



## **Priorities Higher Education Act (HEA) Reauthorization for 2015-16**

### **Access, Affordability, and Completion**

- Reduce regulatory requirements for TRIO programs regarding tracking of students beyond graduation that burden already scarce resources for TRIO programs.
  - TRiO programs are a valuable resource for low income/ first generation students in high school, middle school, and on college/university campuses. They provide access to college campuses, as well as academic and student support services for low income students. Studies show that students retain, persist, and graduate at higher numbers with TRiO assistance, then without it.
- Expand Pell grants to year around assistance (summers) to help students finish in four years.
  - Need-based financial aid programs, such as Pell grants are a valuable investment in America's future. They provide financial resources for low income students that give them access to higher education, allows them to complete their education, and enter the workforce, which improves economic conditions.

### **Increase Support for Minority Serving Institutions**

- Expand resources for all minority-serving institutions (MSI) under Title III
  - The impact of MSI programs on the education pipeline for underserved students cannot be overstated. Minority students make up about 30% of all baccalaureate degrees awarded annually; African American (11.5%), Hispanic (9%), Asian American (6.8%) and American Indians/Alaskan Natives (0.7%) (National Center for Education Statistics, retrieved August 2013).
  - The educational attainment rate for Native American students is widening as bachelor's degrees conferred by other ethnicities has increased for every minority group, with Hispanics accelerating the highest from 5.6% in 1998 to 9% in 2010. Other ethnicities have also had positive percent changes, such as African Americans (2.8%) and Asian Americans (3.1%), while Native Americans remained flat for the past ten year period at 0.7%. Recent U.S. population and demographic trends confirm that underrepresented students, particularly undergraduate students are critical to fulfill 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce needs. More must be done to support all minorities in education achievement.
  - Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCUs) and Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) have programs for capital financing, Master's degree program development, STEM articulation and program development, post Baccalaureate program development, competitive grants, and formula grants, as well as traditional Title III strengthening institutions grants. Investments in minority education for these groups have resulted in increased enrollment and graduation rates for Hispanic and African American students.
  - Expand programs and resources for all minority serving institutions, so that funds are available for urgent needs in areas such as capital financing, Master's degree development, and STEM articulation and programs for Native American Serving, Non-Tribal Institutions that is on par with other minority serving institutions.
- Expand competitive grant competition for Minority Science and Engineering program to include all MSIs, not only selected groups.
- Develop competitive STEM undergraduate programs to meet urgent 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce needs.

### **Retain American Indian/Alaskan Native Education (AI/AN) Initiative**

- Executive Order 13592 established the White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaskan Native (AI/AN) Education, which has established goals Fort Lewis College to fill 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce needs by awarding 2,539 additional baccalaureate degrees or 46.2 per year by 2020.

- To reach this goal an Advisory Council at the U.S. Department of Education should be established for Native American- Serving, Non-Tribal Institutions, to collaborate and work with the Initiative on goals for these institutions in promoting American Indian/Alaskan Native education, as 90% of AI/AN postsecondary students attend institutions of higher education that are not tribally-controlled.
- Encourage Tribal and State partnerships for AI/AN education that includes Native American Serving, Non-Tribal Colleges to work together on issues of education and workforce needs.
- Improve data collection measures for AI/AN students.
  - Revisions to the standards of classification for federal data regarding race and ethnicity are inadequate. Current data collection through The National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) underreports student ethnicity for AI/AN students. This underreporting of an already small sample size further complicates the ability to appropriately account for all AI/AN students within higher education and education in general. For example, at the University of Minnesota, Morris the Fall 2014 enrollment of 317 degree-seeking undergraduates includes 123 students who identified their race/ethnicity as AI/AN only (reported in IPEDS as ‘American Indian’), plus 194 students who identified their race and ethnicity as AI/AN, as well as one or more other races ‘two or more races’ per IPEDS. This also inhibits tribal communities and NASIs from accessing discretionary dollars such as Title III and Title VII under the U.S. Department of Education to better serve AI/AN students in education.
- Expand federal policy to formally recognize Native American Serving Institutions as MSIs across all federal departments.
  - Executive Order 13592 includes language that focuses on expanding educational opportunities and outcomes for AI/AN students, it excludes language that explicitly recognizes Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institutions, which leaves these institutions without a federal advocacy structure to formalize their role as MSIs. The discrepancy between Executive Order 13592 and other federal policy initiatives leads to confusion from federal funding agencies, such as the NSF, NIH, and the Department of Education, which are left unsure or unaware of NASIs’ eligibility for federal discretionary funding and thus tend to exclude them from consideration by default.
- Institutional partnerships and programs need increased resources and language throughout all of the federal agencies that are inclusive of Native American Serving Institutions. For example, the U.S. Department of Education’s Indian Education Professional Development program, which assists Native educators to teach in higher education and secondary schools that serve reservations and surrounding communities with high Native populations, would benefit from extended language to include the allocation of preference priority points for collaborations among Tribal Colleges and Native American Serving Institutions. Broadening the language in the revised regulations to include NASIs, as opposed to the ambiguous and undefined term “Indian Institutions of higher education,” will allow these institutions to better serve the majority of AI/AN students and address the high-quality teaching needs in schools with high AI/AN student populations on and off reservations.

### **Other Emerging Issues in Higher Education**

- Campus Safety and Sexual Assault –
  - College & Universities need clear guidance and sufficient time for implementation of guidelines to adequately measure success in safety measures.
  - Immunity from lawsuits, so that Colleges & Universities are not penalized by either party, if the decision is not in their favor.
- Accreditation that is based at the regional level best serves higher education in the United States. As a matter of fact, it is a model for emulation by foreign countries that see a nationalized program of accreditation as inefficient and bureaucratic.

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