

# AASCU

## 2025 Snapshot

**AASCU advanced its mission and translated priorities into meaningful impact.**



In 2025, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) reaffirmed its commitment to advancing postsecondary value, strengthened member engagement, and supported the leaders and institutions shaping the nation's workforce. Through research, convenings, leadership development, and advocacy, AASCU worked alongside members and partners to deliver on the promise of accessible, high-quality public higher education.

The association announced its new strategic plan, [AASCU Next](#), which represents a bold vision for the future and focuses on championing the value and impact of regional public universities (RPUs). Student success remains at the heart of the new plan, and proactive strategies and tactics support each goal.

### BY THE NUMBERS

**500+**

More than 500 regional public colleges, universities, and systems make up the sector AASCU represents.

**70%**

70% of the nation's 7 million undergraduate students at public four-year institutions are enrolled by RPUs.

**66%**

66% of public, four-year bachelor's degrees are awarded by RPUs.

Source: Most recent AASCU analysis of College Scorecard and Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System data.



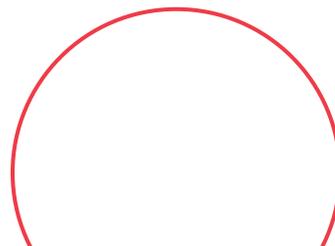


## STUDENT SUCCESS

- AASCU launched the [Student-Centered Course Scheduling](#) initiative to help RPUs remove one of the most persistent—and least visible—barriers to student success: the course schedule. Funded by a \$2.4 million grant from Ascendium Education Group, the project supports 20 RPUs, with plans to expand in 2026.
- Five AASCU members [received grants](#) from Strada Education Foundation to support their efforts to scale innovative guidance and career services. The institutions received up to \$300,000 each to design, implement, and evaluate innovative approaches aligned with the [Principles for Quality Education-to-Career Guidance](#).
- AASCU and the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program announced the fourth cohort of the [Transfer Student Success Intensive](#). Cohort 4 includes 10 teams composed of 10 four-year institutions and 13 community colleges, representing 10 states. These partnerships work collaboratively to create sustainable transfer reform strategies tailored to their institutional and student needs.
- Following the AASCU 2025 Annual Conference for Presidents and Chancellors in Nashville, several presidents and campus leaders attended the SSEI Impact and Sustainability Summit. Participants reflected on the progress made through SSEI and mapped out the next phase of support. Attendees exchanged strategies to sustain student success efforts, strengthen peer networks and partnerships, and set a shared agenda for meaningful campus-level practice moving forward.

## CIVIC & GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

- In 2025, AASCU hosted the first Advancing Campus [Pluralism Cohort](#) in partnership with Interfaith America, supporting 10 AASCU campuses from across the country to develop action plans to foster a culture of curiosity, connection, and constructive dialogue. Each institution received a \$25,000 grant to support their work.
- The [American Democracy Project Summit](#) brought together members to begin to imagine the next steps of our collective work, offering both inspiration and a renewed sense of community.
- AASCU's [Stewardship of Public Lands program](#) drew 20 faculty and staff members, representing 12 AASCU institutions, to Glacier National Park to further develop civic and environmental leadership skills to apply in teaching, research, and campus programming.
- AASCU President and CEO Charles L. Welch led a delegation of 13 AASCU member institutions to China for the 2025 [AASCU China Partnerships and Education Expo](#).



## POLICY & ADVOCACY

- 75 campus leaders and education advocates took part in AASCU on the Hill, making it the highest attended Hill Day in the event's history. More than 50 AASCU institutions across 28 states were represented.
- Advocacy efforts successfully advanced the interests of RPUs as Congress debated the One Big Beautiful Bill, set funding levels for FY26, and considered multiple regulatory proposals affecting international students, indirect cost rates for federal research grants, and student aid.
- Policy discussions protected RPUs, advocating against congressional and administrative proposals to establish a new risk-sharing policy for colleges and universities and to defund or significantly alter numerous institutional and federal student aid programs.

## LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

- Nearly 300 leaders participated in eight cohorts of AASCU's leadership development programs in 2025, representing leaders at every stage of their career journey.
- In 2025, 150 mentors, coaches, and advisors supported leaders across the AASCU membership, offering a wide range of perspectives and expertise to strengthen leadership across campuses. Mentorship is the cornerstone of AASCU's leadership development programs.
- The Millennium Leadership Initiative continues to stand out as one of the most influential leadership development programs for higher education leaders. One in five participants has gone on to serve as a president, and MLI alumni have collectively held 221 presidencies or chancellorships.

## COMMUNITIES & CONVENING

- AASCU hosted four signature events drawing nearly 1,000 participants:
  - AASCU on the Hill
  - American Democracy Project Summit
  - AASCU 2025 Summer Meeting for Academic and Student Affairs Leaders
  - AASCU 2025 Annual Conference for Presidents and Chancellors
- AASCU hosted two symposia for provosts and two for presidents, including an inaugural teacher education symposium focused on strengthening teacher preparation pathways.
- AASCU's Spouse/Partner Program continued to thrive in 2025 with programming tailored to the unique needs of presidential spouses and partners. New virtual programming was introduced to offer additional opportunities for community and connections.



## RESOURCES & EXPERTISE

- The Grants Resource Center's GrantSearch® delivered over 10,000 alerts, connecting institutions with federal and private foundation funding opportunities.
- AASCU Consulting supported 542 college and university leaders to elevate their capabilities, advance strategic goals, and address challenges and opportunities.
- AASCU's Telling Our Story podcast released five episodes, sharing the stories of RPUs making great strides toward serving students and their communities.
- Nearly 50 promising practices from AASCU members across 25 states demonstrate how RPUs are amplifying postsecondary value by fostering greater access and affordability, supporting student success, and improving outcomes for today's learners.
- In 2025, AASCU contributed to the research on RPUs through timely publications and resources to support institutional strategy, leadership, and student success:
  - *2025 Public Policy Agenda*
  - *Advancing Postsecondary Value*
  - *Course Scheduling Playbook*
  - *Leading for Democracy*
  - *Leveraging Alumni Voices to Drive Value*
  - *Making Value the Strategy*

[View All Publications](#) →



## THOUGHT LEADERSHIP



- AASCU President and CEO Charles L. Welch amplified the value of public higher education through his work as a contributor for Forbes.com, with four op-eds published in 2025.
- Welch received the 2025 Advocacy Award from the American Association of Blacks in Higher Education. This award honors individuals whose vision and dedication have significantly expanded educational opportunities for students and communities.
- Welch delivered the commencement address at Chadron State College (NE) in May 2025. He shared his experience as a first-generation college student and reminded graduates they've been "given an irrevocable gift of a college degree."

## AASCU PARTNERS

AASCU's partners help intensify the impact of RPUs by contributing to our mission, engaging with our members, and sharing their expertise. Without them, our work would not be possible.

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