



AASCU on the Hill

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AASCU
Delivering America's Promise

AASCU on the Hill: 2023 Policy Priorities

The need for increased student aid is a challenge shared across postsecondary education. As educators of the “new majority,” regional comprehensive universities know firsthand the impact increased federal assistance can have on a student’s retention and ability to complete their course of study.

The *AASCU on the Hill: 2023 Priorities* reflect this knowledge, asking Congress to double the maximum value of Pell Grants, increase funding for the College Retention and Completion Program while centralizing the founding mission of our membership as normal schools through advocacy to strengthen educator preparation programs and diversify the teaching corps by supporting the EDUCATORS for America Act which will be reintroduced in Congress this session.

As you familiarize federal officials and staff with regional comprehensive universities, we ask that you include our shared priorities within your advocacy plan and mention how important support for each priority is to your students, faculty, and community.

#DoublePell

(41 percent of students at AASCU member RCUs receive a Pell Grant)

A proven program that has been the foundation of federal student aid for decades, Pell Grants open the doors of higher education and opportunity to a better life for low- and moderate-income students with a maximum annual award of \$7,395 in 2023. Since 1972 over **216 million students** have received a Pell Grant.

The Pell Grant is especially critical to those Americans who make up the “new majority” of college students: low income, first-generation, person of color, working adult and/or a veteran. For these students, **doubling the Pell Grant to \$13,000** could make the difference between an affordable opportunity and carrying debt when attempting to access a postsecondary education.

AASCU joins fellow members of the Double Pell Alliance in calling on Congress to strengthen this proven investment and **double the maximum Pell Grant award to \$13,000 by 2027.**

Talking Points - Double Pell Grants Maximum Amount

- No program authorized under the Higher Education Act of 1965 has had greater success nor impact than the federal Pell Grant program.
- Since 1972 over 216 million students have received a Pell Grant.
- The Pell Grant has lost its purchasing power. The maximum Pell Grant would cover more than 79% of the cost of earning a degree in 1979. It now covers **32%** of costs.
- Almost **40%** of student veterans are Pell Grant recipients.
- **47%** of Pell Grant awards went to students whose families earn less than \$20,000 annually.
- Increasing Pell Grants is the most important and direct way to **make college affordable again.**

The "ASK"

Support doubling Pell Grants to a maximum of \$13,000 by FY 2027.

Fixing the Educator Pipeline

The educator pipeline is in crisis, America **needs** a national investment in educators. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, more than **270,000 teachers** are expected to leave the field each year between 2016 and 2026. The COVID-19 pandemic has only accelerated this trend. At the same time, student enrollments in educator preparation programs are plummeting. School districts across the nation are struggling to fill positions.

Past legislative proposals have focused on partial solutions when a comprehensive state-federal partnership is required to address the multifaceted challenges of educator shortages. States and local communities cannot fix the educator pipeline on their own.

AASCU calls on congress to fully fund and support educator preparation, recruitment, and training programs in the FY2024 federal budget to address financial barriers, standardize educator preparation programs and increase capacity, and diversify the profession.

Talking Points - Education in Crisis

- The country's outlook is directly linked to the strength of the education profession.
- However, **270,000** teachers are expected to leave the field each year between 2016 and 2026.
- It is imperative that the nation strengthen its educator preparation programs and diversify the teaching corps.
- States and local communities cannot repair the educator pipeline on their own. They need increased federal engagement.
- Must protect and reinforce **Title II** of the Higher Education Act (HEA).
- Reauthorize the Honorable **Augustus F. Hawkins Centers of Excellence Program** at Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs).

The "ASK"

*Co-sponsor the **EDUCATORS for America Act** when reintroduced in Congress (House and Senate)*

- Also known as [S. 3360](#) in the Senate and [H.R. 6205](#) in the House
- Doubles **TEACH Grants** to \$8,000 per year.
- Provides recruitment and completion grants to educator preparation programs.
- Include the costs of education clinical experiences in the cost of attendance calculations when awarding financial aid.

Supporting College Retention and Completion Grants

Over the past twenty years there has been a growing divide between student enrollment and degree completion. Today, only **6 in 10 students** who enroll in college will complete a bachelor's degree within six years.

Pilot programs targeting student retention and completion through early intervention have led to extraordinary outcomes with some participants doubling the graduation rate of non-participants but support for a nationwide college retention and completion grants has been tepid.

AASCU calls on Congress to support and fully fund Postsecondary Student Success Grants in the President's FY24 budget request.

Talking Points - College Retention and Completion Grants

- Degree attainment, at any level, is the most important goal in higher education.
- Over the past **twenty years** there has been a growing divide between student enrollment and degree completion
- Student retention and college completion drive students' **ability to repay** educational loans that often keep non-degreed students from attaining economic stability.
- In FY 2023 and FY 2024, Congress has allocated the initial investments in the *Postsecondary Student Success Grants Program* intended to support college retention and completion programs.
- The nation needs to increase this investment in new student support services and activities.

The "ASK"

Support full funding and support for the \$165M Postsecondary Student Success Grants.