

Competitiveness

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

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

Among other federal laws, the Higher Education Act contains numerous programs that assist colleges and universities in preparing students to be informed, participating members of a democracy and of the global world while contributing to U.S. competitiveness. With the recent reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, Congress has created several new programs while amending previous law.

For example, in an effort to strengthen teacher preparation programs, Congress has aligned Title II of the Higher Education with provisions in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act/ No Child Left Behind that create more prescriptive requirements

and stronger accountability measures in the preparation of the nation's teaching force.

AASCU is also pleased to have advocated for provisions in the reauthorized Higher Education Act that create a new competitive grant program for rural colleges and universities in an effort to support and strengthen our nation's rural communities.

Competitiveness Priorities

- ★ Require that federally funded partnership programs between institutions of higher education and K-12 schools include a comprehensive focus on teacher induction, mentoring and professional development.
- ★ Target the limited federal funds available to support linkages between teacher preparation programs and the needs of our nation's K-12 system, such as preparing teachers to teach in high-need, hard-to-staff schools and in high-need subjects.
- ★ Create incentives for partnerships among institutions and states to strengthen traditional and nontraditional pathways for qualified candidates to teach in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields.
- ★ Provide appropriations for the newly authorized Rural Development Grants for Rural Colleges and Universities program. These grants encourage partnerships between rural colleges and universities and local entities that promote greater access to college for rural high school students.
- ★ Support the Lincoln Commission recommendations to establish a national study abroad program, particularly for students from underrepresented institutions and populations.
- ★ Strengthen the pipeline for those who have been traditionally underrepresented in STEM fields, such as students of color, low-income students and women.

Federal Role in Competitiveness— AASCU Policy Statements

Teacher Preparation and Development

Title II of the Higher Education Act

Teacher Quality Enhancement Grants

- Require that federally funded partnership programs between institutions of higher education and K-12 schools include a comprehensive focus on teacher induction, mentoring and professional development.

In 2006–2007, AASCU institutions awarded over 54,500 bachelor’s degrees in education, almost half of those awarded nationwide.

AASCU has a long history of commitment to teacher preparation, development and support. In recent years, there has been growing consensus about the importance of teacher quality, as well as growing evidence that teacher quality is the most significant factor affecting 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.

AASCU’s involvement with teacher preparation policy at the federal level focuses on Title II in both the Higher Education Act (HEA) and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).
- Support the strengthening of high-quality clinical experiences in all traditional teacher preparation programs and require that all federally funded alternative teacher preparation programs include high-quality clinical experiences.
- Target the limited federal funds available to support linkages between teacher preparation programs and the needs of our nation’s K-12 system, such as preparing teachers to teach in high-need, hard-to-staff schools and in high-need subjects.
- Oppose requiring states to use funds awarded pursuant to Title II in the Higher Education Act 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).

Federal/State Partnerships to Ensure Teacher Quality

- Provide resources to states to improve the quality of teacher preparation program approval requirements and develop and implement a voluntary process for evaluating the influence that teacher preparation programs have on student learning.
- Oppose federal legislation that infringes on state authority in the regulation of teacher preparation programs.

Accountability of Teacher Preparation Programs

- Provide federal funds for research and evaluation of teacher preparation programs, including improvement of data systems, in order to inform and improve program performance and productivity.
- When a single teacher education program tries to gather data to assess the impact of its graduates on K-12 student achievement, it takes extraordinary time and effort. When the state takes up the study of all its programs, in partnership with institutions, there is an economy of scale.

Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategies

- Provide federal funding to increase the number of educators from underrepresented and nontraditional teaching populations through centers of excellence based at institutions of higher education.
 - Support service-payback models to recruit students who agree to teach in targeted school districts, especially schools that are difficult to staff or where salaries are often not comparable to those of more affluent school districts.
 - Support loan forgiveness for teachers who work in high-need schools or teach in high-need subject areas.
- Every \$1 spent on high quality teacher induction programs provides a return on investment of \$1.66 after five years. The return on investment is primarily a result of enhanced student learning and reduced teacher turnover costs.

Elementary and Secondary Education Act/No Child Left Behind

- Boost appropriations to assist states in meeting the teacher quality requirements set forth under the No Child Left Behind Act.
- Support efforts to align Title II of the Higher Education Act and Title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to strengthen recruitment, pre-service preparation, induction, and in-service professional development of teachers, principals and other K-12 school leaders.

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Education

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

Economic and Workforce Development

Rural Colleges

- Provide appropriations for the newly authorized Rural Development Grants for Rural Colleges and Universities program. These grants encourage partnerships between rural colleges and universities and local entities that promote greater access to college for rural high school students. Other program objectives include increasing the number of adults in rural communities with a bachelor's degree or higher,

enhancing training opportunities, and stimulating technological innovation.

Workforce Investment Act (WIA)

- Advocate for amendments to WIA that more fully include and recognize the role of four-year colleges and universities in workforce education and include state college and university leaders in planning and decision-making processes for state utilization of federal WIA funds.
- Support modifications in federal law that would make it easier for states to coordinate their welfare-to-work systems.

Welfare Reform—Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Program

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

International Education

Study Abroad

- Support the removal of barriers to the open exchange of scholars between all nations and oppose limitations on student study abroad, except in instances of personal health and security issues.
- Boost appropriations for international programs managed by the Department of Education: Title VI of the Higher Education Act: International Education Programs, Fulbright-Hays, and the Institute for International Public Policy.
- Support the Lincoln Commission recommendations to establish a national study abroad program, particularly for students from underrepresented institutions and populations.

- Expand student exchange programs with foreign countries for colleges and universities, and lift current travel restrictions imposed by the Department of Treasury that serve as barriers to student/faculty exchanges with Cuba.

Immigration and Visa Control of Foreign Students

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

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)

STEM Research and Workforce Preparation

- Boost funding for the programs recently authorized in the America COMPETES Act and support specific

In 2006–2007, according to the most recent IPEDS data, AASCU institutions awarded approximately 33 percent of bachelor's degrees in the United States in mathematics and statistics, 28 percent of bachelor's degrees in computer and information science and 21 percent of bachelor's degrees in engineering.

funding designations to public four-year institutions for research and workforce development in energy and sustainability fields.

- Recognize the contributions of each sector of higher education in the strengthening of STEM fields—the resources of the entire community must be tapped when creating, funding and implementing STEM programs that educate future scientists, engineers and mathematicians as well as create research opportunities for students studying in the STEM fields.
- Support and improve basic and applied scientific research and education activities for undergraduate programs in order to complement established graduate and research programming.
- Strengthen the pipeline for those who have been traditionally underrepresented in STEM fields, such as students of color, low-income students and women.

State Role in Competitiveness— AASCU Policy Statements

Higher Education's Role in Statewide Economic Development Initiatives

- Urge states to include the higher education community as an essential partner in statewide economic planning and policy discussions.
- Call for state policies and programs that promote the role of higher education, including four-year institutions, in the development of the human capital essential to advancing state and local economic development and meeting workforce needs.

- Include all public four-year institutions in formal state-sponsored programs designed to facilitate applied research and development activities and regional economic development.

In FY 2006, AASCU member institutions expended \$2.5 billion for research and development activities, according to the latest survey by the Association of University Technology Managers. This equates to the addition of 90,000 well-paying high-skill jobs, based on generally accepted multiplier estimates used by the Bureau of Economic Analysis of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

The Kentucky Postsecondary Education Improvement Act (HB 1), approved in 1997, is illustrative of a successful and inclusive state initiative. The Kentucky Strategic Investment and Incentive Funding Program and the Regional University Excellence Fund serve as good examples of how states can effectively leverage state monies, allowing all public four-year institutions to fully tap their economic development capacity.

Preparing, Developing and Retaining a Quality Teacher Workforce

- Support state efforts to establish and implement rigorous standards of learning for students in teacher preparation programs. These standards should address both specific content area comprehension and knowledge of appropriate methods of instruction and should be used to promote public accountability.

- Encourage states to develop comprehensive teacher workforce strategies that address teacher quality, recruitment, distribution and retention. These strategies might include:
 - Strengthened teacher preparation, induction and mentoring, and professional development programs.
 - 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.
 - Intensified partnerships between teacher preparation programs and school districts, including emphasis on formal, structured interactions between teacher preparation programs and schools.
 - Increased professionalism and improved working conditions (enhanced license reciprocity and pension portability, opportunities for advancement, reduced teaching loads and extra support in hard-to-staff schools).
 - Comprehensive teacher data systems and research on program effectiveness.
 - Increased importance of mathematics education for all teacher preparation students.
 - Alternative certification programs aimed at high-need areas with assurance that these programs have sufficient rigor.

State Investment in Capital Outlay and Infrastructure Maintenance Needs

- Urge states to make a greater commitment to the infrastructure and facility needs of their public colleges and universities in

order to recruit and retain students and faculty and to fully deliver on their missions.

Ensuring Sufficient Staffing in the Healthcare Professions

- Support state efforts to incentivize and facilitate attendance at state colleges and universities for students who seek training in high-demand healthcare professions, such as nursing, through loan forgiveness programs.

Enhanced Preparedness for STEM Occupations

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

Attracting and Retaining Talent Capacity

- Support state efforts to provide resources and policies that serve to attract and retain diverse and highly capable postsecondary workforce talent, such as through the use of progressive benefits packages.

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and Workforce Investment Act (WIA)

- Continue to support the position of the National Conference of State Legislatures that expresses the need for state flexibility and adequate federal resources to ensure implementation of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) provisions is successful.
- Encourage states to coordinate their TANF program with their WIA program, to the extent possible.