



2020 PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA

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FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Colleagues,

I am pleased to share the *2020 Public Policy Agenda* (PPA) with you and express my gratitude to the members of the association's Council of State Representatives for the work they do throughout the year to oversee and refine this important roadmap for our policy advocacy efforts.

Each year, a revised PPA is adopted by the membership at AASCU's Annual Meeting. This document highlights the association's policy priorities for the coming year and aligns with our newly approved [strategic plan](#), particularly with our continued effort to advance the mission of AASCU institutions through national and state policy. I hope this written framework assists our members, other interested organizations, and federal and state policymakers in navigating the regular order of congressional business once normalcy is restored.

The times are far from normal for our country and indeed the world. The coronavirus pandemic and the consequent economic crisis it has triggered have upended institutional operations and our students' lives. The sudden switch to distance delivery and need to close residence halls, assist stranded students from other states and countries, and address the plight of our faculty and staff while keeping everyone safe have been challenges that our members have confronted since the outset of this outbreak. It has taken a toll on them personally and on their institutions financially.

This crisis has also deepened the inequities in our country for underserved students at our institutions. The necessity to expeditiously move to online learning has been difficult for our most vulnerable students who do not have technology capabilities and Wi-Fi at home. AASCU has answered the call for assistance from the earliest phase of this crisis, when we worked collaboratively with other higher education groups to advocate for a significant federal intervention to support institutions and

students, provide much-needed flexibility to otherwise rigid federal rules on financial aid and institutional research, and support continued operations of regional comprehensive state colleges and universities.

I can assure our members and the broader higher education community that AASCU will continue to advocate for federal support, innovative solutions to the challenges ahead, and the preservation and enhancement of a robust and thriving public higher education infrastructure for our nation through these difficult times. The policies articulated in this document remain a vital roadmap to that end. They will certainly need to be complemented with additional emergency measures to help our institutions navigate the difficult road ahead.

I am committed to remaining active and being at the table on your behalf on these and the numerous other topics of importance and relevance to your work. We will keep you informed; act as your eyes and ears in Washington; and, when the conditions warrant it, ask for your direct involvement on issues as they arise.

I thank you for your support and active engagement with AASCU and assure you that AASCU is fully available to you as your Washington office to help in any way we can.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mildred García". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mildred García, Ed.D.
President

STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES ARE ENGINES OF MOBILITY FOR THE AMERICAN DREAM

America's public institutions of higher education serve a unique role as the portal through which so many of the students and much of the nation's future workforce gain the skills needed to face the economic challenges of the 21st century. Regional comprehensive university programs offer more than 4 million students the opportunity to achieve America's promise of an affordable, high-quality college education. And, across the country, public four-year institutions serve as indispensable venues for access and civic engagement. In addition, as institutions are created by and accountable to the states, they serve as catalysts for economic growth in their communities and as engines of global competitiveness for the nation. Considering the challenges state colleges and universities face, including shrinking budgets, increased demand for affordable postsecondary education, enrollment volatility and onerous regulations, we must persevere to create opportunities for all students who would otherwise have few real options for realizing the American Dream—a satisfying career and a fulfilling life.

To this end, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) presents its *2020 Public Policy Agenda*, which underscores the most compelling policy issues affecting regional comprehensive universities and promotes policies that help our institutions fulfill their unique role in educating America's workforce and strengthening communities. Each issue has implications at the state, federal or both levels of policy and law. Accordingly, we provide our state and federal policymakers with specific actions to take going forward.

State Colleges and Universities Will Lead on Issues of Affordability, Campus Climate and Quality Assurance

Among the many issues affecting our campuses, conversations about the cost and quality of higher education, fostering a safe and supportive campus environment for all students, and measuring our institutions' effectiveness and our students' success will be front and center in 2020. AASCU has prioritized these issues in its advocacy plans at the national level and in its work with state-level partners. Our collective voice will be instrumental to our work going forward to ensure that state colleges and universities are heard and heeded in the policy discussions to come, especially considering deliberations for a comprehensive reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, the cornerstone legislation for American higher education.

1 ACCESS, AFFORDABILITY AND VALUE

Regional comprehensive universities uniquely provide three essential ingredients of social and economic mobility—broad access, financial affordability and the best return on investment for students, states and the nation. They have rightly been called engines of mobility because of their high impact in moving students from the lowest-income backgrounds up the income scale and propelling their communities and the nation forward. But the very features that made America’s great public higher education infrastructure so effective as gateways to the American Dream are being eroded by lack of adequate support, most notably through state disinvestment, overregulation and economically regressive policies. These changes, furthermore, are taking place at a time when closing the opportunity gap for historically underrepresented and underserved students—the new American majority—is vital for the future economic and social success of our nation.

The State/Federal Partnership

The top priority for the preservation of America’s public higher education sector is for federal and state policymakers to ensure sufficient, consistent and sustained state funding to keep public colleges affordable and high quality for all students, especially those from modest economic circumstances. Virtually all other higher education policy challenges that we face today—educational attainment, institutional quality and productivity, cost containment, financial aid, innovation in program delivery, and student persistence and completion—stem from the erosion of state support for public institutions. While all stakeholders—the federal government, states, institutions and students—play a role in financing a public college education, the primary driver of higher tuition prices over the last several decades has been the state-to-student cost shift brought about by state disinvestment in public higher education.

For several decades, per-student state support for public higher education has been diminishing, causing families to shoulder twice the share of costs they confronted 25 years ago. The 2008 Great Recession only accelerated this trend.

AASCU developed a unique approach to federal-state collaboration in its *Proposed Federal Matching Program to Stop the Privatization of Public Higher Education*, a framework that has received significant support in the policy community. This new federal-state funding compact would leverage considerable federal monies, include a nonarbitrary state funding threshold, and contain a sound distribution formula. This approach would incentivize state reinvestment in public higher education and mitigate the privatization of higher education.

Policy Actions

- Support state/federal partnerships, matching grants and other federal policies that promote adequate state support for all public institutions.
- Support collaborations with community colleges to contain costs and promote greater affordability.
- Expand and support dual enrollment programs that are both tuition free and high quality.
- Simplify access to aid and revise need analysis to provide greater help to the lowest-income students.
- Preserve and increase federal grant aid.
- Focus grant aid on baccalaureate programs.
- Keep student debt manageable.
- Provide appropriate debt relief to victims of fraud and to overburdened borrowers.
- Protect income-based repayment and loan forgiveness options.
- Maintain tax provisions that support higher education.
- Eliminate tax liability on loan forgiveness programs.
- Expand funding for low-resource institutions that serve large numbers of low-income and underserved students to decrease and eliminate the opportunity gap.
- Preserve and expand student loan tax deductions.
- Expand employer-provided educational assistance benefits.

Tuition-Free College

Several states have been experimenting with “free college” policies within their public higher education sectors. While we support tuition-reduction proposals, we are concerned about unintended consequences of tuition-free proposals for public higher education. Tuition-free public higher education is an appealing concept in that it continues and expands the nation’s commitment to free, universal K–12 education, but there are pitfalls—some of which have been cited in the discussion of state policies to promote tuition-free community college—that policymakers should heed as they proceed with any efforts in this direction.

First, it is important to explicitly recognize the need for joint and coordinated action between the federal and state governments for any tuition-free proposals to be operationally and financially feasible, since neither the federal nor state governments can unilaterally assume the significant costs of eliminating tuition. As identified previously, AASCU has proposed, and will advocate for, a specific mechanism—the federal-state matching grant program—through which public sector tuition costs can be reduced or eliminated.

Second, to maintain and enhance the academic quality of public higher education, it is critical for public funding not only to make up any lost institutional tuition revenues but also to provide adequate additional funding to maintain and improve educational quality. For more than three decades, state privatization has deprived public institutions of greatly needed resources to keep up with their private counterparts, and what little additional expenditures have been possible in pursuit of quality have been financed with rising tuition revenues. There is a great risk of stagnation or even deterioration of efforts to improve quality if the total amount of available federal and state support does not keep pace with the actual needs of public colleges and universities.

Third, the reduction or elimination of tuition should be independent of federal student aid eligibility, to enable low- and middle-income students to use existing aid programs to offset other components of their cost of attendance. Existing state tuition-free initiatives have, in contrast, been configured as “last-dollar” programs that allocate aid from recipients’ federal aid eligibility to tuition. These initiatives, therefore, provide little or no benefit to students and families who need financial assistance the most. Despite these misgivings, we stand ready to work with advocates of free college to develop policies that anticipate and address potential unintended consequences. Most notably, we believe any free tuition model would only work through a federal-state matching mechanism such as the one developed by AASCU.

Finally, eliminating tuition in any sector of public higher education should not incentivize state disinvestment in other sectors of public higher education.

Policy Actions

- Advocate for increased state investment in public higher education and promote policies that align federal and state practices with greater affordability and improved access.
- Encourage and promote AASCU’s proposed federal matching program and other strategies for leveraging federal resources to incentivize state higher education funding.

- Support proposals that promote state-federal affordability partnerships by providing federal incentives for increased state funding of operating costs at public colleges and universities.

Responsible Regulatory Relief

While a regulatory framework is an inevitable requirement for proper oversight and quality assurance, burdensome, duplicative, nongermane and ineffective regulations have proliferated over the years at an alarming rate. Compliance costs are increasing faster than nearly all other institutional expenditures and contribute to cost escalation as they divert resources from more productive activities. The federal government should comprehensively examine the regulatory burdens it has imposed on institutions, with an eye toward greater efficiency. Even as AASCU supports a deliberative approach to deregulation, we also recognize the role well-crafted regulations can and should play in protecting students, taxpayers, bona fide institutions and the public from waste, fraud and abuse. Any deregulatory process must address the costs and benefits associated with the regulations it seeks to rescind or alter and the specific consequences of any changes it seeks to make.

Policy Actions

- Support ongoing regulatory review to streamline compliance burdens whenever possible.
- Encourage more targeted, risk-based regulations.
- Support meaningful analysis of the benefits and costs associated with new regulations.
- Support evidence-based regulations, oversight and enforcement initiatives to target problem institutions.
- Work with Congress and the administration on devising reasonable financial aid policies to reward institutional accountability and effectiveness.
- Ensure any risk-sharing policies enacted by Congress are properly configured to account for student demographics and institutional missions.
- Promote and support completion and graduation initiatives that further reasonable access and academic quality.

2 CAMPUS CLIMATE: SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Public institutions have a responsibility to provide open, safe and supportive learning venues for the entire campus community. Given the broad scope of functions that institutions are assigned—as places of research and teaching, but also as landlords, internet service providers, telecom providers, food service managers, athletic venues, event managers and campus police forces, to name a few—the discharge of this responsibility is a complex and difficult task. Regional comprehensive universities are committed to doing all they can to create ideal environments for their students, faculty and staff, and will be particularly focused on the following challenges:

Campus Safety

Campus safety remains a top priority for regional comprehensive universities. These public four-year institutions seek to create campus environments that are open, safe and respectful for all students, faculty, staff and visitors. Beyond the resources made available to them through local police and judicial authorities, our campuses are committed to prevention and proper adjudication of all disciplinary violations. Chief among the issues our members deal with are instances of campus sexual violence and other forms of sexual misconduct. AASCU believes greater emphasis, through education and outreach, needs to be directed at solutions to help prevent sexual violence, including more attention to this in high schools. Campuses must also have support services in place for victims and ensure that students are aware of these services. Lastly, AASCU and its members remain committed to ensuring that campus disciplinary hearings on these matters are conducted in a fair, equitable and timely manner.

Campus safety extends beyond sexual violence and includes crime prevention and the implementation of policies that eliminate or mitigate physical violence. Ensuring that institutions are provided adequate legal authority and the means to maintain campus safety is an important priority.

Policy Actions

- Support policies and programs emphasizing a renewed and sustained commitment to the prevention of all forms of sexual violence and misconduct.
- Encourage state and system officials to review and update state laws and campus procedures related to sexual violence in a manner consistent with federal law to ensure fair and equitable proceedings.

- Continue AASCU’s engagement with the Department of Education and Congress to consult with higher education institutions in devising policies against sexual violence on campus.
- Ensure that state and federal action pertaining to campus disciplinary processes maintains a standard that is fair and equitable to all parties.
- Oppose federal and state intrusions on academic practices, including transcription.
- Harmonize the Clery Act’s data reporting requirements with the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s Uniform Crime Reporting standards.
- Oppose legislation that prevents campuses from exercising discretion regarding events and scheduling choices that may lead to violence.
- Oppose state legislation that seeks to strip institutional and/or system authority over campus weapons policy.

Protection and Promotion of Free Speech

Freedom of speech is a cherished American tradition enshrined in the nation’s founding document. Open inquiry and academic freedom rely on the right of students, faculty and staff to express themselves without prior restraints or fear of retribution. As creatures of their respective states, public institutions are constitutionally barred from constraining or limiting free speech rights based on the content of the speech in question. As custodians of their facilities and as the parties responsible for maintaining public safety and fostering a learning environment, they do have a legal obligation to prevent violence and injury and at times must intervene in activities or planned activities in those capacities.

Policy Actions

- Promote a free exchange of ideas to the maximum extent possible in a manner that is consistent with constitutional principles.
- Sponsor and support activities that educate the campus community about the value and central importance of academic freedom and open discourse.
- Ensure and promote broad intellectual engagement.
- Oppose micromanagement of constitutional campus operations through new “free speech” laws.
- Support and promote difficult dialogues and civil debate.

Promoting Civic Engagement Is a Critical Educational Responsibility of Public Colleges and Universities

The undergraduate experience involves much more than gaining knowledge and training in a given discipline. It also entails inculcating in students a sense of civic responsibility and active community engagement. Across the United States, state colleges and universities seek to embed learning opportunities that prepare students to be the informed, engaged citizens our communities need. AASCU works with a variety of institutions to promote civic learning and engagement through initiatives such as the American Democracy Project. One of the foundations of a vibrant democracy is participation in the electoral process. States and institutions should facilitate college students' ability to vote to foster a lifelong commitment to engaging in the policy process at the local, state and federal level.

Policy Actions

- Highlight the role of education in restoring and promoting the practice of civil discourse as essential to the health of our democracy.
- Sponsor and support civic learning and engagement initiatives.
- Support programs that provide public service opportunities and learning for students and graduates.
- Support programs that build student civic and information literacy in online spaces through broad, cross-institutional projects that enable students to fact-check, annotate, and provide context for emergent news stories promulgated by social media.
- Educate students to critically analyze information and act as informed citizens.
- Encourage regional comprehensive universities to facilitate their students' participation in the election process to the maximum extent possible.
- Oppose state legislative interventions that unnecessarily and inappropriately limit college students' ability to vote.

Campus Diversity

As the nation has become more ethnically, culturally and intellectually diverse, so have higher education institutions. Indeed, minority communities are experiencing the greatest rates of growth, a fact that is directly reflected in the growing diversity of the student population on public campuses. But diversity goes beyond mere ethnicity to include other important attributes of specific student populations, including religion, national origin, culture, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities and life experiences. Students with disabilities, for example, represent a growing enrollment trend at public institutions. This is also true of adult learners and veterans, who each have their unique strengths and needs. Public institutions will strive to provide the appropriate level of accommodation and support to all student groups.

While the nation has come far in addressing unequal access to higher education for previously excluded and underserved groups, much work remains before the promise of equal opportunity becomes a reality for all students. Regional comprehensive universities remain committed to the importance of equal access not only as a moral imperative but also as a matter of workforce preparation, economic development and international competitiveness. It is in the nation's interest that every member of our society be provided the opportunity for continuous learning and career advancement and to contribute to the greater common good.

Policy Actions

- Defend the legality of university admissions, financial aid and faculty appointment policies intended to promote diversity.
- Support all minority-serving institutions.
- Promote policies that maximize an inclusive campus environment for all students, faculty and staff.
- Support and promote policies that assist underserved students in fully participating in and continuing their postsecondary education.
- Promote access not only to high-quality certificates but also to full-fledged academic credentials for all students seeking higher education.
- Restore Pell eligibility for incarcerated individuals to assist with rehabilitation and reentry into society.
- “Ban the box” on admissions applications and engage in any preventative due diligence and threat assessment based on past criminal convictions only after an academic judgment about applicants has been made.

Improve Educational Opportunities for Veterans and Service Members

AASCU and regional comprehensive universities have a decades-long tradition of serving the educational needs of veterans and active-duty members of the armed forces. This partnership is even more needed now, as the armed forces downsize and begin the orderly transition of service members to equally productive and fulfilling civilian lives. AASCU is committed to working with the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), Department of Education and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to ensure optimal access and successful educational outcomes for service members and veterans.

Policy Actions

- Support the continuation and proper funding of the DOD Tuition Assistance Program.
- Ensure active-duty service members and veterans continue to have access to educational programs and credentials that are broadly recognized and have value within the civilian sector.
- Support the maintenance and improvement of GI Bill educational benefits.
- Support less restrictive policies governing active-duty and veteran benefits—policies hamstringing students and put up barriers to degree completion.
- Improve institutional accountability and oversight for institutional participation in GI Bill educational benefits.
- Support and improve the VA's efforts to ensure efficient delivery of GI Bill educational benefits to veterans.
- Provide active-duty and veteran students with specific support services to meet their unique needs.
- Improve coordination among federal agencies regarding the unique needs of service members and veterans.
- Support Executive Order 13607—Establishing Principles of Excellence for Educational Institutions Serving Service Members, Veterans, Spouses, and Other Family Members.

Support Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals and “Dreamers”

Many of the more than 11 million individuals within the United States who entered the country without legal permission were brought here as children and know no other homeland than America. These “Dreamers” represent an asset to the nation that will contribute to our society and economy if allowed a fair opportunity for advancement. “Dreamers” deserve access to higher education and a pathway to legal status. AASCU supports the passage of state and federal legislation to enable such students to participate in higher education and for legislation to map a strategy for legalization. In addition, states should have the full authority to set tuition policy for these students.

Policy Action

- Support legislation to create a pathway for legalization for eligible individuals brought to the United States as children.

Promote International Education

AASCU deeply values international educational exchanges and opposes efforts to arbitrarily restrict the participation of entire categories of prospective students or scholars in American higher education solely based on religion or countries of origin. As such, AASCU joins the rest of American higher education in opposition to arbitrary travel bans and other restrictive policies that undermine the ability of our institutions to recruit top students and scholars, serve as academic destinations of choice for the rest of the world, and promote American values to future world leaders.

Policy Actions

- Advocate for international exchange programs and reasonable international student and scholar visa policies.
- Oppose inappropriate restrictions on travel to the United States by international students and scholars.

3

QUALITY, ACCOUNTABILITY AND OUTCOMES

AASCU strongly supports calls for transparency and outcomes-based accountability as guarantors of quality. As the public and the policymakers who represent them are getting more alarmed about the costs and benefits of higher education, colleges and universities need to better articulate their contributions to their students' lives and the nation. Better data, reasonable and adequate oversight, and enough resources and autonomy for institutions to act in their students' best interests are critical ingredients for success.

Institutional Autonomy of Public Institutions

Academic autonomy is an essential ingredient for educational quality. As public institutions, regional comprehensive universities respect and understand the public's right to exercise oversight and demand accountability in exchange for their support. In the interest of preserving the integrity of the credentials granted by public institutions, however, it is critical that policymakers allow public colleges to exercise their best academic judgment on educational matters. Political interference with academic freedom and institutional autonomy would inevitably undermine public institutions and diminish the value and credibility of their credentials.

Policy Actions

- Preserve and protect academic freedom and institutional autonomy at public institutions.
- Oppose federal and state efforts to politically micromanage academic decisions regarding admissions criteria, faculty, curriculum, instruction and transfer of academic credit at public institutions.
- Oppose political interference with research and the academic peer-review process.
- Oppose arbitrary restrictions on international exchange and collaborative research activities of public institutions.
- Support the collection of targeted, actionable data for accountability and program management purposes in compliance with fair information practices and in a manner that does not impose unreasonable burdens on participating institutions.

- Encourage state policymakers to recognize issues of institutional/system governance, equity and academic quality in all policies associated with the state role in higher education financing.

Accreditation and Quality Assurance

AASCU strongly supports the uniquely American tradition of quality assurance in higher education through nongovernmental expert peer review, also known as accreditation. Deference in the HEA to accrediting bodies to evaluate institutional academic integrity continues to be valid and should be preserved. However, policymakers should address several shortcomings in federal policy on accreditation. AASCU will actively support efforts for accreditation to be more risk-based, data-driven, timely and accommodating of promising innovations.

Policy Actions

- Work with all stakeholders in reviewing and revisiting accreditation's role within the triad: the federal government, states and accrediting bodies.
- Preserve the American tradition of political noninterference in academic judgments about programmatic quality.
- Reduce unnecessary costs by more tightly defining the accreditation process and its expected outcomes.

Strengthen Educator Preparation

Regional comprehensive universities are deeply committed to educator education, preparing more than 50% of all teachers certified annually in the United States. The growing national alarm about the rigor and performance of the P–12 system concerns higher education institutions as well. Too many students come to college unprepared and in need of remediation, and the problem is worsening. The shortcomings of our P–12 system contribute to the already daunting challenges colleges and universities face regarding cost, outcomes and accountability. Federal policy on educator preparation can improve these outcomes through appropriate financial aid incentives for future teachers, resources for high-quality educator preparation programs, and partnerships with states in support of improved teacher licensure

standards. AASCU has developed a comprehensive proposal in support of an affirmative federal role in the preparation of educators, the Project to Revitalize Educator Preparation in America (PREP America), which can serve as a framework for making improvements to current law.

Policy Actions

- Continue to work with Congress and the administration to chart a practicable federal policy on educator preparation.
- Urge policymakers to align educator preparation requirements with the 2015 reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act.
- Support the Teacher/Educator Quality Partnership Program.
- Encourage state efforts to develop appropriate licensure standards based on valid, reliable and objective data, and align assessment of educator preparation programs with those standards.
- Ensure states evaluate all educator preparation venues using the same standards.
- Support improved teacher salaries to enable states to recruit and retain qualified teachers.

Competitiveness

AASCU believes the federal government must play an essential role in supporting institutional efforts to meet national, state and local 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 and local governments can also support institutional efforts to educate teachers, health care workers, scientists and engineers, and others. The nation's economic competitiveness, security and prosperity largely depend on how well colleges prepare citizens for a knowledge-based economy.

Policy Actions

Economic and Workforce Development for Rural Institutions

- Provide appropriations for the 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, increase the number of adults in rural communities with a bachelor's degree or higher, enhance training opportunities, and stimulate technological innovation.
- Support continued funding for rural broadband enhancements that provide greater access to postsecondary education.

Urban Institutions

- Support efforts to reauthorize, authorize and fund programs that encourage research and partnerships between urban and metropolitan anchor institutions and their communities. These efforts promote economic and workforce development, community revitalization, teacher recruitment, and greater access to college for urban high school students.

STEM Research and Workforce Preparation

- Recognize the contributions of each higher education sector in strengthening STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) fields. The entire community's resources must be tapped when creating, funding and implementing STEM programs that educate future scientists, engineers and mathematicians.
- Create research opportunities for students studying in the STEM fields within all sectors of higher education.
- Support and improve basic and applied scientific research and education activities for undergraduate programs to complement established graduate and research programming.
- Advocate for programs that recruit traditionally underrepresented populations, such as students of color, low-income students and women, into STEM fields and provide them with support.
- Support the creation of institutional incentives for graduate students in fields associated with high-need jobs identified by state workforce service agencies.

Federal Research and Development

- Continue support for undergraduate research and mentoring in STEM fields and for STEM pipeline programs promoting P–20 partnerships and articulation agreements.
- Support programs that meaningfully engage students in applied research that addresses the nation’s innovation plans for health care, energy and national security.
- Support technology transfer and workforce training programs that link higher education institutions with the manufacturing sector and incentivize corporate and private sector investment in these partnerships.
- Fund the development and renovation of laboratory facilities and support equipment acquisition that will promote innovative and collaborative scientific and technical research at all higher education institutions.

Sustainability and Energy Efficiency

- Expand federal efforts to support higher education institutions in improving efficiency in the physical plant, campus transportation and other institutional operations.
- Advocate for grant funding at the U.S. Department of Energy, Environmental Protection Agency and other federal agencies that support university research in sustainability, renewable energy and green technology.

Promote Innovation in Higher Education

Innovation and continual improvement have been and remain important elements of the historical success of public colleges and universities. As the need for higher education grows much faster than traditional means of delivery, the higher education community must develop innovative models of content delivery and credentialing. AASCU supports promising efforts to innovate and reinvent various aspects of higher education through new policies, programs and practices. It is at times, however, difficult to distinguish breakthrough innovation from passing fads that may undermine the integrity of academic credentials.

Therefore, it is essential for new and previously untested initiatives to be thoughtfully examined and to balance embracing innovation with the demand for evidence-based assurances of likely success. An important policy tool for proper testing and evaluation of

new ideas is the experimental site provision of Title IV, which can be expanded to allow more regulatory flexibility for carefully accommodating innovative practices on a limited basis to determine their broader utility.

Policy Actions

- Support new and emerging forms of instructional and program delivery.
- Support net neutrality to ensure institutions and students continue to have access to an open internet.
- Support campus adoption of new and emerging technologies, particularly for students with special needs.
- Support and promote efforts to connect all college graduates to career paths upon completion of their programs.



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