

An AASCU Hallmark: Service at All Levels

Donor stipulations around institutional gifts—large or small—are not new. Supposedly, former Massachusetts Attorney General A.E. Pillsbury left several Ivy League schools \$25,000 apiece in his 1931 will. But he had a proviso: The schools had to use the bequests to combat the feminist movement that had “already begun to impair the family as the basis of civilization and its advance.” Pillsbury envisioned the schools creating a lectureship that could help keep women in the home. It’s not clear if that story is apocryphal, but given what we know about potential institutional gifts that come with strings attached, it doesn’t seem that far-fetched. Stephen Pelletier’s cover story, “The (Potentially) Messy World of Large Donations,” looks at the need for state colleges and universities to develop more sophisticated skills in managing potentially controversial gifts. His story includes a valuable list, suggested by fundraising experts, of seven strategies universities should employ “before you take the money.”

AAASCU’s Grants Resource Center (GRC) will mark a milestone this year: 50 years of service. GRC staff will celebrate that achievement with members on February 23 during their Funding Competitiveness Conference. GRC was created in 1967 to help AASCU members become competitive for the increased funding opportunities presented by federal grants. GRC gave members a Washington office and access to information from major federal agencies that they had previously not been able to access. It also helped members gain expertise to compete against larger research universities. To learn more about GRC’s founding and its services, go to page 20.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, so much of the conversation around public higher education has been an ongoing recitation about challenges: state disinvestment, rising tuition, rising costs, questions about who should pay and who benefits, and so on. And the dialogue doesn’t promise to change in 2017. It’s been a little more than six months since AASCU launched its national branding initiative, Opportunities for All. In a letter AASCU President Muriel Howard sent to members in January, she said: “*These are challenging times for public higher education with eroding state support and uncertainty around federal funding. Taking a collaborative, unified approach in articulating the benefits of State Colleges and Universities (SCUs), and the value they bring to students and to our states, is more vital than ever. When many voices join together they are hard to ignore.*”

The goal of *Opportunities for All* (O4A) is to increase awareness among a number of stakeholders, including key influencers, agenda setters and state lawmakers about the high-quality, accessible and cost-effective education AASCU members can offer to an increasingly diverse student population, as well as the contributions they make to regional and state economic development. *Public Purpose* interviewed three presidents who have committed to O4A and who shared with Cherise Carrera, assistant managing editor, their perspectives on implementation and the value of the campaign: Linda Bleicken, Armstrong State University (Ga.); Jim Borsig, Mississippi University for Women; and Vic Morgan, University of Houston-Victoria (Texas). To learn what they had to say, turn to page 15 and then—in an unabashed commercial for this very important campaign—if you have not committed, go to the Opportunities for All page on the AASCU website and take the pledge!

S.M.C.

