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The Board of Directors of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) invites applications and nominations for a dynamic, innovative, and equity-minded leader to serve as its next president and chief executive officer (CEO). After five years of exemplary service, the current president, Dr. Mildred García, is leaving AASCU well-positioned and with an impressive collection of programs and services, strong relationships with key funders, and a reputation for successfully promoting student success, access, opportunity, and social and economic mobility. The new president and CEO will build on this foundation to extend into the future AASCU’s legacy as a champion of public, four-year institutions that serve a diverse student population. The new president and CEO is expected to take office in January 2024 for this full-time, in-person position located at the AASCU office in Washington, D.C. This position also requires travel.
Based in Washington, D.C., AASCU is a higher education association of 350 public colleges, universities, and systems whose member institutions advance social mobility for students of all backgrounds, positively impacting them, their families, and their communities for generations to come. Offering more than 3 million students each year an affordable, high-quality college education—particularly those from lower-income families, first-generation college students, and/or students of color—AASCU institutions are stewards of their communities, powering economic growth and preparing graduates to be informed and engaged citizens who live by the values of a democratic society.

HISTORY
For more than 60 years, AASCU has worked with its member institutions to deliver on the American promise of access, affordability, and educational opportunity and on the commitment to serve as stewards of place in their communities.

Historically, AASCU members have provided access to high-quality educational opportunities that have launched personal, societal, cultural, and economic enrichment across America. GIs returning from World War II turned to AASCU institutions to seek a better life for themselves and their families. The Civil Rights Movement opened new pathways to higher education that many African Americans pursued at AASCU colleges and universities. And countless women took advantage of the educational opportunities offered by AASCU members to ultimately enhance every field of endeavor. The 21st century finds that people of color, low-income, and/or underserved students are increasingly turning to AASCU colleges and universities to unlock new opportunities as first-generation students. Today, AASCU institutions enroll 3.2 million undergraduate students, or 34% of the nation’s 9.5 million undergraduate students at public, four-year institutions.

AASCU institutions deliver student-centered education in a learning environment that promotes public service, research, and civic engagement. In communities both rural and urban, AASCU schools are Delivering America’s Promise, championing higher education, providing affordable access, and enhancing opportunities for students who may not otherwise have found higher education possible. And they are investing in their communities and regions, fostering regional stewardship and economic progress.
MISSION
AASCU is the collective voice of 350 public colleges, universities, and systems that hold students and community at the heart of their mission. The association works to expand student access, success, and opportunity; promote world-class teaching and experiential learning tied to career advancement; and support applied research and service that advances economic development and quality of life in communities across the country.

VALUES
In fulfilling its mission, AASCU is committed to the following core values:

Social Mobility: Increasing social and economic mobility by promoting accessible, affordable, and high-quality public higher education for students of all backgrounds, in particular those who are nontraditional, from lower-income families, or from underrepresented groups.

Student Success: Committing to programs and policies that help members position students at the heart of their institutions and that have real-world impact on students’ social and economic mobility.

Innovation: Fostering innovative strategies that help members think deeply and creatively about the nature of their work and encourage institutional achievement.

Service: Proactively working to understand and respond to the needs of member institutions and the diverse students and communities they serve.

Leadership: Enhancing institutional leadership by supporting presidents, chancellors, and campus leaders with professional development opportunities that foster exemplary practices, innovative management, and promote a cadre of diverse future leaders.

Accountability: Fostering responsible and accountable stewardship of the public trust.
AASCU’s 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. This broad mission is further stated through five areas of purpose:

- Promote understanding, appreciation, and support for the public purpose of public higher education and the distinctive contributions of such institutions.

- Support member institutions in their mission to prepare students who can be demonstrably competitive and effective in an economy and a society that requires global literacy.

- Advocate for effective public policy at the federal level and to provide both federal and state policy analysis to advance member institutions and the students they serve.

- Provide leadership for effective policy development and program support that will strengthen academic quality, promote access and inclusion, foster regional stewardship and economic progress, and facilitate educational innovation.

- Create professional development opportunities for member presidents/chancellors and their spouses and partners, system executives, and other senior leaders, and to undertake a systematic approach to fostering new leaders who will contribute to educational innovation.

AASCU provides four different types of membership—Institutional, System Office, Associate, and International Associate memberships. Members are located across nearly all 50 states as well as in U.S. territories, the Bahamas, Canada, and Mexico. Members receive ongoing, customized support as they build diverse leadership pipelines and support upward social and economic mobility for their students.
AASCU’s programs are responsive to member institutions and to the diverse students and communities they serve through the support of their teaching-learning, research, and service missions. AASCU’s suite of programs and services are aligned into six areas focused on prioritizing equitable outcomes, helping shape legislative priorities, equipping campus leaders, developing global citizens, making vital connections, and offering customized supports.

**STUDENT SUCCESS**
AASCU state colleges and universities prepare the new majority to realize—and redefine—the American Dream. AASCU supports the efforts of regional public universities to make student success equitable and inclusive of first-generation college students, students of color, and students from low-income families.

**POLICY AND ADVOCACY**
AASCU amplifies members’ voices, offering legislators and advocates guidance that promotes higher education and empowers state colleges and universities to transform their communities.

**LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**
AASCU’s equity-centered leadership development programs are timely, relevant, and solutions-driven. They are designed for leaders at all levels of the academy, from experienced and aspiring presidents/chancellors to new provosts to rising stars among faculty and staff.

**CIVIC AND GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT**
State colleges and universities prepare students to shape the future. Regional public universities serve the nation’s most diverse student populations. AASCU helps these institutions prepare all students to participate in the globalizing world with courage, confidence, and responsibility.

**COMMUNITIES AND CONVENING**
AASCU creates opportunities for presidents/chancellors and senior campus leaders of state colleges and universities to connect, engage, and learn from their peers. By exchanging promising practices and insights and supporting one another, members strengthen the AASCU network and higher education.

**RESOURCES AND EXPERTISE**
AASCU tools prepare state college and university leaders to answer today’s challenges and seize tomorrow’s opportunities. The services and resources offered by AASCU help members meet the unique demands regional public universities face each day. Campus teams can count on AASCU’s comprehensive suite of timely supports to help them execute their priorities.

**RECENT HIGHLIGHTS**
AASCU continues to deliver on its mission of supporting members in building pathways to opportunity and economic mobility through accessible, affordable, and high-quality public higher education. Key recent achievements are listed below. A more comprehensive listing is available in the latest Year in Review 2021–2022.

- Participated in the Student Success Transformation Cohort, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, designed to help achieve student success goals and close equity gaps for Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and low-income students. Received a competitive multimillion, multiyear award to support this effort, one of only six awardees of over 250 applicants.

- Produced the 20th anniversary refresh of the cornerstone piece Stepping Forward as Stewards of Place: A Guide for Leading Public Engagement at State Colleges and Universities. Co-chaired by Mildred García and Ashish Vaidya, and in partnership with a presidential task force and the Alliance for Research on Regional Colleges, Recommitting to Stewardship of Place: Creating and Sustaining Thriving Communities for the Decades Ahead was released at the AASCU 2022 Annual Conference, and a policy brief and a practitioner’s guide were released in early 2023.

- Presented AASCU’s Annual Conference, which has historically drawn highly acclaimed speakers, such as Melinda French Gates, Nikole Hannah-Jones, Ana Navarro, and Donna Brazile. During the conference, AASCU also recognizes and celebrates outstanding graduates of AASCU institutions who have made a significant contribution to the public, intellectual, or cultural life of the nation. The most recent Distinguished Alumnus Award recipients include NASA astronaut Richard Arnold II, educational leader Paul LeBlanc, and weather and feature anchor of NBC News TODAY and co-host of the 3rd hour of TODAY Al Roker.

- Provided a rich array of virtual and in-person learning and engagement opportunities for more than 300 member presidents/chancellors, provosts, and senior leaders.

- Successfully urged Congress to appropriate first dollars in FY22 for two important federal grant programs: a new $5 million for Postsecondary Student Success Grants to support colleges and universities with a high number of low-income and first-generation students and $8 million for the Hawkins Centers of Excellence to support schools of education at Hispanic-serving institutions, historically Black colleges and universities, and other minority-serving institutions.
AASCU has an active and engaged Board of Directors that serves as the governing body for the association, with all powers of governing, directing, and overseeing the management and affairs of AASCU. The board has exclusive control over the property, funds, and affairs of AASCU. The board comprises up to 19 diverse sitting member presidents/chancellors in good standing and includes the executive committee—the board chair, chair-elect, treasurer, and at-large member(s). Board members are elected to serve three-year terms and may not be elected for more than one consecutive three-year term.

The board chair presides at all meetings of the board, including executive committee meetings, the annual business meeting, and others. The chair reviews the AASCU president’s expenses and conducts the president’s annual performance evaluation in concert with feedback from the board and the president’s executive leadership team (ELT).

The chair-elect convenes and chairs the Council of State Representatives (CSR). The CSR is the public policy development body with board-delegated responsibility to frame AASCU’s policy priorities and guide the advocacy efforts of its Government Relations Division. The council consists of presidents/chancellors of member institutions and systems with an interest in federal policy development and advocacy activities.

The treasurer convenes and chairs the finance committee. The finance committee is responsible for overseeing budget and operations, annual financial statement audit, investments, and risk management.

The president leads an accomplished and diverse staff of 44 employees who support the mission of AASCU. The ELT includes six vice presidents, each of whom has served more than four years in their current role. The ELT comprises the vice president and chief operating officer, vice president of academic innovation and transformation, vice president of administration and finance, vice president of communications and public relations, vice president of government relations and policy analysis, and vice president of leadership development and partnerships.

From time to time, AASCU utilizes independent contractors to fill short-term donor funded project roles, and the consultants working for AASCU Consulting are also independent contractors.
FACINES

AASCU has continued to build on a multiyear transformation plan to ensure financial sustainability, to adapt and deliver responsive services and convenings, and to integrate continuous business model improvements through the reallocation of resources and growth of net revenue. Financial operations are measured and managed through traditional financial reports as well as through service line performance.

AASCU operates on a July 1–June 30 fiscal year and has received unqualified or clean audit opinions for the past 10-plus years. Since FY20, AASCU has delivered a positive operating margin and outperformed budget expectations. This has been accomplished through tough yet strategic decision-making, delivery of high-value content and relevant programming for members, and strong support from the board. Since FY19, AASCU has increased assets by 44% and reserves by 130%. Operating performance has improved by over $800,000 from FY19’s deficit of $592,000 to FY22’s surplus of $232,000. AASCU is an efficient organization with 87% of FY22 expenses going directly to support programs and services with only 13% for administrative support. While FY23’s audit is not yet complete, a material surplus is expected.

For FY24, the operating budget is approximately $15 million with a conservative and immaterial 1% budgeted deficit of $140,000. The ELT continues to be good stewards of funds, and it is expected that there will be an outperformance to the FY24 budget. AASCU’s FY24 budget revenue sources are well diversified with the largest sources of revenue being AASCU membership at 36%, convenings and leadership development at 15%, AASCU Consulting at 11%, and donor-supported programmatic work at 27%. AASCU also has more than $23 million in investments, including an endowment of over $13 million as of June 30, 2023. The largest use of FY24 budgeted expenses are personnel at 52%. This equates to a staffing level of 44 employees with approximately 20% of the personnel budget being funded by donor support.
The current era in postsecondary education calls for bold and persistent association leadership that extends into the future AASCU’s legacy as a champion of public institutions that serve a diverse student population. In the fulfillment of AASCU’s mission, vision, and values, the association pursues four strategic goals as a part of the 2020-2025 strategic plan that provide an initial framework for the leadership agenda for the next president.

**Goal 1:** Engage AASCU members in accelerated institutional transformation that optimizes their respective missions and student success goals.

**Goal 2:** Advance the mission of AASCU institutions through national and state policy.

**Goal 3:** Collect, analyze, and disseminate data to inform policy and practice.

**Goal 4:** Elevate AASCU’s organizational capacity, long-term impact, influence, and leadership.

AASCU seeks a leader who is an experienced university or college president/chancellor who has recently served at a regional public institution and has a deep understanding of the current higher education landscape and the challenges of the students, leaders, and campuses AASCU serves. The ideal candidate will possess many of the qualities, experiences, skills, and characteristics below:

- Knowledge and appreciation for the diversity of missions and histories within AASCU membership.
- Demonstrated commitment to student success and institutional transformation.
- A track record of equity-minded leadership with experience serving as a vocal, visible, and successful champion of diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice.
- An effective advocate with the ability to engage a full range of state and federal officials to advance the association’s agenda.
- Demonstrated commitment to developing the next generation of higher education leaders.
- Savvy spokesperson who can elevate the profile of AASCU and the sector with a verbal communication style that rallies, influences, persuades, and inspires when delivering planned and extemporaneous statements.

- Energy, passion, determination, and understanding to successfully engage in brand building for AASCU and its member institutions; ability to serve as an effective representative in the higher education ecosystem (e.g., in Washington, D.C., within the Department of Education, on Capitol Hill, and among the “Big Six” national higher education presidential associations).
- Experience building and nurturing national and international partnerships with an ability to garner philanthropic, corporate, and nonprofit support.
- Strong financial acumen, driven to produce sustainable financial results.
- Experience creating an evidence-based culture to foster continuous improvement and innovation.
- Strong leader who understands organizational culture and the importance of staff; committed to recruiting, retaining, and developing the best workforce possible given the post-pandemic realities.
- Someone who understands a small organization and is comfortable working in an environment with limited resources.
- Strategic, engaged leader who can empower an executive leadership team to take risks and innovate.
- Principles- and values-driven leader who adheres to the highest standard of integrity.
Nominations, inquiries, and applications should be sent to AASCUPresident@academicsearch.org.

To apply, candidates should prepare a thoughtful letter of interest addressing, as appropriate, the leadership agenda/priorities and desired qualities and attributes outlined in this profile. Also required are a current curriculum vitae and a list of five professional references with contact information and a brief explanation of the working relationship with each. References will be contacted at a later stage in the search process and only with candidate permission. The position is open until filled, but only applications received by September 29, 2023, will be guaranteed full consideration.

Academic Search is partnering with AASCU in this search. Confidential discussions about the position are welcome and may be arranged by contacting consultants:

Jay Lemons Jay.Lemons@academicsearch.org
Maria Thompson Maria.Thompson@academicsearch.org
Jennifer Kooker Jennifer.Kooker@academicsearch.org

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER
AASCU is committed to creating a diverse environment and is proud to be an equal opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, national origin, genetics, disability, age, or veteran status.

COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY
AASCU is committed to creating and maintaining a workplace in which all employees have an opportunity to participate and contribute to the success of the business and are valued for their skills, experience, and unique perspectives. This commitment is embodied in all association policies and the way business is done at AASCU.
AASCU'S SIGNATURE PROGRAMS & SERVICES

STUDENT SUCCESS: Helping members achieve student success goals
- Student Success Institute
- Student Success Equity Initiative
- Transfer Student Success Equity Intensive
- Teacher Education
- Academic Planning for Student Success (new)

POLICY AND ADVOCACY: Ensuring members have a voice in Washington, D.C.
- Advocacy for legislation that supports regional public universities
- Weekly federal policy update
- Advocacy tools
- Policy briefs

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT: Helping members to become successful leaders
- Academy for New Provosts (ANP)
- Becoming a Provost Academy (BAPA)
- Department Chair Leadership Institute (new)
- Emerging Leaders Program (ELP)
- Executive Leadership Academy (ELA)
- Student Success Institute (SSI)
- Millennium Leadership Initiative (MLI)
- New Presidents Academy (NPA)

CIVIC AND GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT: Helping members prepare globally engaged citizens
American Democracy Project (ADP)
- ADP Civic Fellows
- ADP Steering Committee
- Civic Engagement Awards
- Civic Solutions: Problem-Solving Through the Up to Us Case Competition
- Constructive Dialogue: Fostering Trust, Curiosity, and Deeper Learning
- Stewardship of Public Lands

Global Initiatives
- AASCU's International Education Week
- AASCU China Partnerships and Education Expo
- American Short-Term Study in China Initiative
- China Studies Institute
- China-U.S. Rising Star Student Study Tour
- Japan Studies Institute
- Presidential Missions
- Sino-US CHEPD 1+2+1 Program

COMMUNITIES AND CONVENING: Creating communities of experience leading to action and change
- AASCU's Academic Affairs Summer Meeting
- AASCU’s Annual Conference
- Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement Meeting (CLDE)
- Symposia for campus leaders
- Webinars
- Committees and affinity groups
- Presidential Spouse and Partner Program

RESOURCES AND EXPERTISE: Providing members with informed and experienced support
- Grants Resource Center
- AASCU Consulting
- Publications
- Podcasts
- Issue briefs
ABOUT ACADEMIC SEARCH

Academic Search is assisting the American Association of State Colleges and Universities in this work. For more than four decades, Academic Search has offered executive search services to higher education institutions, associations, and related organizations. Academic Search was founded by higher education leaders on the principle that we provide the most value to partner institutions by combining best practices with our deep knowledge and experience. Our mission today is to enhance institutional capacity by providing outstanding executive recruitment services, executive coaching, and transition support, in partnership with our parent organization, the American Academic Leadership Institute. For more information, visit www.academicsearch.org.