

AASCU STATEMENT ON HIGHER EDUCATION EMERGENCY RELIEF FUND III EMERGENCY AID AND GUIDANCE

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Contact:

Kellee Edmonds
(202) 478-4662
edmondsk@aascu.org

WASHINGTON, May 11, 2021—The American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) applauds the release of new emergency aid and corresponding guidance to public and private colleges and universities and their students as part of the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund III (HEERF III) as authorized by the American Rescue Plan (ARP).

AASCU specifically celebrates the Biden administration's analysis of the underlying statute to determine that all enrolled students are fully eligible to receive financial assistance under the HEERF programs (I, II, and III). All students are vital members of academic communities at AASCU institutions across the country, and this heroic decision will allow them to continue or return to their educational pursuits.

"I thank Secretary Cardona and the Biden administration for correcting the DeVos department's unfair and inequitable misinterpretation of congressional intent and authorizing colleges and universities to direct emergency grants to all students in need, particularly undocumented students and those who have had almost no resources provided to them for the course of the yearlong pandemic," said Dr. Mildred García, president of AASCU.

AASCU institutions enroll 3.3 million undergraduate students, or 35% of the nation's 9.2 million undergraduate enrollments at public four-year institutions. The increased financial resources now made available as part of the ARP will continue to support these institutions that enroll and educate the "new" majority of America, students who are low-income, first generation, and/or of color who now comprise the United States higher education system.

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The American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) is a Washington, D.C.-based higher education association of nearly 400 public colleges, universities, and systems whose members share a learning- and teaching-centered culture, a historic commitment to underserved student populations, and a dedication to research and creativity that advances their regions' economic progress and cultural development. These are institutions Delivering America's Promise.

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