**Public Policy Priorities**

**Affordability**
- Advocate for sufficient funding to sustain the value of Pell Grant awards by ensuring an appropriations base of $4,860 given the escalating demand for awards.
- Focus any restructuring of Pell Grant Program eligibility, in large measure, on income, since the program is fundamentally a financially-accessed program.
- Encourage the Department of Education to promptly contact delinquent borrowers in the Direct Loan Program, as well as borrowers whose loans were directly or indirectly purchased by the federal government, to avoid default.
- Support the extension or permanency of the American Opportunity Tax Credit (AOTC) as established in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act in order to assist needy students, which provides a tax credit up to $2,500.

**Access**
- Advocate for direct federal support to public institutions of higher education that enroll a high percentage of low-income individuals.
- Support funding directed toward states in their efforts to align P-12 and higher education curricula, standards and assessments to ensure that students are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in postsecondary education and the workforce.
- Support continued appropriation levels for both Title II and Title V of the Higher Education Act.
- Oppose unfunded mandates imposed by the Department of Veterans Affairs or Congress on institutions without regard to established higher education processes and funding streams.

**Accountability**
- Work to devise more accurate student progress and completion measures that encompass the persistence and success of all students, including transfer and part-time students.
- Support integrity in federal student financial aid programs and strengthen the original intent of the “90/10 Rule”, which requires institutions to have at least 10 percent of their revenue from non-TITLE IV federal aid programs. This can be done by including all federal sources of income in the 90 percent calculation.
- Encourage federal recognition of voluntary reporting structures such as the Voluntary System of Accountability.
- Advocate to hold states accountable for maintaining specific state appropriation levels to public higher education whenever the federal government provides: additional, general support funds beyond historical, programmatic funding to ensure that federal dollars are not used to supplant existing state operating dollars.

**Competitiveness**
- Support federal policies that encourage meaningful partnerships between state and local education agencies and institutions of higher education to support teacher education, standards, curricula and assessment alignment, and accountability.
- Secure a dedicated funding stream to support reform in university-based teacher preparation.
- Work to ensure that any federally funded grant program supporting reform in teacher preparation programs requires a meaningful and sustained partnership with a high-needs P-12 school district and places a strong emphasis on clinical training.
- Support legislation and funding opportunities that promote higher education involvement in rural and/or urban programs.

**Public Policy Principles**

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

- Higher education is a common good that provides significant benefits to individuals and society as a whole. While the personal gains from higher education are widely acknowledged, the societal benefits are even more significant and lasting, thus warranting continued public investment. These include tangible returns through economic productivity and increased tax revenues, but even more fundamentally, through the promotion of an enlightened citizenry and greater social cohesion and inclusion.
- America’s public higher education system stands as an embodiment of the nation’s democratic ideals. State colleges and universities accomplish this by promoting broad access to education for all students; regardless of socioeconomic background, thus transforming society and setting a global standard. Amid fundamental changes in the state-campus relationship, this principle must not be compromised.
- State colleges and universities are committed to delivering America’s promise through quality undergraduate and graduate programs that reflect responsible stewardship of the public investment; meaningful engagement 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 ration and need-based federal aid are the two requisite ingredients for realizing this ideal.

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2012 Public Policy Agenda Endorsements

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

View the 2012 Public Policy Agenda in its entirety at aascu.org/policy.

- Muriel A. Howard
  President
- Edward M. Elmendorf
  Senior Vice President
- Government Relations and Policy Analysis
From the President

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

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

The administration's college completion agenda, calling for the United States to lead the world in educational attainment by 2020, reinforces interest in college opportunity remain open for all. Investment in human capital, by laying the foundation for state and national economic prosperity, is in the long-term best interests of all our citizens. 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.

While all AASCU institutions work towards Delivering America's Promise, each school’s mission, size, location and focus is different. AASCU will work in the coming year to maintain the vibrancy of, and seek full funding for, the Pell Grant Program. We will strengthen our efforts to support effective P-20 partnerships and high-quality teacher education. We will continue our economic and workforce development efforts by ensuring that urban and rural institutions have funding opportunities available. As policymakers at all levels of government place demands on institutions to seek more efficient delivery and higher educational attainment, AASCU will work to ensure that metrics are appropriate and realistic.

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

Sincerely,

Muriel A. Howard
President, AASCU

AASCU’s Members

While all AASCU institutions work towards Delivering America’s Promise, each school’s mission, size, location and focus is different. The estimated size of AASCU schools in fall 2010 ranges from 801 students at the New College of Florida to 56,236 students at the University of Central Florida. The estimated average enrollment size is 10,336 students. Approximately 61 percent of AASCU schools are located in cities, another 64 percent in rural areas and towns, and 15 percent in suburbs. In the 2009-2010 academic year*, member institutions awarded more than half a million baccalaureate degrees. This includes close to 47 percent of bachelor's degrees in education, and approximately 34 percent of bachelor's degrees in health professions (see Table). These half-million-plus degrees represent approximately 51 percent of all bachelor's degrees granted at public colleges and universities in the United States in 2009-2010. In addition, member institutions awarded over 29,000 associate degrees and sub-baccalaureate certificates.

AASCU’s Students

More than 3.9 million students attend AASCU institutions (as of Fall 2010*), representing nearly half of all students at public four-year institutions and approximately 29 percent of all students attending four-year colleges and universities. AASCU campuses educate a diverse group of students, including those traditionally underrepresented on college campuses. Fifty-six AASCU schools have minority students comprising at least half of their student population. AASCU also represents 38 Historically Black Colleges and Universities and approximately 30 Hispanic Serving Institutions.

Among all public four-year institutions, AASCU schools educated approximately 50 percent of all minority students in Fall 2009. This includes approximately 64 percent of all African-American students, 44 percent of all Hispanic students, 47 percent of all Native American and Alaskan Native students, and 38 percent of Asian/Pacific Islander students. Following a nationwide trend of women outnumbering men on many campuses, women comprise approximately 58 percent of all AASCU students. Full-time students make up approximately 72 percent of all AASCU students, compared to part-time students (approximately 28 percent).

While the majority of AASCU students are full-time and in their teens and 20s, our members are charged with educating many nontraditional students. Just over 1 million students enrolled at AASCU institutions in Fall 2010 were 25 or older. When looking at all public four-year institutions, AASCU educated 55 percent of all part-time students as of Fall 2010.

Bachelor's Degrees Conferred at AASCU Institutions, as a Percent of U.S. Total, 2009-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selected Majors</th>
<th>Percent of U.S. Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer and Information Sciences</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Languages</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics and Statistics</td>
<td>31.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Professors</td>
<td>34.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: All enrollment and degree data are from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Systems (IPEDS), Institutional Characteristics, Completions (2010), and Enrollment (Fall 2009 and estimated Fall 2010 surveys).