



aascu

2007
Public Policy
Agenda

**American Association of State
Colleges and Universities**

DELIVERING AMERICA'S PROMISE

AASCU's membership of 430 public college and university members are found throughout the United States, and in Guam, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. We range in size from 1,000 students to 44,000. We are found in the inner city, in suburbs, towns and cities, and in remote rural America. We include campuses with extensive offerings in law, medicine and doctoral education—as well as campuses offering associate degrees to complement baccalaureate studies. We are both residential and commuter, and with on-line degrees as well. Yet common to virtually every member institution are three qualities that define its work and characterize our common commitments.

- I. We are institutions of access and opportunity. We believe that the American promise should be real for all Americans, and that belief shapes our commitment to access, affordability and educational opportunity, and in the process strengthens American democracy for all citizens.
- II. We are student-centered institutions. We place the student at the heart of our enterprise, enhancing the learning environment and student achievement not only through teaching and advising, but through our research and public service activities.
- III. We are “stewards of place.” We engage faculty, staff and students with the communities and regions we serve—helping to advance public education, economic development and the quality of life for all with whom we live and who support our work. We affirm that America's promise extends not only to those who come to the campus but to all our neighbors.

We believe that through this stewardship and through our commitments to access and opportunity and to our students, public colleges and universities effectively and accountably deliver America's promise. In so doing we honor and fulfill the public trust.

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January 2007

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 more than 3.7 million students in the fall of 2005, representing 54 percent of enrollment at all public four-year institutions.
- Total enrollment is largely undergraduate (84 percent) and full-time (71 percent). Almost one quarter of all undergraduate students are over the age of 24.
- When looking at all public four-year institutions, AASCU educates 60 percent of all part-time students.
- Among all public four-year institutions, AASCU schools educate 57 percent of all minority students. Three of every 10 students at AASCU institutions are minority students.

Degrees

- Member institutions awarded more than half a million baccalaureate degrees in the 2004 academic year, 34 percent of those awarded nationwide. This includes 50 percent of all bachelor's degrees in education, 38 percent in health professions and 34 percent in business.

Student Charges

- Undergraduate tuition and fees for resident students averaged \$4,918 in 2005-06 at AASCU colleges and universities. Fifty-three percent of full-time undergraduates enrolled at campuses charging less than \$5,000.

Institutions

- The average enrollment at AASCU member institutions is 9,311 students. AASCU's membership consists of 172 (43 percent) campuses located in cities, 56 (14 percent) in suburbs, and 173 (43 percent) in rural areas.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Colleagues:

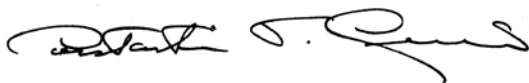
I am pleased to present you the American Association of State Colleges and Universities' 2007 *Public Policy Agenda*. This annual statement of policy principles and positions guides the association's advocacy on current and developing issues at the federal and state levels.

The ongoing reauthorization of the federal Higher Education Act, as well as the recommendations from the National Commission on the Future of Higher Education and the National Academies report *Rising Above the Gathering Storm—Energizing and Employing America for a Brighter Economic Future*, form the backdrop of this year's edition of the *Public Policy Agenda*. Amid debates on issues of access, accountability, affordability of college and the challenges of being competitive in a global society, 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. 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 statehouse 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

2007 POLICY PRIORITIES

AASCU's advocacy efforts in 2007 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 2008 appropriations to fund at least the \$4,500 maximum grant.
- Align Pell Grant awards with the benchmark proposed by The National Commission on the Future of Higher Education to increase the purchasing power of the average Pell award, specifically, 70 percent of the average in-state tuition at public four-year institutions over a period of five years.

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.
- Support flexible repayment terms and incentives for timely repayment for borrowers, and oppose increases in borrower fees.
- Support measures that encourage the federal government to provide the basic information needed by institutions to provide appropriate counseling and consumer information for the prospective borrower before the student begins borrowing.

National Security

Immigration and Visa Control

- Protect provisions under current law to permit exemptions from the annual visa cap on H-1B visas for the academic community and support changes in legislation that would raise the current limitation on new visas per year imposed on the business community.

International Exchange

- Support legislation that will implement and fully fund recommendations of the Lincoln Commission to establish a national 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 an overhaul of existing Helping Outstanding Pupils Educationally (HOPE), Lifetime Learning and other tuition tax deductions and changes in benefits 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 the nation's innovative capacity and economic competitiveness by increasing funding for undergraduate programming by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Science Foundation (NSF).

Teacher Preparation, Development, and Support

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Reauthorization

- Support NCLB provisions related to high quality teachers and to the alignment of Title II of NCLB with Title II of the Higher Education Act (HEA).

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.

Competitiveness—Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)

- Support collaboration with associations, government entities and universities to develop a strategy that addresses the national shortage, training and placement of STEM teachers in areas of greatest need.

Access and Inclusion

HEA Programs—Minority-Serving Institutions

- Boost funding for Titles III and V of 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 Gaining Early Advancement and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (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**

- Support federal and congressional initiatives to fully include and recognize four-year institutions as workforce providers and involve university leaders in the planning and decision-making processes related to economic and workforce development.

Welfare Reform

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

Governance and Accountability**Student Learning Assessment**

- Support efforts to develop state level student-learning measures, drawing on existing instruments such as the Collegiate Learning Assessment and the National Study of Student Engagement. Such efforts should involve institutions, associations, state agencies, and regional accreditors working together.

Student Outcomes Data

- Support a federal and state role that calls for a privacy-protected national system of student level data.

- Support a collaborative initiative with State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) for states to develop a pilot test of an integrated network of state data systems.

- Continue to support the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC)/AASCU Voluntary System on Accountability project for assessing student learning.

INTRODUCTION

AASCU's 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 2007 public policy priorities focus on the fulfillment of core commitments to the nation's students and their families and to responsible stewardship of the public's resources and trust. AASCU first and foremost remains committed to increasing access and to making college affordable for all. In this regard, it strongly supports increases in need-based financial aid and is dismayed by the growth of merit-based aid programs and the large debt burdens that many students carry. AASCU is committed to greater public accountability by supporting improvement of data systems and greater transparency, as well as paying more attention to student learning outcomes. Finally, AASCU recognizes the importance of expanding human capital and boosting competitiveness in the global marketplace. These themes were central to the final report of the U.S. Secretary of Education's Commission on the Future of Higher Education, and AASCU is committed to tackling the difficult issues outlined in that report. Through the federal Higher Education Act and other means, AASCU will represent the interests of its members and advocate aggressively for those most at risk of being left behind—or left out—in the emerging knowledge-driven society.

The *2007 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, but 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

To ensure that access to higher education not be limited to those with the ability to pay, 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. Students, their families, and federal and state governments share this responsibility.

AASCU's analysis and advocacy on student financial aid center on the following basic beliefs:

- 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.
- Minimizing the risks and adverse consequences of student loan borrowing is a shared responsibility. The increasing student reliance on federal debt financing should be accompanied by improved consumer information to borrowers and more flexible repayment options.
- 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 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

Appropriations

Student financial aid grant 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.

Increases have been insufficient in recent years to provide adequate grant assistance to low-income recipients. The National Commission on the Future of Higher Education, established by the U.S. Secretary of Education, has proposed a benchmark to increase the purchasing power of the average Pell award, specifically, 70 percent of the average in-state tuition at public four-year institutions over a period of five years. The Commission adds a caveat that the growth in college tuition should not exceed the growth in median family income over a five-year period.

Pell Grants

2007 PRIORITY AASCU will continue to advocate for significant annual 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. Increases in the Pell Grant maximum award should align with a benchmark proposed by The National Commission on the Future of Higher Education to increase the purchasing power of the average Pell award, specifically, 70 percent of the average in-state tuition at public four-year institutions over a period of five years.

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

AASCU will continue to advocate 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.

Legislation

Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA)

Congress reauthorized the major loan programs in the Higher Education Reconciliation Act (HERA), which was part of S.1932, the Federal Deficit Reduction Act, signed by the President in February 2006. AASCU, in combination with the other higher education associations, did not support the passage of the Federal Deficit Reduction Act because it used savings resulting from curtailing lender subsidy to reduce the federal deficit, not to improve benefits for needy students, and it eliminated several existing borrower benefits in the federal loan programs.

Congress has passed several short extensions of the remaining HEA programs, most recently, H.R. 6138, that extends the programs through June 30, 2007. Congress may accomplish a more extensive reauthorization of the remaining programs next year. To this end, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 609, but the U.S. Senate has not completed comparable legislation.

Academic Competitiveness Grants and SMART Grants

The HERA also created two new grant programs, and appropriated \$4.5 billion for them over five years: Academic Competitiveness Grants, and National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent (SMART), grants. AASCU and the City University of New York filed a joint statement aimed at streamlining the implementation of these two complex programs in response to the U.S. Department of Education's request for comments on its interim final regulations; these programs became operational in July 2006. AASCU will continue to advise the Department and Congress on changes needed to make these programs, which provide higher Pell Grant awards to selected Pell recipients, more equitable and manageable.

Pell Grants

2007 PRIORITY AASCU advocates four 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;
- (3) The U.S. Department of Education will pay all eligible recipients the amount that the student is entitled to receive; and
- (4) In the event that the substantial increases in Pell Grant funding recommended by the National Commission on the Future of Higher Education become available, these new benefits should be better targeted to low-income students than is possible under current law.

Year Round Pell Grant Awards

2007 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

2007 PRIORITY AASCU advocates the continued availability of both Direct and government-guaranteed Federal Family Education Loans, based on school choice on the front end and on borrower's choice upon entry into repayment. AASCU will continue: (1) to advocate appropriate improvements that would render these programs more beneficial to borrowers and less cumbersome for institutions, and (2) to oppose all efforts to undermine either program through legislative and regulatory provisions that would impose artificial disadvantages on the efficient operation.

Student Debt Burden

Increasing student debt burden has resulted in several major studies, proposals, and Congressional bills highlighting the need for better counseling for borrowers and better repayment options. These reinforce AASCU's continued concern for the protection of those assuming debt to finance their postsecondary education. AASCU will pursue these concerns through regulatory and legislative proposals, consultation with U.S. Department of Education officials regarding its program oversight, and coalitions of relevant interest groups and stakeholders.

Counseling and Consumer Information

Federal role

2007 PRIORITIES AASCU believes the federal government should provide the basic information needed by institutions for appropriate counseling and consumer information for the prospective borrower before the student begins borrowing. This includes regional data on starting salaries in all major fields, the impact of forbearance and capitalization of interest on unsubsidized loans and repayment options (including the availability of income-contingent repayment).

AASCU strongly recommends that the federal government make prominently available to prospective borrowers information regarding the government's extraordinary powers to collect student loans, far beyond those of most

unsecured creditors. Even in bankruptcy, most student loans must be repaid. Unlike any other type of debt, there is no statute of limitations.

Institutional role

AASCU advocates that each institution ensure that prospective borrowers have access to information on the average indebtedness of borrowers at that institution, the amount of annual and aggregate debt needed to complete the student's academic program, sample payments for that amount of debt, as well as information made available by the U.S. Department of Education on starting salaries for graduates by field of study, repayment options, capitalization of interest, and the consequences of default.

Role of the lending community

AASCU calls for lenders, before loan disbursement and before repayment begins, to disclose to borrowers an explanation of repayment options, including both income-sensitive and income-contingent repayment.

2007 PRIORITY AASCU calls for periodic communication from lenders, servicers, and the U.S. Department of Education to student borrowers in repayment, recommending that they review their payments relative to their current financial circumstances to make any adjustment necessary to avoid default and to minimize the repayment period if possible.

Repayment

AASCU is particularly concerned about borrowers who drop out of college. Recent research reveals that almost 300,000 borrowers annually who first enroll in a four-year institution and aspire to a bachelor's degree have dropped out six years later, and nearly one fourth have defaulted on loans.

2007 PRIORITIES AASCU supports changes to the federal loan programs to eliminate default by ensuring that the U.S. 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 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 supports legislative changes, if necessary, to locate borrowers in repayment who are delinquent on their student loans. If the U.S. Department of Education determines that lack of current borrower addresses is causing borrowers to default, AASCU would support making the “National Directory of New Hires” maintained by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services available to the U.S. Department of Education for the purpose of locating borrowers in delinquency or default status so that borrowers do not build up large penalties for nonpayment.

Nontraditional Students

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

STATE ISSUES

In addition to providing appropriations to keep tuition at a reasonable level, states provide aid directly to students. AASCU encourages states to coordinate their policies with those of the federal government and institutions, especially on issues pertaining to student access. AASCU believes that state financial aid programs should:

- Target grants to low-income undergraduates, making a priority for Pell Grant recipients, rather than basing grant aid on merit.
- Include funding for both traditional and non-traditional students, full-time and part-time.

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:

- AASCU institutions play a role in making the nation safer against terrorist threats. 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 U.S. campuses.
- AASCU favors targeted and appropriate 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 U.S. 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 that 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.

2007 PRIORITY AASCU endorses the findings of the Lincoln Commission, and will advocate for legislation that will implement and fully fund its recommendations to establish a national study abroad program.

Immigration and Visa Control of Foreign Students

2007 PRIORITY AASCU will advocate for legislation that would relieve the H-1B visa and EB green card problems. AASCU will protect provisions under current law that permit exemptions from the annual cap on H-1B visas for the academic community and AASCU will support changes in legislation that would raise the current limitation on new visas per year imposed on employers from the business community.

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 United States Visitor and Immigrant Status Indicator Technology program (US VISIT). US VISIT is a biometric-based system that checks the fingerprints and digital facial photograph of foreigners against U.S. government watch lists to determine if they are in violation of immigration laws or have a connection to terrorism.

2007 PRIORITIES 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 United States.

Support for Students Called to Military/Protective Duty

2007 PRIORITIES 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 advocate for legislation that seeks to improve the educational preparation of youth for postsecondary education and for enlistment in military service. Only three out of ten young people (ages 17-24) are eligible to meet the military enlistment standards.

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 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 2007. 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. In Washington, a change in congressional leadership and control of one or both chambers will surely result in attempts to reverse tax policies that served as a centerpiece for the current congressional leadership. Congressional attempts to switch from existing and proposed federal tax cuts to tax increases will affect campuses and their students, possibly in adverse and far-reaching ways.

AASCU's analysis and advocacy on tax policy questions in the year ahead will center on 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

2007 PRIORITY AASCU supports changes in the HOPE and Lifetime Learning Tax Credits that will make them more accessible to the most needy 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.

AASCU supports an overhaul of existing HOPE, Lifetime Learning and other tuition tax deductions. Benefits from these programs do not align with policy priorities that promote greater access to the most needy students. A realignment and overhaul should redirect benefits to the most needy students.

Student Loan Interest Benefits

AASCU, working with the U.S. Public Interest Research Groups (PIRG) and the U.S. 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 reinstate the tax deduction for student loan interest. The provision that permitted student loan interest to be deducted expired at the end of 2005 and was not renewed.

Student Loan Forgiveness

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

Policy Affecting Institutions

State/Local Retirement Plan Contributions

2007 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

2007 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

2007 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

2007 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.

Individual Retirement Account Provisions—Charitable Giving

AASCU will support legislation that would make permanent tax provisions due to expire in 2007 that permit individuals 70½ and older to transfer up to \$100,000 from an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) tax-free to charitable and other nonprofit organizations. AASCU will explore the feasibility of lowering the eligibility requirement from age 70½ to 65.

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.

Nonprofit Regulation

2007 PRIORITY AASCU supports 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.

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

2007 PRIORITY AASCU will oppose any proposed modification of the Federal Insurance Contributions Act exemption for students working on college and university campuses.

Tuition Remission

2007 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 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 that 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

During 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. The Spellings Commission called attention to the important role that higher education institutions play in preparing citizens for a knowledge-based economy. The nation's economic competitiveness, security, and prosperity depend in large measure on its scientific and technological innovation.

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 believes that its institutions play a central role in producing graduates with bachelors and masters degrees and serve as the primary access to doctoral degrees.
- 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 the technological competitive advantage.

- AASCU supports the federal government's role and investment in increasing diversity in science and technology fields where racial/ethnic minorities and low-income students have traditionally been underrepresented.

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 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.

Agriculture

AASCU will work with other associations to support the passage of the 2007 Farm Bill in the first session of the 110th Congress.

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

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 supports 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 encourages 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 understand and manage the legitimate usage

of P2P file sharing and to seek ways to reduce its illegitimate use 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 to gain access to high-speed networks. AASCU 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 primary policy areas: HEA's Title II and federal student loan forgiveness for teachers. In addition, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act is scheduled for reauthorization in Fiscal Year 2008, and AASCU will be monitoring this reauthorization.

**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 and to assure quality preparation of high school graduates who enroll in higher education institutions;
- 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

2007 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

2007 PRIORITY AASCU supports:

- Efforts as part of Title II to provide resources to strengthen 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.

2007 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

2007 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.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

2007 PRIORITIES NCLB directly relates to a number of higher education policy issues. AASCU is particularly interested in those provisions related to high quality teachers and to the alignment of Title II of NCLB with Title II of HEA. The alignment of teacher education policies with P-16 policy is a priority for AASCU.

AASCU will work with other associations, particularly the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), in developing the policy agenda pertaining to reauthorization of NCLB. For example, AASCU, together with AACTE, will support federal funding under NCLB for states to develop student data systems with links to teacher preparation programs.

Competitiveness

The United States currently faces enormous shortages in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields, creating national concerns about the country's ability to compete in a growing global economy. Two issues in particular contribute to this problem: shortages of qualified P-12 classroom teachers and a lack of success in college in STEM courses, particularly in basic mathematics.

There is no national agenda to address the complex problems that enervate efforts to attract, retain and support highly qualified teachers. AASCU will advocate, in collaboration with associations, government entities and universities, to develop a strategy that addresses the national shortage of STEM teachers.

AASCU will encourage its institutions to work within their states to strengthen traditional and non-traditional pathways for qualified candidates.

AASCU will advocate for increased funding to support training, placement, and retention of STEM teachers in areas of greatest need and to encourage federal incentives to improve their compensation.

In addition, AASCU is working with member institutions to improve undergraduate mathematics instruction. AASCU institutions are the sites of enormous innovation and experimentation. AASCU is committed to identifying best practices in undergraduate mathematics at its institutions and disseminating those practices more widely.

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.

AASCU encourages states to develop comprehensive teacher workforce strategies that address the interrelated factors of recruitment, distribution, quality, and retention. Such strategies would aim to eliminate out-of-field placement and emergency credentialing of teachers, while recognizing the challenges facing K-12 schools and districts. They might include:

- Strengthened teacher preparation, induction and mentoring, and professional development programs.
- 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, including increased salaries and pay for performance.
- Alternative certification programs aimed at high-need areas with assurance that these 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.

- Intensified recruitment efforts and partnerships between teacher preparation programs and school districts.
- 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.

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 2007 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 during 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*, 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. AASCU opposes federal and state efforts that prohibit affirmative action policies for colleges and universities.
- 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

HEA Programs

Minority-Serving Institutions

2007 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 at the doctorate 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 the creation of a new section and funding line for graduate education.

Students

2007 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 U.S. 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. This includes alignment of high school exit, college admissions, and college placement assessments.

AASCU encourages states to raise and clarify expectations for entering freshmen by articulating statewide coursework requirements for college admission and the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in college.

AASCU encourages states to develop “early warning” systems for postsecondary readiness.

AASCU encourages states to make accelerated learning options a statewide issue and to develop policies that encourage participation of middle- and lower-achieving groups in such programs as Advanced Placement/ International Baccalaureate and dual/concurrent enrollment.

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 supports coordinated and collaborative efforts at the state or system level to develop 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.

Nontraditional/adult learners

Beyond statewide articulation/transfer policies, AASCU encourages states to develop additional policies supportive of adult learners, including policies on assessment of prior learning and policies that help adults meet the logistical challenges of simultaneously working, parenting, and attending college.

Undocumented students

AASCU encourages states to offer in-state tuition to qualified undocumented aliens.

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.

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. In addition, as the nation struggles to develop preparedness for national emergencies, there continues to be a critical need for trained workers in construction, energy, health care, transportation, and public safety. As AASCU institutions strive to meet these challenges, new methods and approaches must be applied to prepare displaced workers with the skills needed to re-enter the workforce.

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 U.S. 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)

2007 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 federal and congressional initiatives that recognize four-year institutions as workforce providers.

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.

Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) Initiative

The Bush Administration announced in February 2006 a new \$195 million initiative to transform regional economies. The WIRED initiative will provide 13 different regions with \$15 million in funding over a three-year

period to produce long-term strategic plans that prepare their workers for high-skill, high wage opportunities.

The initiative is designed for regions that have been affected by global trade, are dependent on a single industry, or recovering from natural disasters. WIRED focuses on regional partnerships comprised of multiple jurisdictions within or across state borders.

2007 PRIORITY AASCU will advocate that four-year institutions be recognized as workforce providers in the WIRED Initiative.

Nursing and Other Health Professions

AASCU will support coordinated and collaborative efforts that provide resources to increase the number of qualified professionals in the areas of health and safety, especially in critical need areas such as nursing.

Welfare Reform

AASCU believes that welfare recipients with higher education and training have a better opportunity to increase their earning capacity and to become self-sufficient. Higher education and training for welfare recipients have proven to be viable and expedient routes for moving individuals toward productive employment and enriched lives.

AASCU will advocate for increasing the allowable time limits under which welfare recipients can pursue a higher education as a direct work activity. AASCU believes that a 12-month limit forces many welfare recipients to leave college before receiving the needed education and training.

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 and local initiatives can have a significant impact in developing a strong economy. For example, Northern Kentucky University (NKU) has been recognized locally and nationally for their work in this area and has built a strong foundation for regional stewardship.

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.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (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.

The U.S. Secretary of Education's National Commission on the Future of Higher Education focused public attention on a number of governance and accountability topics. Issues of accreditation, disclosure, transparency and accountability described in the Commission report align closely with AASCU's public policy priorities, and AASCU endorsed the recommendations of the report. AASCU's response to this report details association activities that serve to support the implementation of the report and its priorities.

FEDERAL ISSUES

Accountability

AASCU believes that public colleges and universities have a responsibility to communicate clearly and effectively about their stewardship of the public's investment in them. Policymakers and the general public need better data and meaningful information, not simply more data.

The report of the Secretary's Commission called for the development of a "privacy-protected higher education information system that collects, analyzes, and uses student-level data." The U.S. Secretary of Education introduced a modification of this proposal in her Action Plan for Higher Education, calling for a national system that links existing state-level information systems in 40 states.

- AASCU supports a federal and state role that calls for a privacy-protected national system of student level data. A national system, or an integrated network of state systems, could fill existing information gaps regarding net price, student attendance patterns, and success rates. Privacy and implementation issues remain, and a pilot test of such a system should be authorized to assess feasibility and weigh costs and benefits. Such a system could yield needed national data on a wide range of accountability indicators, including persistence/attainment, net price, and distribution of federal/state/institutional aid.
- AASCU, in partnership with SHEEO, will advocate for states to develop a pilot test of an integrated network of state data systems. AASCU will encourage member institutions to participate in the pilot.
- AASCU will continue to support the development of a federal, privacy-protected student information system, should such a proposal be introduced. At the current time, momentum seems to be directed toward the piloting of an integrated network of state systems, not a database created at the federal level. However, AASCU has gone on record in

support of a federal information system and supports either effort as a means to provide needed data.

- AASCU advocates for modifications to the graduation rate calculation provided in the Student Right to Know Act to provide completion rates for low-income students (AASCU is advocating a change in the Senate HEA bill that would add low-income as a data element collected by the U.S. Department of Education).

Accreditation—Transparency

2007 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 expectations in assessing and reporting student learning.

Transfer of Credit

2007 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 Learning Assessment

The lack of comparable data on student learning and the value added by collegiate curricula remains one of the gaping holes in institutional accountability. Promising initiatives are underway in this area, and they should be evaluated, linked, and brought to scale.

- AASCU endorses recommendations of the National Commission on the Future of Higher Education pertaining to student learning outcomes.
- AASCU supports efforts to develop state level student-learning measures, drawing on existing instruments such as the Collegiate Learning Assessment and the National Study of Student Engagement. Such efforts should involve institutions, associations, state agencies, and regional

accreditors working together. The NASULGC/AASCU Voluntary System of Accountability project proposes to ask our members to collect data on students, student engagement with their campuses, and student learning in several core areas.

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.

Transfer and Articulation

Academic matters are most appropriately handled through the collaborative efforts of accreditors and statewide, system, and institutional boards.

- AASCU encourages states to develop effective policies to support the transfer of credit and streamline credit transfer, including statewide articulation agreements.
- AASCU supports the development of better statewide data systems that track the performance of transfer students.

Student Learning Assessment

AASCU supports state efforts, working with the higher education community to expand and improve institutional graduation rate measures to better reflect diversity of institutions, changing demographics, and complex attendance patterns.

AASCU supports state efforts, working with the higher education community, to generate comparable information on student learning outcomes, including exploring value-added approaches.

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES FOR TEACHER EDUCATION

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American Association of State Colleges and Universities
1307 New York Avenue, NW • Fifth Floor
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Deno:

The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) is pleased to support AASCU's *2007 Public Policy Agenda*. AACTE recognizes AASCU's longstanding commitment to supporting high-quality educator preparation programs.

We note, with particular appreciation, AASCU's emphasis on collecting meaningful data on preparation program effectiveness and on strengthening Title II of the Higher Education Act. AASCU also recognizes the important role schools of education play in developing more K-12 student interest in the STEM fields.

We look forward to working with AASCU in the coming year, particularly on developing an agenda for the No Child Left Behind Act reauthorization.

Sincerely,



Sharon P. Robinson, Ed.D.
President and CEO

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICANS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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

Dear Dr. Curris:

Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education (APAHE) endorses AASCU's *2007 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 *2007 Public Policy Agenda*.

Sincerely,



Roy H. Saigo
APAHE Board

COUNCIL FOR OPPORTUNITY IN EDUCATION

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

Dear Deno:

The Council for Opportunity in Education is pleased to support AASCU's *2007 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

HISPANIC ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

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

Dear Deno:

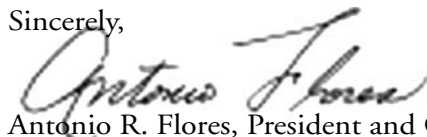
The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) offers its support for the American Association of State Colleges and Universities' *2007 Public Policy Agenda*. HACU's mission as "Champions of Hispanic Success in Higher Education" is bolstered by the policies on access and inclusion delineated 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 population, and the many other groups 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. HACU will continue to work with AASCU and its members during the 110th 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

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE UNIVERSITIES AND LAND-GRANT COLLEGES

Dr. Constantine Curris
President
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
1307 New York Avenue, NW • 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 *2007 Public Policy Agenda*. NASULGC embraces your commitment to public higher education and we support the concepts set forth in the agenda. We are particularly pleased to work with AASCU.

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 in the higher education community, on your priorities during 2007.

With all best wishes,



Peter McPherson
President

THE COALITION OF URBAN AND METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITIES

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

Dear Deno:

The Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities enthusiastically supports AASCU's *2007 Public Policy Agenda*. The Coalition continues to endorse 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 works 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 also endeavor to ensure that federal and state public policy continues to focus on affordable access to higher education and 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.

Sincerely,



Robert L. Caret
President



1307 New York Avenue, NW • Fifth Floor

Washington, DC 20005-4701

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January 2007