AACC-ACCT

JOINT

LEGISLATIVE

AGENDA

for the 110th Congress
Community College Federal Legislative Priorities

Across our nation, more than 1,200 community colleges serve as the vehicle for higher education, training, and workforce development to more than 11 million students annually. With the ever-changing global economy, affordable access to higher education and training is the key to continued economic prosperity and to extending its benefits to all sectors of our society.

Each year, community colleges educate almost half of all U.S. undergraduates, making them the largest and fastest-growing sector of higher education. The colleges provide training for students seeking to gain or upgrade skills for the 21st century economy, including half of nurses, other health care professionals, and early childhood educators; and more than 80 percent of first responders. To assist community colleges in this vital role, Congress must pursue an agenda that makes higher education, economic prosperity, and workforce development top priorities, both in the investment of federal resources and in other policies that position the nation’s community colleges to effect the greatest change on behalf of our communities.

The American Association of Community Colleges and the Association of Community College Trustees support the following legislative priorities for the 110th Congress.
GOAL: Pursue Legislation and Funding That Ease Economic Barriers and Enable Community Colleges to Better Serve Their Communities

Higher Education Act (HEA) Reauthorization

✦ Ensure the continued vitality of the Pell Grant program, with an emphasis on providing equal benefits for all higher education students. Provide annual increases in the maximum Pell Grant.

✦ Strongly oppose efforts to give for-profit colleges new access to federal institutional grant funds.

✦ Reject new federal restrictions on institutional transfer-of-credit policies.

✦ Maintain other major federal student aid programs, including SEOG, TRIO, Federal Work-Study, and LEAP, that preserve and enhance community college student attendance.

✦ Preserve and increase support for the vital Strengthening Institutions Program, Title III-A of the HEA, enabling community colleges to serve disadvantaged populations.

✦ Make part-time students eligible for the new Academic Competitiveness Grants program that fosters achievement in math and science.

Veterans

✦ Support legislation and funding that provides tuition assistance for veterans and reservists, especially those returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.
Hope Scholarship Tax Credit and Other Tax Issues

- Support legislation expanding Hope Scholarship eligibility to include required fees, books, supplies, and equipment.

- Oppose tax incentives that are overly tilted toward more affluent students and college graduates who are less in need of federal support than are other people.

- Support a tax credit for student loan interest for borrowers of limited means.

DREAM Act

- Support passage of legislation eliminating federal restrictions on states choosing to offer in-state tuition to undocumented students.

- Support making DREAM Act students eligible for federal student financial assistance.

STEM Competitiveness

- Include community colleges in efforts to bolster America’s competitiveness in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields.

- 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 in a number of important fields.

- Increase funding for STEM Talent Expansion Programs (STEP), which 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 Fulbright-Hays Programs

- Increase funding for undergraduate international education programs, which are vital to national security and economic productivity.

International Students

- Ensure a secure student visa system without placing undue burdens or imposing delays on international students who wish to study at community colleges.
GOAL: Forge Partnerships to Advance the Educational, Economic and Workforce Development, and Social Goals of Community Colleges

Workforce Investment Act Reauthorization

- Ease the burden of data collection on institutions and increase community college involvement in the federal workforce development system by reducing reporting requirements for training providers.

- Establish the Community-Based Job Training Grants (CBJTG) program in statute and make community colleges the sole grantees for training and program development in high-need areas.

- Fund the workforce system’s infrastructure with minimal or no impact on funding for mandatory partners.

- Reemphasize job training at the local level by providing funding for training programs outside of the voucher-based framework and eliminating the “sequence of services” that emphasizes quick job placement and informational services.

Perkins Career and Technical Education Act

- Increase funding for the Perkins Basic State Grant program, which helps community colleges provide cutting-edge career and technical education programs that prepare students for the 21st century economy.

- Fund the Tech Prep program that fosters partnerships between high schools and community colleges.
Allied Health and Nursing Legislation

Ensure that the amendments to, or reauthorization of, nurse education programs in Title VIII and allied health education in Title VII of the Public Health Service Act includes community colleges in all relevant programs. Seek funding increases for such 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.

Protect scope of practice and prevent or remove career advancement barriers for graduates from 2-year institutions, including those employed by federal agencies such as the Veterans Health Administration.

Seek federal funding for an Institute of Medicine study of education for registered nurses.

Homeland Security

Support legislation and funding that recognizes the critical role community colleges have in educating and training first responders.

Ensure passage of legislation that expands opportunities for community colleges to address cybersecurity needs.

Identify federal agency programs that address the broad range of homeland security issues and enhance community college opportunities to partner with these agencies (e.g., Department of Energy, Department of Defense, Department of Health and Human Services), with colleges and universities, and with the private sector to provide training.
Community College Facts:

- Community colleges are the largest sector of higher education, enrolling almost half of all U.S. undergraduates - more than 11 million students.
- Average tuition costs are $2,272 annually.
- Average student age nationally - 29 years.

Community Colleges at the Forefront

- Healthcare: 50% of new nurses and the majority of other new health-care workers are educated at community colleges.
- Earnings: Average expected lifetime earning for a graduate with an associates degree are $1.6 million - about $0.4 million more than a high school graduate earns.
- Workforce Training: The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that between 1998 and 2008, jobs requiring an associate degree will increase by 31.2%, the largest percentage increase among all educational levels.
- Homeland Security: Close to 80% of firefighters, law enforcement officers, and EMTs are credentialed at community colleges.
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