Mission
The mission of AASCU’s Spouse/Partner Program is to serve the unique needs of spouses and partners of state college and university presidents and chancellors through networking and professional development opportunities, information exchange and guidance. Its aim is to highlight the important role played by presidential spouses/partners and assist all those who serve our colleges and universities in these important and unique roles.

Network of Peer Support
The program’s foundation is derived from the individuals who comprise its membership and their diversity of knowledge, experience and wisdom. The AASCU Spouse/Partner Program serves as a source of information and support for the entire membership.

Program Benefits
- Targeted sessions at AASCU’s twice yearly national conferences.
- Information and best practices for successful navigation in the varied roles of presidential spouses/partners.
- Strategic and continuous development for spouses/partners at all experience levels.
- Annual publication of spouse/partner photo directory.
- Access to national network of college and university presidential spouses/partners.
- Orientation and mentoring programs for new spouses/partners and others as requested.

Conference Sessions
Sessions and roundtable discussions designed specifically to address the needs of spouses/partners and the challenges of their unique roles.
are offered at AASCU’s twice yearly national conferences (Annual Meeting and the Summer Council). Sample offerings include:

- The spouse/partner role in “friend and fundraising.”
- Ideas for campus and community involvement.
- Personal/professional development sessions.
- Book discussions.
- Managing expectations as a partner.
- New presidential spouse/partner orientation.
- Male spouse/partner roundtable.
- The employed spouse/partner.
- Entertaining various stakeholders, including the campus community.
- Informal networking opportunities.

**Program Elements**

Two committees and three staff members ensure that the needs of AASCU’s spouses and partners are continuously met.

- **Spouse/Partner Planning Committee** is the pivotal steering body of the Spouse/Partner Program. Through its diverse make-up, the committee provides the “thought leadership” for initiatives and topical programming and advises AASCU on the needs, wishes and experiences of spouses/partners. Members of the committee (including the chair and co-chair) are proposed by a Spouse/Partner Nominating Task Force and are then voted upon by all AASCU spouses/partners. Members serve two-year terms, with one-half rotating off the committee each year. The Liaison to the Spouse/Partner Program and the Planning and Outreach Coordinator both serve as ex-officio members of this group.

- **Spouse/Partner Nominating Task Force** develops the annual slate of individuals to serve on the planning committee using nominations received from the spouse/partner network. The slate this group develops is subsequently presented to the entire membership for ratification.

- **Judy K. Ingle**, former presidential spouse at Coastal Carolina University (S.C.), serves as the Spouse/Partner Program Planning and Outreach Coordinator. The coordinator works with the Spouse/Partner Planning Committee and AASCU staff to develop program and discussion sessions for Annual Meeting and Summer Council, and serves as a resource in assessing the value and feasibility of projects and services. Together, they provide individual counseling,
advice and mentoring to spouses/partners as needed. Further, through targeted outreach they facilitate the engagement of presidential spouses/partners—particularly of those new to the role—in the AASCU network.

- **Albert R. “Mickey” Howard**, husband of AASCU President Muriel A. Howard, serves as the Liaison to the Spouse/Partner Program. In addition to performing “first spouse” duties, the liaison is the spokesperson for the group’s collective concerns, advocates for interests of presidential spouses/partners, and advises presidents and the Spouse/Partner Planning Committee on the interests and needs of spouses/partners (with a special focus on male spouses/partners).

- **Alex Wood**, Spouse Programs Associate, provides day-to-day support of the program from the AASCU office. He is responsible for providing staff assistance to all entities of the program; handling on-site meeting arrangements; supporting the Spouse/Partner Planning Committee and Nominations Task Force—including taking minutes and keeping records; serving as the communication nexus among various program elements; managing spouse/partner data and producing the annual *Spouse/Partner Directory*.

### Support for New Presidential Spouses/Partners

**What should I do? What shouldn’t I do?**
The role of presidential spouse/partner varies by region, institution and personal preference. Regardless of this variation, AASCU makes a particular effort to assist those individuals new to this exciting but perplexing role. AASCU aims to provide the requisite knowledge necessary to thrive both in the university environment, as well as in their personal lives. Efforts include:

- Workshop and orientation session at AASCU’s fall and summer meetings designed specifically for spouses/partners of new presidents/chancellors.
- New member events at national meetings.
- Special outreach to spouses/partners of newly-appointed campus executives.

### Male Spouses/Partners
The concerns of this unique and growing group are addressed through roundtables and targeted content during the annual orientation session held for those new to the presidential spouse/partner role.
How to Get Involved
- Submit your information for the Spouse/Partner Directory.
- Attend AASCU meetings and sessions.
- Suggest ideas for programming and let us know what you need.
- Share your knowledge and experience.
- Volunteer to participate in various roles.

Cost
An institution’s AASCU membership is inclusive of this program and there is no additional cost to participate.

Confidentiality and Privacy
AASCU is dedicated to protecting and maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of all of our members and their leadership, including presidential spouses/partners. Contact information for spouses/partners is shared only with other spouses within the association membership. Further, meetings are limited only to member spouses and presidents and their personal guests. Lastly, information-gathering devices (surveys, questionnaires, etc.) are used to aid in the future development of programming and services for AASCU presidential spouses/partners and are carefully vetted to ensure a high degree of confidentiality.

History
The AASCU Spouse/Partner Program was founded in 1979 by Roberta “Bobbie” H. Ostar, wife of then-AASCU President Allan W. Ostar. It was initially comprised of sessions that focused on the existence and nature of the role of the presidential spouse. From 1991–1999, Patricia “Pat” Appleberry, spouse of AASCU President James B. Appleberry, served as coordinator and created programming to address the rapidly changing demographics of the spouses. From 1999–2009, Jo Hern Curris, spouse of AASCU President Constantine W. “Deno” Curris, built upon the work of her predecessors as director of the program. Recognizing the many roles and contributions of spouses/partners, Mrs. Curris served as a fervent advocate for spouses/partners and helped create top-tier programming that responded to their needs.

For More Information
Contact Alex Wood, spouse/partner program associate at wooda@aascu.org or via phone at 202.478.4645.