

AASCU American Association
of State Colleges and
Universities

Delivering America's Promise



FISCAL YEAR 2021

IN REVIEW





Fiscal Year 2021 in Review

In FY21, AASCU continued to support our members through turbulent times, focusing on student success innovation, creating communities of experience, building leadership capacity and diversity, policy and advocacy, and subject matter expertise.

We ensured our institutions could continue to support students and respond to changing technological and programmatic needs during the pandemic, thanks to generous support from Ascendium Education Group and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Our civic programs kept students engaged, resulting in a bigger campus voter turnout than ever before amongst our American Democracy Project members.

We also held 39 virtual meetings and webinars to build spaces where our members could come together. Our webinars had more than 1,300 participants and attendees in FY21, and we are excited to announce on-demand viewing will soon be available.

AASCU launched new services to build our members' leadership skills, including the Academy for New Provosts and Student Success Institute for Provosts. We promoted our unique programs in the media, including a cover story on our Millennium Leadership Initiative in *Diverse: Issues In Higher Education*.

Additionally, we advocated for robust federal and state support for our members during the pandemic and teamed with other organizations to call on Congress to double the Pell Grant. We also kept our Grants Resource Center members informed of a variety of sponsored and research program funding opportunities and brought subject matter experts to our members through our corporate partnership program.

During all this, AASCU moved its headquarters to 1717 Rhode Island Avenue, NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20036. We are proud to continue to serve as a voice for our members in our nation's capital and look forward to furthering our institutions' work and innovative programs in the year to come.

Here are more details on AASCU's accomplishments:

Student Success Innovation

- ➔ Received a \$2 million grant from Ascendium Education Group to maintain member institutions' momentum in student success.
- ➔ Served as a partner on two major grants from the Ascendium Education Group to help AASCU members improve student transfer practices and policies. This includes the Equity Transfer Initiative with the American Association of Community Colleges and the Transfer Success Equity Institute with the Aspen Institute.
- ➔ Saw the largest student voter turnout at AASCU's American Democracy Project campuses during the November national election, with one member leading the state's colleges and universities in voter participation. Overall, the youth vote increased from 52% to 54% in 2016 to 65% to 70% turnout from our campuses for the 2020 election.
- ➔ Assisted 30 AASCU members with supporting student needs in the COVID-19 crisis in the areas of measuring digital learning impact and equity, transitioning from emergency remote learning to intentionally designed online pedagogy, and using multiple measures assessment for placement, with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.
- ➔ Amplified AASCU's impact educating the new majority through successful integration of key messages across multiple communications channels including social media, webpages, and e-newsletters.
- ➔ Incorporated compelling examples of student success work of AASCU members via public speaking engagements of AASCU President Mildred García.

Creating Communities of Experience

- ➔ Attracted a record-breaking 524 attendees to the 2021 Academic Affairs Winter Meeting, which focused on the theme "Walking the Talk: Leading the Equity-Centered University" and featured compelling plenary speakers and relevant concurrent sessions.
- ➔ Hosted 27 webinars with more than 1,300 participants, providing timely and relevant content to members. Topics included updates from the Office of Postsecondary Education, federal teacher education policy, and academic scheduling for the post-pandemic student experience. Through these webinars, AASCU introduced members to thought leaders, including former Secretary of State (current Special Presidential Envoy for Climate) John Kerry and former Gov. John Kasich, Colorado State Election Director Judd Choate, Design Specialist Katherine Bray-Simons from the National Endowment for the Arts, and Senior Policy Specialist Beth Strausser from the National Science Foundation, just to name a few! Webinars will soon be available for on-demand viewing.
- ➔ Worked closely with chief communications officers at AASCU institutions to showcase campus efforts in the fight against COVID-19 and promoted that critical work on the association's website and across social media channels.

- ➔ Presented our 2020 Annual Meeting virtually in November for 386 participants, including 121 presidents and 132 cabinet members from member campuses. The event featured author Ibram X. Kendi, political commentators Bill Kristol and Kim Wehle, panelists outlining the work of the Gates Foundation's Postsecondary Value Commission, and AASCU presenting the Distinguished Alumnus Award to weather and feature anchor Al Roker.
- ➔ Delivered a virtual symposium with EAB for 155 presidents and cabinet members, covering the current and future state of higher education.

Building Leadership Capacity and Diversity

- ➔ Launched the Academy for New Provosts, a yearlong program that addresses topics of immediate interest and concern to new provosts.
- ➔ Held the first Student Success Institute for Provosts, with funding from Ascendium Education Group and in coordination with Sova Solutions. The leadership development program is tailored to the distinctive needs of established provosts (chief academic officers) at AASCU member institutions.
- ➔ Launched new learning and engagement programming including Leading the Senior Team, designed by the Aspen Institute and offered to current presidents as a pilot in 2020. Fall and spring offerings are planned for 2021–22.
- ➔ Provided a rich array of virtual learning and engagement opportunities for more than 300 member presidents, provosts, and senior leaders. This included:
 - Millennium Leadership Initiative: 30 senior leaders participated in the 2020 cohort and 32 in the 2021 cohort.
 - Emerging Leaders Program: 21 emerging leaders participated in the 2020 cohort and 35 in the 2021 cohort.
 - New Presidents Academy: 13 new presidents/chancellors participated in the 2020 program. Registration is underway for 2021 cohort.
 - Becoming a Provost Academy: 30 aspiring provosts participated in 2020 and 24 are appointed for 2021.
 - Executive Leadership Academy: 36 aspiring presidents participated in 2020 and 35 are appointed for 2021.
- ➔ Executed public relations strategies in support of AASCU's leadership development programs.
- ➔ Helped strengthen the Millennium Leadership Initiative's status as a premier leadership development program in higher education with a cover story in *Diverse: Issues In Higher Education*.
- ➔ Raised the public profile of the Emerging Leaders Program, including working closely with chief communications officers at the selected universities to promote the new cohort.

Policy and Advocacy

- ➔ Advocated for a robust federal intervention to cushion the financial impact of COVID-related losses for public institutions and their students. This continuing effort has already resulted in three significant infusions of federal dollars into the higher education community, totaling at nearly \$75 billion with over \$21.4 billion going directly to AASCU eligible institutions.
- ➔ Engaged the Trump administration on multiple regulatory and administrative issues impacting state colleges and universities. These included the expansive Title IX regulations published by the Department of Education, various executive orders on freedom of speech and religion, and the administrative guidance issued by Secretary Betsy DeVos on allowable uses of COVID-19 relief funds that excluded DACA students.
- ➔ Served as the voice of state colleges and universities with the Biden administration. AASCU's outreach started during the transition and continues to emphasize the needs of the public higher education sector as the new administration formulates its higher education strategy. This included joining with nearly 1,200 organizations to call on Congress and the Biden administration to double the purchasing value of Pell Grants while concurrently protecting and encouraging further state investments in public higher education.
- ➔ Developed a suite of infographics that articulated the value of regional comprehensive institutions.
- ➔ Delivered strategic communications to members through targeted advocacy alerts and the production of appealing digital publications.
- ➔ Published an op-ed on the Dream Act, articulating AASCU's position in support of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.

Subject Matter Expertise

- ➔ Positioned AASCU as a thought leader and source for journalists covering higher education issues, increasing media mentions and coverage in outlets such as the Associated Press, *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, and *Inside Higher Ed*, among others. These media relations strategies positively impact AASCU's reputation and brand and promote our members' accomplishments.
- ➔ Hosted a fall and spring webinar series that featured speakers and funding opportunities from federal departments and agencies.
- ➔ Participated in three campuswide virtual workshops related to funding opportunities.
- ➔ Added more than 50 new grant opportunities to the Grants Resource Center's GrantSearch database and nearly 20 funded proposals to the Proposal Library.
- ➔ Continued to bring thought leadership and subject matter expertise to members through our robust corporate partnership program. We are expanding the partnership program to increase revenue for AASCU and enrich programming for members.

AASCU by the Numbers



With a membership of
**304 institutions and
26 system/state offices**
in the U.S. and U.S. territories,

AASCU

institutions comprise

38%

of the nation's 795 public
four-year institutions.

AASCU

institutions enroll

3.3 million
undergraduate students,

or 35%

of the nation's

9.2 million
undergraduate students

at public four-year
institutions.



AASCU

institutions award more than
562,000 bachelor's degrees, or

42%

of the more than

1.3 million
bachelor's degrees

awarded by public
four-year institutions.



AASCU

institutions educate

**the new
majority—**

first-generation,
low-income, and/or
students of color.

39%
of undergraduates at

**AASCU
institutions
receive
Pell Grants.**



Of the total percentage of
**Pell
undergraduates**
enrolled at all public four-year
colleges and universities,
approximately

43%

are from
institutions that are
represented by

AASCU.

AASCU Partners

This year would not be possible without our partners, who are deeply committed to our collective work.

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