Welcome to the 2021 Shared Solutions Dialogues

Indicators of Higher Education Equity in the United States: 2021 Historical Trend Report

"Post-Pandemic Reconstruction for a Diverse and Non-Zero-Sum Game U.S. Higher Education System: A New Equity Paradigm?"

Part 1: Individual Reflection & General Questions

(5-7 Minutes)

As we begin the Shared Dialogues, take a few minutes to write down your reflections and views on some of the specific proposals we will be discussing. Click Here to view the specific proposals: https://fs12.formsite.com/DZNAsc/unbezm2a1x/index.html.

After the session, we will compile the individual online responses and distribute them to you. No individuals will be identified. Thank you for completing the Shared Solutions Survey.

General Theme Questions for 2021 Included on the Survey — What Policy and Practice Changes at the Federal, State, and Institution Level are Needed to Address the following issues:

1. *Inequity of Institutional Resources*. Most low-income and non-traditional students are in less-resourced institutions? What are the top three policies and practices that need to be changed to have more equalization of institutional resources?

2. *Growing Unmet Financial Need and Debt*. The debt burden is growing and falls most heavily on nontraditional students, low-income students, and students of color. What are the top three policies and practices that need to be changed to address unmet needs and student debt burden?

3. *Complexity and Intersectionality of Supports Needed for Successful Completion*. What policies and wider supports are needed to address the complex needs of low-income, first-generation, and nontraditional students to help them complete their programs and meet their career goals?

Part 2. Small-Group Shared Dialogue Session Instructions (20 Minutes)

Before you begin to discuss, appoint a Note Taker who will Submit the Notes to Pell. *As you start your discussion, the facilitator will help you obtain a volunteer to keep good notes on the session to submit back to Pell. The large number of folks online will not permit us to have more than three breakout groups reporting to the whole group, but we would like to know your group's thoughts and ideas. So, we ask that you keep some notes and email them to Marisha Addison: marisha.addison@pellinstitute.org*

We will compile the notes and share them with the group as a follow-up. Thanks for your help.

Discuss only 1 issue / set of policies. Given the limited time, your small breakout group should focus on only one set of policies (Issue 1, Issue 2, or Issue 3). Your facilitator will tell you which set we would like you to focus on. We provide brief background descriptions of each of the proposals for consideration and some discussion questions for each set of proposals organized around the three themes. These are meant to be discussion prompts, and you may not be able to address all the questions in the allotted time. *We then suggest specific discussion questions about each group. Your Facilitator will know which of the three sets of proposals you should focus on in your group discussion.*

ISSUE 1: ADDRESSING INSTITUTIONAL EQUITY OF RESOURCES

In light of the presented Indicators 2021 data, scholars and student narrative(s), and your reflections, consider the policy proposal below and respond to the subsequent questions.

Proposal: Increased Support for Minority Serving Institutions

Background Description: Support for Minority Serving Institutions. The proposed American Families Act would: Provide two years of subsidized tuition and expand programs in high-demand fields at HBCUs, TCUs, and MSIs. Research has found that HBCUs, TCUs, and MSIs are vital to helping underrepresented students move to the top of the income ladder. For example, while HBCUs are only three percent of four-year universities, their graduates make up approximately 80 percent of Black judges, half of Black lawyers and doctors, and 25 percent of Black undergraduates earning STEM degrees. Yet, these institutions have significantly fewer resources than other top colleges and universities, undermining their ability to grow and support more students. The American Families Act is calling on Congress to make a historic investment in HBCU, TCU, and MSI affordability. Specifically, the Act calls for a new $39 billion program that provides two years of subsidized tuition for students from families earning less than $125,000 enrolled in a four-year HBCU, TCU, or MSI. The President is also calling for $5 billion to expand existing institutional aid grants to HBCUs, TCUs, and MSIs, which these institutions can use to strengthen their academic, administrative, and fiscal capabilities, including by creating or expanding educational programs in high-demand fields (e.g., STEM, computer sciences, nursing, and allied health), with an additional $2 billion directed towards building a pipeline of skilled health care workers with graduate degrees. These investments, combined with the $45 billion proposed in the American Jobs Plan targeted to these institutions, will enable America's HBCUs, TCUs, and MSIs to tackle longstanding inequities in postsecondary education and make the U.S. more competitive on the global stage (American Families Plan Fact Sheet).

Discussion Questions

- Is this proposal a sound approach to the problem?
- Could sufficient resources be identified to implement such a proposal? What would be the source of those funds—federal, state, institutional?
- What obstacles might block the implementation of the policy? Does the answer vary depending on the type of institution (e.g., public vs. private, two-year vs. four-year)?
- Are there possible unintended consequences of implementing this policy?

- What is the group's decision regarding the proposal?

  ___Implement ___ Disregard ___ Refine

- If the group would refine the proposal, in what way would it do so?

ISSUE 2: addressing growing unmet financial need and student debt burden

In light of the presented Indicators 2021 data, scholars and student narrative(s), and your reflections, consider the policy proposal below and respond to the subsequent questions.

Proposal: College for All Act Eliminate Undergraduate Tuition at 4-year Public Colleges and Universities. **Addressing Student Debt and College Cost Supports**

The College for All Act, introduced by Senator Sanders and Representative Jayapal has widespread support in the higher education community. **This legislation would provide $47 billion per year to states to eliminate undergraduate tuition and fees at public colleges and universities. Today, total tuition at public colleges and universities amounts to about $70 billion per year. Under the College for All Act, the federal government would cover 67% of this cost, while the states would be responsible for the remaining 33% of the cost.** To qualify for federal funding, states must meet a number of requirements designed to protect students, ensure quality, and reduce ballooning costs. States will need to maintain spending on their higher education systems, academic instruction, and need-based financial aid. In addition, colleges and universities must reduce their reliance on low-paid adjunct faculty. States would be able to use the funding to increase academic opportunities for students, hire new faculty, and provide professional development opportunities for professors. No funding under this program may be used to fund administrator salaries, merit-based financial aid, or the construction of non-academic buildings like stadiums and student centers.

Canceling Student Debt. A hearing in April 2021 urged President Biden to cancel $50,000 in student debt (April 12, 2021). **Addressing Existing Student Debt Through Presidential Actions** The student debt crisis has ballooned into a 1.7 trillion-dollar crisis, with far-reaching consequences, particularly for low-income, first-generation students and students of color and their families. The student debt crisis is not an isolated problem and intensifies the educational, racial, and intergenerational wealth inequity in the United States Both the House and Senate have bills in the 117 congress that are now in committees concerning student debt. The Senate resolution calls on the President to take executive action to cancel up to $50,000 in federal student loan debt for borrowers. Further, it encourages the President to (1) ensure that borrowers have no tax liability from the debt cancellation, (2) ensure that the debt cancellation helps close racial wealth gaps, and (3) pause student loan payments and interest accumulation on federal student loans for the duration of the COVID-19 (i.e., coronavirus disease 2019).

Work-Study Reforms. Today, the federal work-study program receives less than $1 billion per year and serves nearly 700,000 students. This legislation would expand the number of students and colleges that can offer part-time employment and participate in the federal work-study program and focus funding on schools that enroll high numbers of low-income students (College for All Act).

Fully Paid for by Imposing a Robin Hood Tax on Wall Street. This legislation is offset by imposing a Wall Street speculation fee on investment houses, hedge funds, and other speculators of 0.5% on stock trades (50 cents for every $100 worth of stock), a 0.1% fee on bonds, a 0.005% fee on derivatives. It has been estimated that this provision could raise hundreds of billions a year, which could be used to make tuition free at public colleges and universities in this country. It could also be used to create millions of jobs and rebuild the middle class of this country.

Doubling the Pell Grant and Increasing its Purchasing Power. The federal government would increase the current maximum Pell Grant award. In addition, recipients will be able to use their awards to cover living and non-tuition expenses. For-profit institutions would be excluded from the funding increase (College for All Act of 2021).

Provide up to approximately $1,400 in additional assistance to low-income students by increasing the Pell Grant award (American Families Plan, 2021).

Discussion Questions

- Are these proposals a sound approach to the problem?
- Could sufficient resources be identified to implement such a proposal (s)? What would be the source of those funds—federal, state, institutional?
- What obstacles might block the implementation of the policy? Does the answer vary depending on the type of institution (e.g., public vs. private, two-year vs. four-year)?
- Are there possible unintended consequences of implementing this policy?
- What are the social and economic implications if the federal government would cancel student debt? How much should the federal government cancel?
- What cost control mechanism would you propose to keep runaway college costs low?
- Should these bills include or exclude for-profit institutions?
- Should there be any requirements to receiving federal funding within a federal-state partnership?
- What is the group’s decision regarding the proposal? ___Implement ___ Disregard ___ Refine

- If the group would refine the proposal, in what way would it do so?

ISSUE 3: Addressing The Complexity And Intersectionality Of Needs For Successful Completion Among Nontraditional Students

In light of the presented Indicators 2021 data, scholars and student narrative(s), and your reflections, consider the policy proposal below and respond to the subsequent questions.

Proposal: American Families Plan, Services to Increase Retention and Completion

Wrap-Around Services to Increase college retention and completion rates. Education beyond high school can lead to higher pay, financial stability, social mobility, and better health outcomes. It also has public benefits such as a reduction in crime rates and higher civic engagement. However, far too many students enter college but do not graduate. Research shows that only approximately three out of five students finish any degree or certificate program within six years. **To complete, students need additional support. The President is proposing a bold $62 billion grant program to invest in completion and retention activities at colleges and universities that serve high numbers of low-income students, particularly community colleges. States, territories, and Tribes will receive grants to provide funding to colleges that adopt innovative, proven solutions for student success, including wrap-around services ranging from childcare and mental health services to faculty and peer mentoring; emergency basic needs grants; practices that recruit and retain diverse faculty; transfer agreements between colleges; and evidence-based remediation programs (White House Fact sheet for AFP).**

Examples of Such Services. To help its students stay on track, Norfolk State offers campus childcare with the backing of federal grants. The demand for such services has grown as the population of college students includes more working parents and older adults. The administration's plan to invest $62 billion to fund child care, emergency aid grants, mental health, and other wrap-around services is a recognition of the circumstances that can derail students from graduating. Although the details of the proposed grant program are being hashed out, the White House said the money would go to colleges that serve high numbers of students from low-income households. Trinity Washington University in D.C., where 70 percent of full-time undergraduates come from families earning less than $50,000, could benefit from the investment and others on the table. Because the majority of Trinity's 1,500 undergrads are Black or Hispanic, the school is also considered a minority-serving institution. The Roman Catholic women's college provides more than $13 million in scholarships and grants, but the support is not enough to meet the need, said Trinity President Patricia McGuire. "Many of our students have to work long hours to pay for college expenses, and some have to stop out because of finances," McGuire said. "A college degree is essential to move ahead in this region, and President Biden's plan will ensure that low-income students have a real chance to move forward, which, in turn, will promote racial and social equity." (How Biden's American Families Plan may expand access to colleges - The Washington Post

Expand TRIO Services to Provide Nontraditional Students Complex Work-School Balance. Despite the mounting evidence from rigorous evaluation studies that TRIO Works and can increase access and completion rates by as much as 40 to 50 percent, TRIO reaches less than 2 percent of eligible students with intensive programs. The College for All Act will support an annual $10 billion federal investment to cover Student Support programs (such as SSS) at these institutions (College for All Act of 2021).

Expand TRIO Teacher Prep to address teacher shortages, improve teacher preparation, and strengthen pipelines for teachers of color. President Biden calls on Congress to double scholarships for future teachers from $4,000 to $8,000 per year while earning their degree, strengthening the program, and expanding it to early childhood educators. The President's plan also invests $2.8billion in Grow Your Own programs and year-long, paid teacher residency programs, which have a greater impact on student outcomes, teacher retention and are more likely to enroll teacher candidates of color. His plan targets $400 million for teacher preparation at HBCUs, TCUs, and MSIs and $900 million to develop special education teachers (American Families Plan, 2021).

Completion Micro-Grants. Institutions provide at-risk students (students with relatively small balances that may inhibit them from enrolling in classes or otherwise persisting in their education) with small grants to relieve these debts. The micro-grants cover one-time emergency expenses that may prevent students from continuing in college. Georgia State University piloted the concept of micro-grants which are usually around $1,000, and since then, many other colleges have implemented these programs.

Discussion Questions

- Are these proposals a sound approach to the problem?
- Could sufficient resources be identified to implement such a proposal (s)? What would be the source of those funds—federal, state, institutional?
- What obstacles might block the implementation of the policy? Does the answer vary depending on the type of institution (e.g., public vs. private, two-year vs. four-year)?

- Are there possible unintended consequences of implementing this policy?

- How to incorporate TRIO SSS services into the wrap-around services and Teacher Prep programs?

- How should institutions recruit students to join teacher prep programs (enrollment management strategy)?

- How should one decide which students qualify for services?

- What is the group's decision regarding the proposal?

  ___Implement ___ Disregard ___ Refine

- If the group would refine the proposal, in what way would it do so?

- Should there be any requirements to receiving federal funding within a federal-state partnership?
- How should a Federal and State partnership transfer a matriculation agreement?

To read a full version of *Indicators of Higher Education Equity in the United States—2021 Trend Report*,
please visit http://pellinstitute.org/indicators/.