



2010
Public Policy
Agenda

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American Association of State
Colleges and Universities

Access and Attainment

Access to college means ensuring that all students who wish to pursue a higher education have the opportunity to do so, regardless of their socioeconomic, demographic, geographic or academic backgrounds. It includes the opportunity to earn admittance, experience a supportive environment during their studies, and graduate from college prepared to succeed in the workplace and participate as a citizen of the world.

While state and federal governments, as well as institutions, play a role in ensuring the path to college is as smooth as possible for all students, state and federal governments play an especially important role in ensuring equal access to college. The states and federal government, in partnership with the nation's pre-K-12 system, have a responsibility to focus the most effective strategies for access and inclusion on the pre-college years and work to reduce barriers in the transition from secondary to postsecondary education.

The Department of Veterans Affairs has begun to implement the new Post 9/11 GI Bill Program. AASCU is actively monitoring this implementation and the effect it is having on veterans and campuses. Based on its observations, AASCU is actively engaged in discussions with policymakers advocating positive change that will reduce confusion and lead to a more simplified process.

The first session of the 111th Congress brought a strengthened federal role in the area of access through the College Access and Completion Initiative. Significant funding has been provided to bolster state efforts around access. AASCU was instrumental in the design of this new program.

Looking forward, the Congress will be reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and examining immigration reform. AASCU will work to strengthen teacher development programs in order to ensure that high school graduates are college-ready, not only with an understanding of curricula, but also armed with the skill sets to achieve college success.

Federal Role in College Access and Attainment—AASCU Policy Statements

K-12 and Postsecondary Education Alignment

- ◆ Support funding directed toward states in their efforts at aligning K-12 and higher education curricula, standards and assessments to ensure that students are prepared for and enter postsecondary education and the workforce with the knowledge and skills to be successful.

Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs)

- ◆ Boost appropriation levels for Title III of the Higher Education Act, which supports the development and strengthening of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Predominantly Black Institutions, American Indian Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities, Alaska Native and Hawaiian Serving Institutions, and Native American Serving Institutions.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), between 2007–2018, college enrollment is expected to increase 4 percent for white students, 26 percent for black non-Hispanic students, 38 percent for Hispanic students, 29 percent for Asian/Pacific Islander students 32 percent for Native American/Alaskan Native students and 14 percent for nonresident alien students.
- ◆ Boost funding of Title V of the Higher Education Act, which supports the development and strengthening of Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) in order to address the nation’s changing demographics and increasing enrollments at HSIs.

Federal Early Outreach and Student Services Programs: TRIO and GEAR UP

- ◆ Support increased funding for TRIO and GEAR UP through the annual appropriations process.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, in 2008 there were 2,853 TRIO projects, 838,591 total participants, and a total funding allocation of \$878,850,850 for TRIO—an across-the-board decline from 2007. According to other recent data, more than 11 million people need TRIO services, and over 90 percent of people eligible for TRIO projects are not served. Two-thirds of TRIO participants come from households where neither parent graduated from college and where the income for a family of four is under \$30,975.

- ◆ Oppose any proposal to scale back or eliminate any significant component of TRIO and GEAR UP programs.

Veteran Students, Students Called to Active Duty and Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) Students

- ◆ Support legislative changes and/or technical corrections to the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 in order to standardize processing of benefits in accordance with accepted higher

education practices.

In particular, support

efforts to revise

separate payment

charts for tuition

and fees created by

the U.S. Department

of Veterans Affairs

(VA)—in which the

VA calculates and caps

tuition and fee charges

separately—to a combined tuition and fee chart conforming to

standard higher education billing practices.

The Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 or “Post-9/11 GI Bill” also has a Yellow Ribbon component, where institutions whose tuition and fees are higher than the base Post-9/11 GI Bill benefit (in-state tuition and fees at the most expensive public college or university in that veteran’s state) can sign agreements with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to contribute up to 50 percent of tuition and fees toward the remaining cost. The VA will match up to 50 percent of the school’s Yellow Ribbon contribution. According to October 2009 VA statistics, 3,539 Yellow Ribbon agreements have been signed for the 2009-2010 school year; 1,101 of them are for an unlimited number of veteran students.

- ◆ Fund Model Programs for Centers of Excellence for Veteran Success authorized under HEA to award competitive grants for model programs that support veteran student success in postsecondary education.
- ◆ Benchmark MGIB benefits (pre-Post 9/11 GI Bill) to the cost of attendance at public four-year institutions for those service members who served prior to September 11, 2001. Service members eligible under the current MGIB who served on or after September 11, 2001 will have an irrevocable decision point to choose either set of benefits.
- ◆ Ensure that no student-reservist is required to repay any unearned federal student aid received for an academic term in which they are called to active duty.
- ◆ Support the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in its efforts to create a comprehensive payment system able to make timely and accurate payments to eligible recipients of veterans education benefits. Such a system should ensure that student veterans, states and institutions do not suffer adverse financial consequences as a result of federal action.
- ◆ Advocate for more advantageous tuition rates for MGIB Selected Reserve (Chapter 1606) benefits; also advocate for portability equity for MGIB-SR benefits earned during mobilization for a period of 10 years after leaving service (equal to MGIB Active Duty portability rates).
 - ◆ MGIB-SR benefits for members of the Selected Reserve attending college in 2009 ranged from \$83.25/month for less than half-time study to \$333/month for full-time study; reservists who voluntarily separate from the Selective Reserve lose their educational benefits immediately upon separation.
- ◆ Boost funding for the Upward Bound TRIO programs that prepare low-income, first-generation military veterans for college.

- ◆ Support ROTC programs on campus that allow students to develop both academic and leadership skills in the service of their country.
- ◆ Discourage attempts to mandate institutional refund policies for veteran and active-duty military students on the federal level; a recent national survey indicated that nearly 80 percent of responding campuses had already established refund policies for military activations and deployments.

Funding for Advanced Degree Programs

- ◆ Increase investment in federal scholarship and fellowship programs—such as the Javits Fellowship and GAANN programs—as important means of building a pipeline for historically underrepresented groups into academia and advanced graduate studies.
- ◆ Boost funding to the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program through the TRIO programs in order to increase the number of undergraduate students who participate in advanced degree programs. Funding is used to encourage enrollment in advanced degree programs through mentoring, test preparation for the Graduate Record Exam (GRE), tutoring and assistance in applying for graduate school. Students who benefit from this program are tracked and supported as they progress through their advanced degree programs.

Undocumented Students

- ◆ Support clarification of existing federal immigration law to allow states to determine the tuition status of qualified dependents of undocumented immigrants. AASCU believes that states' authority over tuition policy must be preserved and respected.

- ◆ Support access to federal loan and work-study programs for qualified undocumented students who were brought to the United States under the age of 16, have resided in the United States for five or more years and have graduated from a United States high school.

Between 2001 and 2006, 10 states passed legislation allowing undocumented students to receive in-state tuition. The issue of whether undocumented students should have access to enrollment in public postsecondary institutions and lower in-state tuition rates continues to be hotly contested in many states. Considerable attention will be given to the first state Supreme Court case on the issue, in California. A central question in the case will be whether high-school attendance can legally replace the residency requirement for receiving in-state tuition. While the California court's decision, which should be handed down in 2010, will not have any binding effect on other states, it may have national implications given that policymakers and the courts could be influenced by the decision.

Affirmative Action and Diversity of College Campuses

- ◆ Oppose federal efforts that prohibit affirmative action policies for colleges and universities, in order to ensure equal educational opportunity and access for all students.

State Role in College Access and Attainment—AASCU Policy Statements

Undocumented Students

- ◆ Encourage states to provide eligibility for in-state tuition rates to qualified undocumented students. Qualifications may include graduation from a state high school, state residency and intent to obtain U.S. citizenship.
- ◆ Discourage state efforts to prohibit undocumented students from enrolling in public institutions.

Tuition Benefits for Active Military Personnel and Veterans

- ◆ Encourage states to support programs that facilitate veterans' entry into and success in postsecondary education.

Affirmative Action and Diversity Referendums

- ◆ Discourage state referendums limiting the ability of public colleges and universities to utilize admissions or other policies that aim to engender a diverse student body.

Aligning and Strengthening the Education Pipeline

- ◆ Support state efforts to increase the preparedness for, and transition to, postsecondary education through strong P-20 coordination initiatives. Such initiatives may include:
 - Alignment of secondary and postsecondary curriculum, standards and assessments.

- Clarifying and raising expectations for entering college freshmen by articulating a rigorous statewide high school core course of study that prepares students for college and the world of work.
- Developing policies that promote access to accelerated learning options and that encourage participation of middle- and lower-achieving groups in such programs as Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate and dual/concurrent enrollment.
- Supporting early outreach/commitment programs that incentivize middle and high school students to plan and prepare for college.

Seamless Student Transitioning

- ◆ Encourage states to develop effective policies to support the transfer of credit and streamline credit transfer, including statewide articulation agreements, while recognizing that academic matters are most appropriately handled through the collaborative efforts of accreditors and statewide, system and institutional boards.
- ◆ Urge adoption of policies that remove undue barriers to baccalaureate programs for students completing associate degree programs.

Nontraditional/Adult Learners

- ◆ Urge states to develop policies that facilitate adult learner re-entry into college and toward degree completion, such as assessment of prior learning and initiatives designed to help adults meet the logistical challenges of balancing occupational, parental and college responsibilities.

