. MSP brings states and local school districts together with the science, engineering, mathematics, and education departments of higher education institutions to strengthen math and science at the elementary and secondary levels.

AASCU strongly supports efforts to maintain and strengthen the NSF's Division of Undergraduate Education. To that end, AASCU will encourage NSF to boost the agency's commitment to undergraduate science and mathematics education, as well as efforts to increase the number of women and minorities in the sciences. AASCU further calls on the NSF to address the financial and programmatic needs of emerging research universities.

National Institutes of Health (NIH)

AASCU believes that the National Institutes of Health (NIH) should continue its strong commitment to graduate programming while taking a more active role in undergraduate research and education. For example, the Academic Research Enhancement Award (AREA) program promotes efforts to establish new opportunities for undergraduate research and education. AREA grants support individual research projects in the biomedical and behavioral sciences conducted by faculty and involving their undergraduate students, who are located in health professional schools and other academic components that have not been major recipients of NIH research grant funds. AASCU will advocate for increases in funding for AREA grants.

Applied Research

AASCU's advocacy activities will seek to expand federal support for applied research funding among a wide array of federal agencies that will benefit institutions and the students they serve.

Information Technology

2006 PRIORITY Working in collaboration with other education associations, AASCU will advocate changes in the Communications Assistance for Law Enforcement Act (CALEA) that promote timely compliance with law enforcement requests for information on suspected criminal/terrorist activity within a framework of reasonable implementation timetables and costs; the cost for institutions to comply with this requirement is viewed by AASCU as an unfunded mandate.

AASCU will continue to work to raise member awareness of the importance of improving the security of college and university computers and networks. AASCU will monitor legislative developments in this area as well as federal regulations and standards for improving data security, and assess the campus impact of compliance with new mandates.

AASCU will support efforts to update copyright law to fully reflect the growing use of digital technologies in higher education. Students and faculty must continue to have access to copyrighted materials with the advent of digital technologies.

AASCU will encourage its members to examine policies governing copyright and use of campus computing networks, and the applicability of those policies to the use of peer-to-peer (P2P) file-

sharing technologies. AASCU will work to help institutions seek ways to reduce or eliminate the illegitimate use of P2P file sharing without interfering with legitimate activities or infringing on core academic values.

AASCU will advocate for the expansion of funding for programs and the creation of new programs to assist non-Internet2 institutions gain access to high-speed networks. AASCU also will support efforts by the Federal Communications Commission and Congress that encourage the telecommunications industry to provide broadband services to a greater percentage of consumers so that students will have access to such networks in their living and learning environments.

TEACHER PREPARATION, DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

AASCU has a long history of commitment to teacher preparation, development, and support, due in part to the historic role many of its member institutions have played as colleges of teacher education. Though now having more broadly-defined missions, AASCU institutions remain committed to teacher preparation and continue to produce the majority of the nation's K-12 teachers. In recent years, there has been growing consensus about the importance of teacher quality, as well as growing evidence that teacher quality is the biggest school factor that affects student learning. AASCU therefore remains deeply committed to the development of a highly qualified teaching force as essential to achieving a more competent, competitive workforce.

Education policy is set primarily at the state level, but with the 1998 reauthorization of HEA and the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act, the federal government has become increasingly involved in issues related to teacher preparation, development, and support, as well as accountability of teacher preparation programs. AASCU supports investment in quality teaching and the promotion of teaching as a profession, as well as appropriate accountability mechanisms.

FEDERAL ISSUES

AASCU's involvement with teacher preparation policy at the federal level focuses on two policy areas: HEA's Title II and federal student loan forgiveness for teachers.

HEA's Title II—Teacher Quality Enhancement (TQE) Grants for States and Partnerships

The reauthorization of Title II of the HEA provides an opportunity for the federal government to invest in the educational continuum—recruitment, pre-service, induction, and in-service professional development of teachers. AASCU believes that federal teacher education policy should:

- Focus on the initial preparation of teachers;
- Align federal teacher education policies with federal K-12 policy to prevent unnecessary duplication;

- Provide financial support to institutionally-based teacher education programs, as the vast majority of teachers in America receive their preparation in a collegiate setting;
- Recognize the importance of content knowledge, teaching skills, pedagogy, and extensive clinical experiences in the preparation of all teachers; and
- Respect and support the important role that states have in regulating teacher preparation programs.

State Grants

2006 PRIORITY AASCU supports efforts, as part of the reauthorization of Title II of the HEA, to provide resources to states to reform teacher preparation program approval requirements and develop and implement a process for evaluating the influence that teacher preparation programs have on student learning. Such studies should involve institutions that volunteer to participate and should be conducted for the purpose of improving the quality of teacher preparation programs.

AASCU further supports efforts to develop and support innovative teacher preparation programs backed by strong research and evaluation, such as Charter Schools of Education.

AASCU opposes requiring states to use funds awarded pursuant to Title II for reforming teacher licensure requirements or for developing policies related to merit pay, teacher advancement, or teacher removal. These issues are more appropriately addressed in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

Partnership Grants

2006 PRIORITY AASCU supports:

Efforts as part of Title II to provide resources to reform teacher preparation programs;

High quality clinical experiences in all teacher preparation programs, traditional or alternative;

Simultaneously renewing in-service and pre-service teacher preparation by providing resources for in-service teacher induction, mentoring and professional development;

Addressing the acute needs of high need and/or hard to staff schools by targeting limited federal resources to partnerships that involve these schools; and

Preparation and continuing education of principals, paraprofessionals and other school personnel, as well as teachers.

Reporting Requirements: Raw and Scaled Scores

As part of the federal reporting requirements under Title II, Congress is seeking new ways to collect data on the quality of teacher preparation programs. Since the 1998 reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, the discussion has shifted from the reporting of pass rates only to the

collection of score data. Additionally, proposals have been put forth for the reporting of raw and scaled scores. A raw score is an original datum, a measurement or observation that has not been transformed. A scaled score is a raw score that has been transformed so as to anchor it on a scale for the purpose of providing context and meaning.

2006 PRIORITY AASCU recognizes the limitations and problems involved with various proposals, but also supports a robust accountability system. Therefore, AASCU advocates the following:

- Reporting of existing state-established scaled scores to the public.
- Establishment of a national scaled scoring system that would enable cross-state comparisons of institutions based on the average score of the teachers prepared by the institution, provided that:
 1. The system is based on an appropriate use of the assessment instrument;
 2. The reporting of the scaled scores is done in a manner that clearly identifies the teacher preparation program's contribution to the graduate's performance, as distinguished from other intervening variables; and
 3. The teacher credentialing assessment upon which the scaled scores are based is a valid and reliable assessment of a program graduate's ability to positively impact student learning.
- Collection of raw scores for research and analysis purposes only, since providing raw scores to the public would provide misleading information.

Centers for Excellence and Recruitment Grants

AASCU supports federal efforts, such as the Centers for Excellence found in the Ready to Teach Act and the recruitment grants found in current law, to increase the number of educators from underrepresented and non-traditional teaching populations.

Federal Student Loan Forgiveness for Teachers

There are two basic types of loan forgiveness categories – simple forgiveness and service-payback. Simple forgiveness programs aid in retention of teachers because the loan forgiveness provides a financial incentive for teachers to work in targeted school districts where salaries are often not comparable to those of affluent school districts. The service-payback model is the most effective way to structure a program to address recruitment problems because the service commitment is made prior to receiving the financial benefits and failure to fulfill the service commitment results in stiff penalties.

AASCU supports both simple forgiveness and service-payback programs that are intended to address the nation's teacher recruitment and retention needs.

Teacher Quality Programs

2006 PRIORITY AASCU will seek increased appropriations for programs that improve and expand teacher preparation and partnership programs, including: Teacher Quality Enhancement Grants, Centers for Excellence, science and math preparation, and other long-term professional development initiatives.

AASCU supports increased appropriations to assist states in meeting the teacher quality requirements set forth under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

STATE ISSUES

Preparing, Developing, and Retaining a Quality Teacher Workforce

In order to ensure a quality education for all of the nation's children, states are entrusted with the primary responsibility for teacher quality and program standards. In addition, given the challenges faced by schools in recruiting and retaining quality teachers, states are increasing their involvement in matters pertaining to recruitment, hiring, and compensation. While states and districts bear direct responsibilities for many of these issues, AASCU institutions have a responsibility to work with K-12 schools and others toward common goals.

In response to teacher shortages in critical areas, many states are pursuing strategies that rely on alternative providers and approaches, including programming by two-year institutions. While AASCU supports innovations that address existing and emerging gaps, quality and rigor must not be compromised. AASCU views teacher preparation, at a minimum, to require a baccalaureate degree.

AASCU supports 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 to promote public accountability and disclosure of the qualifications of teachers employed in local school districts. The standards also should be consistent with the provisions of NCLB to:

- Aid in recruiting, hiring, and retaining highly qualified teachers;
- Increase the number of educators from underrepresented and nontraditional teaching groups;
- Foster interstate mobility of certified teachers through reciprocal licensing agreements and portable pension plans;
- Eliminate out-of-field placement and emergency credentialing of teachers, while recognizing the challenges facing K-12 schools and districts;

- Ensure that alternate certification programs have sufficient rigor. Qualifications of approval of alternative programs should be comparable to those applied to traditional teacher preparation programs and the teacher licensure standards should be the same regardless of the preparation route; and
- Encourage coordination between two-year and four-year colleges to facilitate seamless transfer of teacher preparation students.

ACCESS AND INCLUSION

Mounting evidence of the United States' lost ground in educational competitiveness makes it clear that the pipeline must be strengthened for all Americans, especially those most at risk of being left behind. Strides have been made in sealing cracks in the pipeline and boosting opportunities, but disparities still exist. Commitments by federal and state governments will again be tested in 2006 and their leaders must be prepared to make difficult but essential choices to boost student success and national competitiveness.

AASCU's policy priorities in this area emanate from the following basic beliefs:

- The federal government properly carries the mantle of responsibility for ensuring equal access to higher education. Given the considerable recent growth in historically underrepresented and disadvantaged populations, as well as the established track record of existing programs such as TRIO and GEAR UP, continued and increased investment is warranted. Existing programs should command funding priority over the creation of new programs.
- The principle of diversity is a compelling state interest, as articulated in *Bakke v. Regents of the University of California*, is essential and must inform all executive, legislative, and judicial deliberations regarding educational access and inclusion. Until the goal of educational opportunity for all is achieved, affirmative action has a rightful place in public policy.
- Social, economic, and academic disadvantages are rooted in early childhood, elementary, and secondary years, making it more difficult for underrepresented groups to make the transition to college. The most effective strategies for access and inclusion focus on the pre-college years and must work to reduce barriers in the transition from secondary to postsecondary education.

FEDERAL ISSUES

Higher Education Act (HEA) Programs

Minority-Serving Institutions

2006 PRIORITIES AASCU will advocate for increased funding for the programs falling under Title III of the HEA (Institutional Aid), specifically those that aid public Historically Black Colleges

and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), and Alaska Native and Hawaiian Serving Institutions.

AASCU calls on Congress to approve amendments to Title III (Section 326) that will strengthen graduate programming at Historically Black Colleges and Universities, specifically:

- Expanding the number of institutions eligible for graduate programming funds;
- Increasing the program funding cap from 10 percent to 30 percent, and permitting institutions to develop new qualified programs to the Ph.D. level;
- Raising the “no match” minimum funding from \$1 million to \$1.5 million; and
- Providing for teaching and research fellowships for students enrolled in graduate programs.

AASCU also calls on Congress and the Administration to strengthen and increase funding for programs falling under Title V of HEA (Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions), and will work for: (a) creation of a new section and funding line for graduate education; (b) reduction or elimination of the two-year waitout period for previous grant recipients; and (c) elimination of the “50 percent low-income” assurance requirement as a funding criterion.

Students

2006 PRIORITIES AASCU will advocate for increased funding of the TRIO and GEAR UP programs, specifically for expansion of those programs to reach community-based institutions and other groups that serve underrepresented students. Additionally, AASCU will vigorously oppose any proposal to scale back or eliminate any significant component of these programs.

AASCU will ask Congress and the Administration to increase investment in federal scholarship and fellowship programs such as the Byrd Honors Scholarship, the Javits Fellowship, and Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need programs as important means of building a pipeline for historically underrepresented groups into academia.

Distance Education

AASCU supports continuation and expansion of the Department of Education’s Distance Education Demonstration Program as a means of making state colleges and universities more accessible to nontraditional students.

FEDERAL/STATE ISSUES

Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act

AASCU supports the passage of this proposed federal legislation that would clarify existing immigration law by allowing states to determine the tuition status of qualified dependents

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

STATE ISSUES

P-16 Standards Alignment

AASCU supports efforts to develop statewide P-16 coordination that brings together all levels of education to work toward more seamless education systems.

AASCU calls on state policymakers and K-12 and higher education leaders to make alignment of secondary and postsecondary curriculum, standards, and assessment a top priority of their P-16 initiatives.

AASCU endorses the National Governors Association's Redesigning the American High School initiative, especially its emphasis on better use of the high school senior year for college/workforce preparation and its call for a uniform methodology for calculating the high school graduation rate.

Developmental Education

AASCU urges policymakers to take a long-term, comprehensive approach to developmental education. Specifically, AASCU calls for state/federal partnership initiatives, where appropriate, to provide resources for institutions enrolling a significant number of at-risk students.

Articulation/Transfer

AASCU encourages a coordinated, collaborative approach at the state or system level to policies pertaining to student transition between two- and four-year institutions and urges adoption of policies that remove undue barriers to baccalaureate programs for students completing associate degree programs.

ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

AASCU institutions are committed to providing undergraduate and graduate degrees to students regardless of family resources, and believe that degree attainment is an essential building block for a globally competitive workforce.

A recent study of bachelor's degree recipients from AASCU institutions found that 89 percent were working one year after graduation, with an average annual salary of \$31,000. Of those employed, 79 percent reported that their job was related to their undergraduate major. Among graduates, 24 percent were employed in education and 26 percent in business and management. Additionally, 74 percent of those employed indicated that their job is the start of a career.

Historically, AASCU institutions have played an integral role in providing education and training to its citizenry to meet the changing needs of the current and emerging workforce. National, regional, state and local economies face mounting challenges in workforce development to identify and develop the skills needed by businesses, nonprofit, and government employers. As AASCU institutions strive to meet these challenges in the aftermath of recent natural disasters, new methods and approaches must be applied to prepare displaced workers with the skills needed to re-enter the workforce. There will be a critical need for trained workers in construction, energy, health care, transportation, and public safety as a result of these catastrophic disasters.

FEDERAL ISSUES

AASCU believes that partnerships with federal agencies will be crucial in the years ahead. These partnerships promote the discovery of knowledge, enhance training, stimulate technological innovation, improve the quality of life, and contribute to meeting the demands of the economy.

Agency Linkages

AASCU will explore partnership and program opportunities with federal agencies and entities such as: (1) the U.S. Department of Labor—Technical Skills Training Grants, Work Incentive Grant Program and Grants for Community Based Organizations; (2) the U.S. Department

of Housing and Urban Development—Community Outreach Partnership Centers, Hispanic Serving Institutions, and Historically Black Colleges and Universities; (3) the U.S. Department of Education—Strengthening Institutions Program Development Grants and Minority Science and Engineering Improvement Program; (4) the National Endowment for the Humanities—Extending the Reach: Institutional Grants for Historically Black, Hispanic-Serving, and Tribal Colleges and Universities; and (5) the U.S. Chamber of Commerce—Business Coalition for Workforce Development.

Workforce Investment Act (WIA)

2006 PRIORITIES AASCU will continue to advocate for amendments to the WIA that more fully include and recognize state college and university leaders in planning and decision-making processes.

AASCU will continue to advocate for the president’s community college initiative, provided that it recognizes four-year institutions as workforce providers.

AASCU will advocate that disaster relief grant funds be allowed for four-year institutions to serve as training providers to displaced workers.

AASCU supports efforts to provide job search and job training through WIA programs for youth most at risk, displaced workers, and to individuals and businesses affected by natural disasters. AASCU institutions are uniquely situated to assist in this effort because of their existing relationships with local and regional communities.

AASCU will seek involvement in the development of any regulations related to workforce issues that may affect institutions of higher education, such as the appropriate use of Pell Grants to provide educational assistance to workforce program participants.

Nursing and other Health Professions

AASCU will support efforts to increase the number of qualified professionals in the areas of health and safety, especially in critical need fields such as nursing and regions that have been impacted by natural disasters.

Welfare Reform

AASCU will advocate that benefits for victims of natural disasters not be subject to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) time limits and work requirements. AASCU will advocate that states outside of a region impacted by natural disasters be allowed to receive contingency funds for any allowable TANF benefit or service to families who have moved to their state.

AASCU will advocate for increasing the allowable time limits under which welfare recipients can pursue higher education as a direct work activity. To further promote human capital formation

in the states, AASCU will call on federal and state policymakers to provide adequate financial aid for welfare recipients who want to pursue a higher education.

STATE ISSUES

Higher Education's Role in Statewide Economic Development Initiatives

AASCU recognizes that economic and workforce development are important state and local issues and that innovative state/local initiatives can have a significant impact in developing a strong economy. AASCU believes that higher education should be an essential partner in statewide economic planning and policy discussions and that state policies should promote the role of higher education, including four-year institutions, in developing the human capital essential to state and local economic development and workforce needs.

TANF—State Flexibility

AASCU supports the position of the National Conference of State Legislatures that expresses the need for state flexibility and adequate federal resources to ensure that implementation of the TANF provisions are successful.

GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Lay governance and self-regulation serve as two of the cornerstones of public higher education in the United States. The ability of state colleges and universities to address the dramatic changes of the past half-century is due in no small part to the vision and leadership of citizens and educators entrusted with the governance, coordination, and evaluation of these institutions.

As AASCU institutions strive to meet the demands of a rapidly changing society, the bodies overseeing and accrediting these institutions must recognize these demands and be prepared to adjust governance relationships and structures, as well as accreditation policies and practices. For their part, federal and state governments are charged with holding colleges and universities and their governing/coordinating entities accountable for responsible stewardship of the public's resources and trust, while scrupulously avoiding unwarranted interference in the management and direction of these institutions.

FEDERAL ISSUES

Accreditation—Transparency

2006 PRIORITY AASCU supports amendments to the Higher Education Act that would require public disclosure and dissemination of findings from final accreditation reports. Additionally, AASCU encourages the six regional accrediting associations to broadly communicate their initiatives in assessing student learning.

Transfer of Credit

2006 PRIORITY AASCU opposes Higher Education Act amendments that promote the direct involvement of the federal government in regulating inter-institutional academic practices such as the transfer of credit. Academic matters are most appropriately handled through the collaborative efforts of accreditors and statewide, system, and institutional boards.

Student Outcomes Data

2006 PRIORITIES AASCU endorses the National Commission on Accountability in Higher Education's recommendation for a nationwide data approach for measuring student success. Specifically, AASCU will advocate for the authorization of a multi-state pilot test to explore the feasibility of a unit-record data system covering all institutions of higher education. Such a system, provided that it contains appropriate privacy safeguards, would yield needed national data on a wide

range of accountability indicators, including persistence/attainment, net price, and distribution of federal/state/institutional aid.

AASCU advocates modifications to the graduation rate calculation provided in the Student Right to Know Act to provide completion rates for low-income students.

FEDERAL/STATE ISSUES

Academic Bill of Rights

AASCU opposes state and federal legislation mandating intellectual diversity or faculty quotas on campus. Rather, AASCU calls on colleges and universities to uphold higher education's historical policies and practices, ensuring that no member of the campus community is discriminated against on the basis of their personal beliefs.

STATE ISSUES

Board Selection, Preparation, and Institutional Relations

AASCU believes that higher education governing and coordinating boards represent a vital public trust, demanding extreme care in the selection and continuing education of board members. Accordingly, AASCU endorses the selection/appointment criteria forwarded by the Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis: commitment to public education; record of public or community service; knowledge of complex organizations and academic institutions; demonstrated collaborative leadership; willingness and availability for constructive engagement; commitment to open-minded, non-partisan decision-making; and a record of integrity and civic virtue.

AASCU calls on policymakers and the higher education community to provide comprehensive orientation for board members as they assume their duties, and continuing education for them as they strive to carry out those duties.

AASCU encourages 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.

AASCU endorses 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.

*Endorsement***AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES FOR TEACHER EDUCATION**

January 9, 2006

Dr. Constantine Curris
President
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
1307 New York Avenue N.W. • Fifth Floor
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Deno:

The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) is pleased to support AASCU's 2006 *Public Policy Agenda*. The association notes with particular pleasure your policies on educator preparation. In addition to advocating for strong content curriculum in preparation programs, AASCU also acknowledges the importance of including pedagogical curriculum as well as rigorous clinical experiences. Your attention to the pieces related to educator preparation in the Higher Education Act is also appreciated, particularly your focus on funding issues and accountability.

AACTE has long recognized AASCU's commitment to advocating for educator preparation programs. Your *Public Policy Agenda* is further evidence of your commitment to improving PK-12 student learning through educator preparation programs.

Sincerely,



Sharon P. Robinson
President and CEO

Endorsement

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICANS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

January 11, 2006

Dr. Constantine W. Curris
President
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
1307 New York Avenue N.W. • Fifth Floor
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Dr. Curris:

Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education (APAHE) endorses AASCU's 2006 *Public Policy Agenda*. We encourage AASCU to continue its advocacy for broad and inclusive access to state colleges and universities as being crucial to maintaining American democracy.

The presence of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders continue to increase at public colleges and universities. We urge AASCU and its affiliated public universities and colleges to be cognizant of the needs of Asian Pacific American students, staff, and faculty and to provide support to ensure their successful participation in higher education.

APAHE is prepared to work with AASCU and its member institutions to advance its 2006 *Public Policy Agenda*.

Sincerely,



Roy H. Saigo
APAHE Board

*Endorsement***COUNCIL FOR OPPORTUNITY IN EDUCATION**

January 6, 2006

Dr. Constantine Curris
President
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
1307 New York Avenue, N.W. • Fifth Floor
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Deno:

The Council for Opportunity in Education is pleased to support AASCU's 2006 *Public Policy Agenda*. The Council notes with particular pleasure your policies on access and inclusion. The Council has long recognized AASCU's leadership role in advocating for low-income and disabled students - students for whom the TRIO programs provide a vital support network.

Your *Public Policy Agenda* is further evidence of your commitment to assure that public universities continue to provide such students realistic opportunities to attend and succeed in college.

We look forward to working with you to advance these goals.

Sincerely,



Arnold L. Mitchem
President

*Endorsement***HISPANIC ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**

Dr. Constantine W. “Deno” Curris
President
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
1307 New York Avenue, N.W. • Fifth Floor
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Deno:

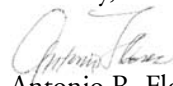
The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) offers its support for the American Association of State Colleges and Universities’ 2006 *Public Policy Agenda*. HACU’s mission as “Champions of Hispanic Success in Higher Education” is bolstered by the policies on access and inclusion delineated in this important and timely document.

The economic success and prosperity of the United States will increasingly rely on the higher education achievement of Hispanics, the nation’s largest, youngest, and fastest growing ethnic group, and the many other populations with the potential for making remarkable contributions to the nation’s well-being and security. The policy priorities and expectations shared by HACU and AASCU reflect our joint commitment to improve the educational opportunities available to the communities we serve.

HACU commends AASCU for again joining the growing number of organizations and individuals calling on Congress and the Administration to strengthen funding for the nation’s postsecondary system and to increase funding targeted specifically at Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs).

We remain strongly committed to working with our educational partners to complete the reauthorization of the HEA and to strengthen Title V by creating a new program to support graduate education at HSIs and by eliminating Title V program barriers currently in place. HACU will continue to work with AASCU and its members during the 109th Congress to advance key policy priorities focused on “Delivering America’s Promise” and to make higher education a real possibility for all low-income and minority students.

Sincerely,


Antonio R. Flores
President and CEO

*Endorsement***NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITY
IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

January 3, 2006

Dr. Constantine W. “Deno” Curris
President
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
1307 New York Avenue N.W. • Fifth Floor
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Deno:

On behalf of the nation’s 120 historically and predominately black public and private, two- and four-year colleges and universities that form the membership of the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education (NAFEO), I salute you and AASCU for producing another thoughtful, realistic set of policy principles to guide public debate and action. NAFEO is pleased to join AASCU in its efforts to prod the nation to invest resources more equitably and efficiently by investing disproportionately in programs and services designed to meet the needs and interests of students most at risk of being denied adequate preparation for, equal access to, and equal resources for higher education.

In joining your call for an equitable investment in the higher education institutions ravaged by hurricanes Katrina and Rita, I am reminded of the words of Thomas Jefferson who admonished that no nation can be both ignorant and free. Our world and our nation will become secure through the power of ideas and by the teaching of tolerance and ecumenism central to a college education. The twin hurricanes flooded classrooms and dormitories, destroyed laboratories and libraries, and displaced thousands of students and faculty. These historic campuses of academic excellence were forced to close doors to higher educational opportunities. We must invest in reopening the closed doors and continue to graduate top quality students.

NAFEO members Dillard University, Southern University New Orleans, and Xavier University most felt the pangs of devastation and destruction. In response, NAFEO has been working tirelessly to ensure that these great institutions and thus, the African-American community and the nation, are not, as the result of these unforeseen natural disasters, forced to reverse

important educational advances. We look forward to continuing to work with AASCU and with a diverse coalition to secure funding to restore these institutions to their pre-Katrina luster.

As you are aware, NAFEO member institutions, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and predominately black institutions (PBIs), educate disproportionate numbers of students who are denied adequate preparation for, equal access to, and equal resources for higher education. In many instances, however, these institutions offer students the most diverse learning environments—a 15 percent diversity rate on average. HBCUs and PBIs provide students with the tools and skills critical to prepare them for today's increasingly diverse, globally interdependent, technologically revolutionized world. They continue to serve as equal educational opportunity institutions, as other higher education institutions disengage from educating the growing populations of America and the growing segments of the nation's workforce. It is therefore crucial that we strengthen HBCUs, PBIs, and other equal educational opportunity institutions that educate disproportionate numbers of students of least advantage.

NAFEO has long valued the role that AASCU plays in advancing a genuine higher education equity and excellence agenda. We have enjoyed working with AASCU to advance our shared policy priorities. We look forward to redoubling our efforts and working with AASCU and its members to advance our 2006 common policy priorities to expand educational opportunity, equity, and success and by so doing, make our nation enlightened, safe, and free.

With best wishes, I am sincerely,



Lezli Baskerville
President and CEO

*Endorsement***NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE UNIVERSITIES
AND LAND-GRANT COLLEGES**

January 12, 2006

Dr. Constantine Curris
President
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
1307 New York Avenue, N.W. • Fifth Floor
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Deno:

On behalf of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC), I want to commend you for AASCU's 2006 *Public Policy Agenda*. NASULGC embraces your commitment to public higher education and though there may be some difference in perspective, we share your views on the key higher education policy issues. The higher education community faces many challenges in the coming year as Congress continues to work on the Higher Education Act reauthorization legislation and the Administration's Commission on the Future of Higher Education proceeds. The challenges are compounded by efforts to include vital student aid programs in proposals to reduce federal spending.

NASULGC looks forward to working closely with you, and with our colleagues on the higher education community, on your priorities during 2006.

With all best wishes,



Peter McPherson
President

Endorsement

THE COALITION OF URBAN AND METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITIES

January 3, 2006

Dr. Constantine Curris
President
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
1307 New York Avenue, N.W. • Fifth Floor
Washington, DC 20005-4701

Dear Deno:

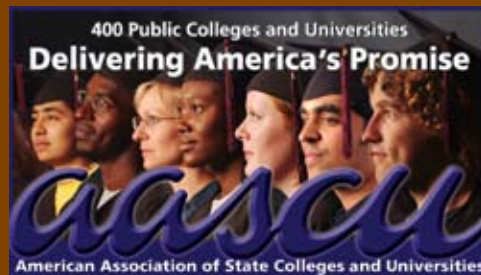
The Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities enthusiastically supports AASCU's 2006 *Public Policy Agenda*. The coalition endorses the work being conducted by AASCU in the public policy arena, specifically in those areas that focus on the special circumstances surrounding universities that are housed in urban and metropolitan settings.

The coalition will work to continue to develop strong partnerships with government aimed at focused efforts within urban and metropolitan regions. These will include, but not be limited to, homeland security, workforce, and urban revitalization and development. We will also endeavor to ensure that federal and state public policy continues to focus on metropolitan area workforce needs. Of specific concern are science, technology and engineering majors, information technology majors, teachers, nurses and other health care professions.

These goals overlap many of the goals and sentiments in the AASCU *Public Policy Agenda*. Working together, our organizations can drive public policy which will strengthen the ability of our metropolitan universities to step forward as stewards of place.



James C. Votruba
President



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