



N. J. Association of State Colleges & Universities, Inc.
www.njascu.org



Public Policy Agenda
2009-2011

January 2010

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Letter from the Chair

Dear Colleagues:

I am pleased to share the New Jersey Association of State Colleges and Universities (ASCU) **Public Policy Agenda**. This agenda has been developed in consultation with ASCU members, and contains principles to guide the Association's policy advocacy agenda.

ASCU aspires to serve its member institutions and the state as a principal information resource about the condition and value of investment in New Jersey public higher education.

The public policy statement is meant to complement the goals and objectives adopted annually by the Association, and to provide a broad context within which the Association can fulfill its mission of policy analysis, advocacy and forum development to serve ASCU institutions and the State of New Jersey.

As with its member institutions, the Association is committed to transparency and accountability in all of its public education activities, in service to the citizens of New Jersey.

Public higher education remains a critical and vital part of New Jersey's future in a rapidly changing environment. The Association trusts that its public policy agenda provides appropriate guideposts to assist in achieving effective higher education policy to expand access, opportunity and affordability for all deserving citizens in the State of New Jersey.

John L. McGoldrick, Esq.
ASCU Chair

ASCU Mission and Role

Based in Trenton, ASCU is a nonprofit higher education association serving New Jersey's nine state colleges and universities. The Association is a nonpartisan entity created by the State Legislature [NJSA 18A:64:45 *et seq.*] in 1985 to advance and support public higher education in New Jersey.

ASCU's primary mission is to advocate higher education as a public good and the collective values of the state colleges/universities in serving the public interest and the State of New Jersey. In fulfilling this purpose, the Association advises the executive and legislative branches of state government, and others, on higher education policy, achieving its mission by:

- ◆ **articulating** how the state colleges/universities serve the public good through educational, social, and economic development;
- ◆ **providing** research and information services to enhance the policy and resource needs of the state colleges/universities;
- ◆ **enhancing**, through collaborative efforts, the ability of the state colleges/universities to achieve effective institutional performance, autonomous governance and public accountability; and
- ◆ **convening** forums of diverse constituencies to develop a common opinion about the value of public investment in higher education; and the contributions of the state colleges and universities.

The Association's vision is to serve as the principal information resource about college opportunity, policy affecting the value of New Jersey public higher education, and the contributions of the nine state colleges and universities.

The Association is governed by an eighteen-member board, consisting of a trustee and the president of each institution; the board meets four times annually. The presidents serve as *ex officio*, nonvoting members of the board; trustee members are appointed by and serve at the pleasure of their respective individual college or university boards. Board members work actively on Association standing and *ad hoc* committees. Expenses are defrayed through institutional membership dues, in accordance with state law and Association bylaws, and occasionally through private gifts and grants. The staff is headed by an executive director/CEO.

ASCU Staff

Darryl G. Greer, PhD, CEO
Michael W. Klein, Esq., Director of Government & Legal Affairs
Paul R. Shelly, Director of Communications & Marketing
Wendy A. Lang, Director of Programs & Policy Analysis
Patricia A. Stearman, Budget & Office Administrator
Charlene R. Pipher, Executive Assistant
Theresa M. Toth, Secretary

Introduction

Principles Guiding Public Higher Education

The state colleges and universities recognize higher education as a public good. They serve the State of New Jersey by empowering individuals with knowledge; building citizenship in a democracy; and strengthening economic development and contributing to individual and state prosperity. The following fundamental principles guide the state colleges'/universities' service to New Jersey:

- ◆ Equal opportunity for all qualified citizens to access higher education is essential.
- ◆ Financial predictability for all partners (taxpayers, parents and students, and others) in funding higher education is necessary to achieve broad opportunity.
- ◆ Diversity in mission and program offerings promote opportunity and educational excellence.
- ◆ Each college and university should be measured, in the long term, by distinct educational and public service results.
- ◆ Institutional assessment and accountability are desirable and are better accomplished through effective trustee governance and coordination, not centralized regulation.
- ◆ The colleges and universities can best achieve public accountability and public service excellence by appointment of autonomous, nonpartisan trustee governing boards.
- ◆ Cooperation with other educational and cultural institutions, business, labor and other organizations is essential for the colleges/universities to fulfill their missions.

Common Strengths of New Jersey State Colleges/Universities

The state colleges and universities are educationally distinctive, yet as a set of public institutions share common characteristics that serve the public good. They are:

- ◆ Conveniently located in regions accessible to New Jerseyans;
- ◆ Dedicated to high academic standards;
- ◆ Recognized as a “best buy” regarding quality, affordability and value;
- ◆ Committed to broad educational opportunity for all New Jerseyans; and
- ◆ Dedicated to regional and statewide public service.

Significant Challenges Facing New Jersey’s Public Higher Education

Access/Opportunity: New Jersey’s colleges and universities are receiving record numbers of applications as the state’s high schools hold steady in producing about 100,000 graduates annually through 2018. Most are college bound. The nine state colleges and universities now receive about 55,000 applications for about 11,000 full-time freshmen seats. This means that many applicants must be

turned away. Unfortunately, New Jersey ranks 47th nationally in public 4-year undergraduate seats per 1,000 residents, and remains the nation's #1 net exporter of college-bound high school graduates.

Predictable Financial Support: State support for public higher education has been inconsistent over the past twenty years and, in recent years, basic funding for state colleges and universities has dropped dramatically. The cost of a college education is being disproportionately borne by students and families. While institutions are actively raising private monies to enhance quality while not sacrificing access and affordability, such funds will never replace basic state aid.

Capacity: To accommodate this increased demand with diminished state support, the state colleges and universities are forced to finance their own construction projects. Already among the most debt-leveraged in the country, they are doing so prudently. This debt for new facilities and programmatic capacity creates a financial burden for students and families and stresses New Jersey's economic competitiveness. ASCU will continue to advocate state investment in academic facilities.

Access & Opportunity

Access, Success and Excellence

The state colleges and universities are committed to broadening educational opportunity for all New Jersey citizens. ASCU will endorse legislative initiatives to support student aid, scholarship, pre-college programs, equal opportunity fund programs, and barrier-free facilities that expand and enhance educational opportunity.

The state colleges and universities are committed to preparing the state's future workforce and strengthening our citizens' capacity to adapt to rapidly changing social and economic conditions. ASCU will support programs and partnerships that marry educational and practical preparation for the workplace.

Finally, the colleges remain committed to the delivery of high-quality education. ASCU will support policy that keeps New Jersey's best and brightest students in-state and promotes academic achievement, retention and graduation of all students.

Diversity

The state colleges/universities will continue to meet the challenge of expanding college opportunity to an increasingly diverse student population. ASCU will analyze and report regularly on trends in this regard.

Affordability

A cornerstone of access to equal educational opportunity is affordability. The state colleges and universities are committed to campus- and state-level initiatives that will minimize costs and fee increases for all students, recognizing that cost predictability is essential for family budgets. ASCU will continue to monitor the relationship between state support and students' costs, and will provide comparative data on state college/university costs nationally.

Instructional Services and Student Life

Academic Programs

The state colleges and universities collectively offer 300 academic and pre-professional degree programs, with about 500 concentrations. They offer high-quality programs in response to the needs of the state, especially in fields of critical importance such as public and allied health, teaching, the environment, and civic affairs.

Accordingly, ASCU will advocate state-level financing strategies that enhance the colleges' educational quality and public service roles, as well as their responsiveness to New Jersey's strategic economic development and public service needs.

Faculty Professional Development

Faculties, as well as students, are at the heart of learning at the state colleges and universities. Through ASCU, the institutions will work with the executive and legislative branches of state government to help ensure that faculty members are provided with the professional salary recognition and development opportunities that allow them to meet the emerging educational needs of their students.

Affirmative Action: Faculty and Staff

The state colleges and universities are committed to supporting policy initiatives that will bring talented minorities and other historically under-represented groups into all academic and administrative levels at each institution. ASCU will assist in these efforts.

Facilities and Equipment

The climate for instruction is often set by the quality of educational facilities and equipment. To remain competitive, New Jersey must have a plan and commitment to invest once again in its higher education infrastructure. The state colleges, through ASCU, will continue to advocate policy for facilities and equipment that contributes to quality educational services.

Student Life

New Jersey's state colleges and universities will continue to provide students with healthy cultural, social, recreational and physical environments that allow them to mature and to appreciate diverse social perspectives and human conditions. Working with trustees, student leaders and others, ASCU will support public policy initiatives that enhance the quality of student life, and that safeguard the health, security and privacy rights of students.

Transfer

The state colleges and universities support the educational aspirations of students who begin their college careers at other institutions, particularly New Jersey's county colleges. ASCU works with state officials and campus officers to achieve statewide transfer agreements between the county colleges and New Jersey's senior public institutions.

Veterans/Servicemembers

Efforts to make college education more accessible to military service members and veterans and accommodate their unique needs and situations deserve institutional and government support. ASCU will serve as a facilitator for cross-institutional efforts.

Shared Responsibility for Predictable College Finance

Funding Principles and Responsibilities

Adequate funding of public colleges and universities is a responsibility shared among institutions, government, students and families, and donors. ASCU will continue to advocate for a sound funding and budgeting rationale for the state colleges/universities, as well as predictable funding strategies for all funding partners. Certain principles guide the Association's advocacy of funding the institutions:

- ◆ Funding policies should preserve institutional autonomy, should support diverse institutional missions, and should recognize enrollment, retention and graduation goals appropriate to an institution's mission and that are responsive to state needs.
- ◆ Funding policies should be designed to address state and community needs, promote access, affordability, economic development, and enhance program quality.
- ◆ Funding policies should provide predictability and stability in funding, and address state-mandated costs including negotiated salary increases and benefits.
- ◆ Funding policies should encourage public-private partnerships and private giving.
- ◆ Funding policies should be comprehensive in addressing operating costs, capital construction, repair and replacement, and support for physical plant and technology infrastructure. A capital budget should include annual support of at least 2% of plant value.
- ◆ As a goal, two-thirds of educational operating costs should be supported by the state, and one-third by the students, through a multi-year budgeting plan.
- ◆ New Jersey should maintain a leadership role in providing need-based student financial aid and investment in merit aid programs to provide opportunity, and to help stem the outmigration of talented students.
- ◆ Tuition and fee policy should continue to be governed by boards of trustees.
- ◆ Institutions should be given significant flexibility to manage finances so that the most can be made of limited taxpayer and student dollars. Current state regulation that impedes flexibility and hampers efficiency should be revised or rescinded.
- ◆ New Jersey should maximize its opportunities for financial support from the federal government for education, research and public service activities at public colleges and universities and financial support for their students. ASCU should support these efforts.

Affordability

The public is very concerned about college costs. Educational costs are now split about 45% state, 55% students and families—down from about 70% (state) and 30% (families) twenty years ago. Adjusted for inflation, institutions receive the same state funding as in FY 1995. ASCU will advocate funding policy that reverses the shift in the cost burden and that helps families pay for college.

Capacity Building

Scientific polls—commissioned by the Association—indicate that New Jerseyans are deeply concerned about two issues: getting into, and paying for, college.

New Jersey is on a collision course on the following issues:

- ◆ Diminishing college opportunity because of a severe enrollment capacity crisis;
- ◆ Continuing stress on college affordability; and
- ◆ Stagnating capacity to compete with other states regarding ability to meet critical workforce, economic development, and research needs.

New Jersey is facing unprecedented growth in demand for higher education and currently has inadequate capacity to meet that demand. New Jersey is 47th in the nation in four-year public college/university seats per capita. The state would have to add 70,000 new undergraduate spaces to reach the national mean. From about 85,000 high school graduates in the 1990's, it is predicted that throughout the decade of 2008 to 2018, the number will hover around 100,000 graduates per year. This represents one of the largest increases in college-bound high school graduates, nationally. New Jersey is by far the nation's leading net-exporter of high school graduates (because so many attend college out-of-state and so few from other states attend here).

Building capacity to meet these challenges requires a diverse set of investments to achieve enrollment, facilities, and academic and public service objectives determined by institutional mission.

Based on findings from ASCU's NJ College Promise Advisory Council, the Association will advocate policy to:

- ◆ Send more New Jerseyans to New Jersey colleges, reduce time to graduation for some students in line with institutional mission, and make college more affordable;
- ◆ Increase overall institutional academic, administrative, and campus operations productivity using savings not only to improve services but to slow down the rate of increases in tuition;
- ◆ Strengthen public trust by demonstrating effective governance; and
- ◆ Use New Jersey College Promise's earned recognition to build a constituency and elevate the state colleges and universities to a higher priority on the state's public policy agenda.

Economic and Workforce Development/Partnerships

Economic Development

Given their multi-faceted role in economic development, New Jersey's state colleges and universities have an estimated impact—conservatively—of \$3 billion annually on the state's economy. With about 100,000 students, nearly 10,000 employees, and an aggregate operating budget of about \$1.4 billion, these nine institutions directly and indirectly buy products and services that help provide income for many New Jersey businesses and residents beyond campus boundaries.

ASCU supports policy, such as institutes and enterprise zones, which aids state colleges and universities in serving as catalysts for regional and state economic development.

Partnerships

ASCU seeks policy that will support meeting innovation, education and economic development goals through new public-private partnerships.

ASCU will support cooperative education initiatives and special programmatic thrusts to help meet professional and workforce needs in high-demand fields; support the colleges and universities in consulting with business, local government, and community service agencies to stimulate local and regional growth and development.

Finally, ASCU will assist its members in working with the state and federal governments to achieve national security goals and goals related to health, veterans educational services, and other public service needs.

Public Accountability/Cooperation

Public Accountability

The state colleges and universities, held in public trust, are accountable to New Jersey in multiple ways, including:

- ◆ Governance by lay trustees, who are appointed representatives of the state;
- ◆ Open public meetings and open public records;
- ◆ Statutory responsibility to release regularly many types of financial and administrative information to the public;
- ◆ Reporting responsibilities to municipal, county, state and federal authorities;
- ◆ Periodic audits and reviews by the state and federal government;
- ◆ Visitation and reviews by various national and specialized accrediting bodies;
- ◆ Annual audits by independent, professional accounting firms; and
- ◆ Voluntary adherence to the principles and best practices resulting from federal financial accountability (Sarbanes-Oxley) law.

Trusteeship is the key to public accountability. To the extent that institutions demonstrate effective governance free of partisanship, they will earn the public trust. ASCU will continue to assist the institutions by reporting on emerging public accountability concerns, by advising and conducting forums for trustees on effective governance, and by reporting regularly to the citizens of New Jersey about how the colleges are responding to the investment of trust placed in the institutions. ASCU will also continue to advocate timely appointment of nonpartisan trustees, as recommended by the institutions, in cooperation with the governor.

Cooperation

The nine state colleges and universities, although diverse and separately governed, are committed to mutual interests, which helps to ensure effective use of resources and greater accountability. The primary agencies through which such cooperation occurs at a policy level are higher education sector offices, the Commission on Higher Education (CHE), and the New Jersey Presidents' Council (PC). ASCU will continue to advocate the needs of the state colleges and universities in conjunction and cooperation with these and other agencies.

Furthermore, the state colleges are committed to cooperating closely with other institutions, both public and private, within the state. Other important opportunities for state college cooperation include:

- ◆ The county colleges on student transfer and course articulation;
- ◆ The senior public and private research universities on graduate and professional education, and research;
- ◆ The state's elementary and secondary school districts and educational associations on pre-K-12 education, urban and teacher education, and special needs areas, such as math and science; and
- ◆ The private sector on student capacity and affordability goals, as well as an economic development and public service goals.

ASCU will advocate policy to continue strengthening cooperative efforts on these fronts.

Academic Governance

ASCU will continue to support public policy that asserts trustee boards' primary responsibility for college governance. Essential to shared governance is the role of the faculty in setting academic standards and policy. Accordingly, the state colleges recognize the faculty senates as the legitimate partners in campus governance.

Collective Bargaining

The state colleges and universities recognize the right of the faculty and staff to bargain collectively on matters relating to terms and conditions of employment, as prescribed by law. ASCU will continue to advocate, in policy and practice, full funding of negotiated salary obligations. ASCU will oppose any expansion in the scope of negotiations that would affect institutional, academic and governance matters.

ASCU is opposed to incorporating, into the language guiding the state's annual budget, requirements that supersede permanent law and affect personnel decisions and collective bargaining.

ASCU supports a more authoritative role for state colleges and universities in collective bargaining.

Facts At A Glance

New Jersey's state colleges and universities are the key to educational opportunity for New Jerseyans. Together, they award more baccalaureate degrees annually than any other sector of higher education in the state; about 94% of their students are New Jersey residents.

Student Population:

◆ Total, Fall 2008	97,828
◆ Total undergraduate students, Fall 2008	84,120
Full-time:	56,615 (67%)
Part-time:	27,505 (33%)
◆ Students residing on campus , Fall 2008	19,179
◆ Total graduate and professional students, Fall 2008	13,708
◆ Total undergraduate students (full/part-time) by race/ethnicity/origin , Fall 2008:	
White (Caucasian).....	49,559 (60%)
Hispanic	11,976 (14%)
Black (African-American)	10,567 (13%)
Asian	4,147 (5%)
Native American	317 (.4%)
Race Unspecified	5,812 (7%)
Foreign	1,737 (2%)
◆ Total undergraduate student population by gender , Fall 2008:	
Women.....	57%
Men.....	43%

Academic Awards

◆ Total degrees awarded AY 2007-2008:	
Bachelor's (45% of state's total).....	15,615
Master's	3,232
Associate's	492
Doctoral	56

Alumni

◆ Estimated state college alumni, Fall 2008	507,223
<i>(Figure double-counts individuals with degrees from more than one state college/university)</i>	
◆ Estimated alumni known to reside in New Jersey	307,291

Faculty & Staff

◆ Total full-time faculty at eight traditional institutions	2,714
◆ Number of employees (combined full/part-time, excluding adjuncts)	9,763

Finances

◆ FY 2008 estimated aggregate general operations budgets	\$1,340,975,000
<i>(Excludes state-paid employee benefits)</i>	
◆ FY 2008 Aggregate direct state adjusted appropriations	\$272,885,000
<i>(Excludes state-paid employee benefits)</i>	



**New Jersey
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This *Public Policy Agenda*
was endorsed by the ASCU Board of Directors, January 2010.

*The New Jersey Association of State Colleges & Universities (ASCU)
is a nonprofit, nonpartisan higher educational association, chartered by law in 1985
to advance and support the collective interests of New Jersey's nine state colleges/universities.*