Project Degree Completion: A Public University Initiative

Commitment Statement

We the undersigned members of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) affirm our commitment to accessible, affordable and quality public higher education for all students.

We commit to increasing the number of undergraduate baccalaureate degrees by 3.8 million between now and 2025 while striving to provide those students with a quality education. We further commit to containing per student educational cost while pursuing enhanced quality.

We call for a renewed partnership among public colleges and universities, the states and the federal government as we work to achieve these goals.

We commit to the following:

- To strive for the “best in the world” degree status for America. Public colleges and universities will do our part to achieve 60 percent degree attainment by awarding an additional 3.8 million baccalaureate degrees by 2025. We will publicly track progress toward this goal.
- To make a concerted effort to reach out to former students who have attended our institutions but who have not earned a baccalaureate degree from any institution.
- To assure that educational quality is enhanced, not compromised, in the effort to increase degree attainment.
- To uphold the principles of student access, success and diversity in this pursuit.
- To reduce the average time to degree for our students.
- To constrain per-student educational expenditures while pursuing enhanced quality.
- To work closely with P-12 systems and community colleges, especially in the STEM fields and other areas of critical need.
- To support economic growth in our regions, states and country including research and innovation, commercialization of technologies, and economic development. For many institutions, this will include increasing graduates in areas of critical need including STEM fields.*

These commitments will be achieved with a strong, renewed partnership among the states, the federal government and public colleges and universities, but there is significant work to be done. During the past 20 years, many states have maintained tight, regulatory institutional oversight while per student investment in public higher education steadily declined until 2008 when the decline accelerated, in part, because of the recession. During this same period, public colleges and universities contained per student educational expenditures to about the rate of inflation. These circumstances forced public institutions to raise tuition to compensate for the significant loss of state dollars. The total educational expenditures per student have been stable for many years, but the mix of student tuition versus state appropriations has shifted dramatically and continues to deteriorate. This trend must be reversed for public colleges and universities to continue to meet their obligations as institutions of public purpose. In short, the full partnership between public colleges and universities, the states and the federal government needs to be reestablished with each partner fulfilling its responsibilities.
The states must provide sufficient appropriations to support students and the discovery of new knowledge while extending greater operational flexibility for public colleges and universities. The federal government must maintain its commitment to student financial aid; support for research and innovation; and encouragement of states to continue their support for public colleges and universities.

Public colleges and universities must be more innovative in the performance of their essential roles while containing educational expenditures.

Education, including research, is the only public investment that provides both a social and an economic return. Policymakers need tangible evidence that public higher education is transforming to meet economic and educational needs. Achieving these commitments will ensure greater economic security for America and the next generation of citizens.

* AASCU and APLU understand that some individual institutions may not be able to contribute to these commitments to the same degree as others because of their particular circumstances, but we expect that the overall commitments will be met.

List of Participating Institutions (Oct. 1, 2012)

Adams State University  California State University, California Maritime Academy
Alabama A&M University  California State University, Channel Islands
Alabama State University  California State University, Chico
Alcorn State University  California State University, Dominguez Hills
Angelo State University  California State University, East Bay
Appalachian State University  California State University, Fresno
Arizona State University  Arkansas State University Jonesboro
Arkansas State University  California State University, Fullerton
Arkansas State University System  California State University, Long Beach
Arkansas Tech University  California State University, Los Angeles
Armstrong Atlantic State University  California State University, Monterey Bay
Athens State University  California State University, Northridge
Auburn University  California State University, Sacramento
Auburn University at Montgomery  California State University, San Bernardino
Augusta State University  California State University, San Marcos
Austin Peay State University  California State University, Stanislaus
Ball State University  California University of Pennsylvania
Bemidji State University  Cameron University
Binghamton University, SUNY  Castleton State College
Black Hills State University  Central Connecticut State University
Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania  Central Michigan University
Bluefield State College  Central State University
Boise State University  Cheyney University of Pennsylvania
Bowie State University  City College of New York
Bowling Green State University  City University of New York
Buffalo State College, SUNY  City University of New York (CUNY)
California Polytechnic State University  City University of New York, Brooklyn College
California State Polytechnic University Pomona  City University of New York, College of Staten Island
California State University, Bakersfield  City University of New York, Lehman College
City University of New York, Medgar Evers College
City University of New York, Queens College
City University of New York, York College
Clarion University
Clayton State University
Clemson University
Cleveland State University
Colorado School of Mines
Colorado State University
Columbus State University
Concord University
Connecticut Board of Regents for Higher Education
Coppin State University
Cornell University
Dakota State University
Dalton State University
Delaware State University
Delta State University
Dickinson State University
Dixie State College of Utah
East Central University
East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania
Eastern Connecticut State University
Eastern Illinois University
Eastern Kentucky University
Eastern Oregon University
Eastern Washington University
Edinboro University of Pennsylvania
Emporia State University
Fairmont State University
Farmingdale State College, SUNY
Fayetteville State University
Ferris State University
Fitchburg State University
Florida Atlantic University
Florida Gulf Coast University
Florida International University
Fort Hays State University
Fort Lewis College
Framingham State University
Francis Marion University
Frostburg State University
George Mason University
Georgia College & State University
Georgia Institute of Technology
Georgia Southern University
Georgia Southwestern State University
Georgia State University
Glennville State College
Governors State University
Grambling State University
Grand Valley State University
Harris-Stowe State University
Henderson State University
Humboldt State University
Idaho State University
Illinois Board of Higher Education
Illinois State University
Indiana State University
Indiana University
Indiana University East
Indiana University Kokomo
Indiana University Northwest
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Indiana University South Bend
Indiana University Southeast
Indiana University-Purdue University
Indianapolis
Iowa State University
Jackson State University
James Madison University
Johnson State College
Kansas State University
Keene State College
Kennesaw State University
Kent State University
Kentucky State University
Kutztown University of Pennsylvania
Lamar University
Lander University
Lewis-Clark State College
Lincoln University (Missouri)
Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania
Longwood University
Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College
Louisiana State University Shreveport
Louisiana State University System
Louisiana Tech University
Lyndon State College
Macon State College
Mansfield University of Pennsylvania
Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA)
Mayville State University
McNeese State University
Metropolitan State University
Metropolitan State University of Denver
Miami University
Michigan State University
Michigan Technological University
Southwestern Oklahoma State University
St. Cloud State University
State University of New York at Fredonia
State University of New York at Geneseo
State University of New York at New Paltz
State University of New York at Cortland
State University of New York College at Maritime
State University of New York College at Old Westbury
State University of New York College at Oneonta
State University of New York College at Oswego
State University of New York College at Plattsburgh
State University of New York College at Potsdam
State University of New York College of Agriculture and Technology at Cobleskill
State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry
State University of New York College of Optometry
State University of New York College of Technology at Alfred
State University of New York Delhi
State University of New York Downstate Health Sciences Center
State University of New York, Empire State College
Stephen F. Austin State University
Stony Brook University, SUNY
Tarleton State University
Temple University
Tennessee State University
Texas A&M University
Texas A&M University-Central Texas
Texas A&M University-Commerce
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi
Texas A&M University-Texarkana
Texas Southern University
Texas State University-San Marcos
Texas Women’s University
The California State University
The College at Brockport, SUNY
The College of New Jersey
The Florida State University
The Ohio State University
The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey
The State University of New York System
The University of Akron
The University of Alabama
The University of Alabama at Birmingham
The University of Alabama in Huntsville
The University of Arizona
The University of Iowa
The University of Kansas
The University of Louisiana at Lafayette
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The University of Louisville
The University of Maine
The University of Nevada Las Vegas
The University of New Orleans
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
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The University of Rhode Island
The University of South Carolina
The University of South Carolina Aiken
The University of South Carolina Beaufort
The University of South Carolina Upstate
The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
The University of Tennessee at Martin
The University of Tennessee System
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville
The University of Texas at Arlington
The University of Texas at Austin
The University of Texas at Dallas
The University of Texas at El Paso
The University of Texas at Tyler
The University of Texas of the Permian Basin
The University of Texas System
The University of Texas-Pan American
The University of Toledo
The University of Utah
The University of West Alabama
The University of West Georgia
The University System of Georgia
Thomas Edison State College
Towson University
Troy University
Truman State University
Tuskegee University
University at Albany, SUNY
University at Buffalo, SUNY
University of Alaska Anchorage
University of Alaska Fairbanks
University of Alaska Southeast
University of Alaska System
University of Arkansas at Fort Smith
University of Arkansas at Little Rock
University of Arkansas at Monticello
University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff
University of Arkansas System
University of Arkansas, Fayetteville
The University of Baltimore
University of California
University of California, Berkeley
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University of Maine at Machias
University of Maine at Presque Isle
University of Maine System
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University of Maryland Eastern Shore
University of Maryland, Baltimore County
University of Massachusetts System
University of Massachusetts Amherst
University of Massachusetts Boston
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University of Michigan-Flint
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University of Northern Iowa
University of Oregon
University of Pittsburgh
University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg
University of Pittsburgh at Bradford
University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez
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University of South Florida
University of Southern Indiana
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University of the District of Columbia
University of the Virgin Islands
University of Vermont
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University of West Florida
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University of Wisconsin-Green Bay
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University of Wisconsin-Madison
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University of Wisconsin-Platteville
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University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
University of Wisconsin-Stout
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