AACC-ACCT JOINT LEGISLATIVE AGENDA FOR THE 108TH CONGRESS

Community colleges are the primary portal to higher education and employment for those who might not otherwise have access. Affordable access to higher education is key to continued economic prosperity and to extending its benefits to all sectors of our society. Each year, community colleges educate almost half of America’s undergraduate students, and provide training for millions of others seeking to upgrade their skills for the new economy. In order to assist community colleges in this vital role, Congress must pursue an agenda that makes higher education and job training top priorities, both in the investment of federal resources and in other policies that affect these key institutions. The American Association of Community Colleges and the Association of Community College Trustees support the following legislative priorities for the 108th Congress.

GOAL: Pursue Legislative Strategies that ease Economic Barriers to Accessing Community Colleges

Higher Education Act Reauthorization

- Ensure the continued vitality of the Pell Grant program, with emphasis on its providing equal benefits for all higher education students.
- Support new accountability provisions that better reflect the many goals of community college students.
- Revise the Act’s provisions concerning distance education to reflect the rapid and continuing developments in this area.
- Work to ensure that burdensome and unnecessary administrative and reporting requirements are eliminated.
- Preserve the vital Strengthening Institutions Program.

Hope Scholarship Tax Credit

- Support legislation (introduced in the 107th Congress in both the House and Senate) that would expand Hope Scholarship eligibility to include fees, books, supplies and equipment.

GOAL: Forge Partnerships to Advance the Educational, Economic and Workforce Development, and Social Goals of Community Colleges

Workforce Investment Act Reauthorization
• Revise the subsequent eligibility requirements for training providers to link them closely with other federal accountability requirements and to ease the burden of data collection on institutions.

• Institute direct federal support for the operation of One-Stop Centers.

• Modify the provision of WIA services to allow more funds to be used for training.

• Establish WIA funding outside of the voucher-based framework to support training program development.

Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act Reauthorization

• Establish separate postsecondary performance indicators that account for all of the successful outcomes for community college students and allow institutions to report on the most relevant measures.

• Enact a postsecondary title within the Perkins Act that reflects the missions of community colleges, emphasizes linkages between community colleges and community partners, and utilizes modern terminology.

• Institute a new competitive grant program that would fund innovative approaches to linkages between community colleges and community partners, especially secondary schools.

• Modify the Tech-Prep program by requiring a renewable contract between consortium members.

Nursing Legislation

• Ensure that the reauthorization of nurse education programs in Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act includes community colleges in all relevant programs.

• Monitor implementation of the Nurse Reinvestment Act to ensure fair treatment of community colleges; seek legislative remediation if this turns out not to be the case.

Welfare Reform

• Secure modifications to the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) provisions of the Welfare Reform legislation to:
o Extend from 12 to 24 the number of months welfare recipients may participate in vocational education and have such participation counted as “work” under the statute;

o Expand the definition of vocational education specifically include community college programs leading to a recognized credential;

o Remove from states’ work participation rate the number of teen parents enrolled in secondary school.

GOAL: Secure and Enhance Public Funding for Community Colleges, Enabling Them to Serve the Needs of Individuals and Communities

Higher Education Programs

Secure annual increases in the maximum Federal Pell Grant to ensure that needy students are afforded maximum access to community colleges.

• Provide needed support for major federal student aid programs (Supplemental Grants, Federal Work-Study, and Leveraging Education Partnerships that preserve and enhance community college student attendance.

• Expand support for Title III, Part A, “Strengthening Institutions,” which assists community colleges with scarce resources and a mission of serving large numbers of disadvantaged and historically under-served students.

National Science Foundation

Advanced Technological Education Program

• Enhance funding for the Advanced Technological Education (ATE) program at the National Science Foundation. ATE serves a critical need by providing funds to establish and improve community college programs that produce skilled technicians.

Undergraduate Math and Science Programs

• Increase funding for NSF programs that increase the quality of undergraduate math and science programs and the quantity of students that enroll in them.

International Education Programs

Higher Education Act Title VI and Fulbright Hays Programs
• Increase funding for undergraduate international education programs, which are vital to national security and economic productivity.

International Students

• Identify and support federal legislation that increases the security of the student visa system while maintaining the nation’s premier status as a destination for foreign students.