

Governance

HIGHER EDUCATION NEWS FOR UNIVERSITY GOVERNORS AND TRUSTEES

SPRING 2016

Policy Changes Around the Country

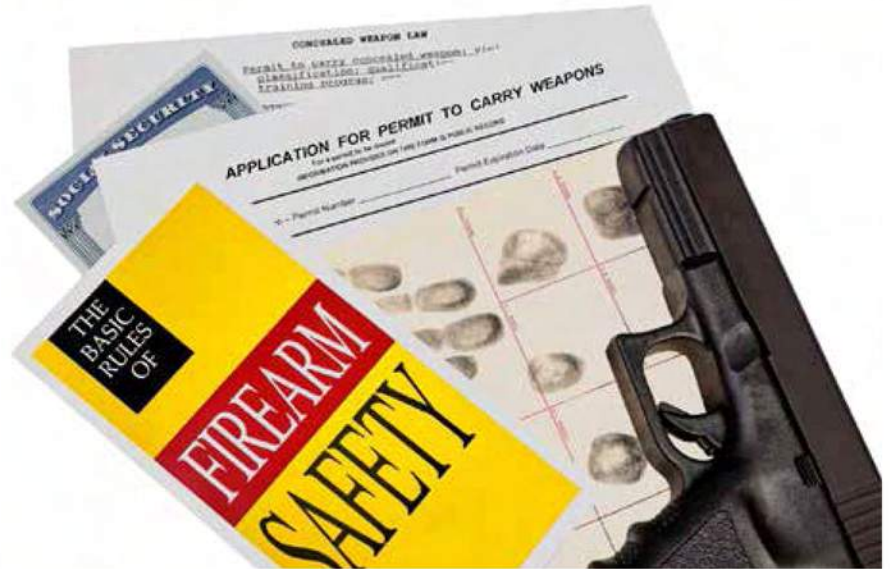
From “free college” to loan forgiveness, higher education policy has become part of the presidential campaign. While candidates are speaking rhetorically, legislatures around the country are actually formulating responses to the increasing cost of college.

Last year, the “Tennessee Promise” drew thousands of recent high school graduates into tuition-free community colleges. Oregon and Minnesota also recently created new financial aid programs to provide access to community colleges for recent high school graduates. Montana too created a new financial aid program, directed specifically at science, technology, engineering, and mathematics majors.

In addition, policymakers are recognizing the potential for online education to keep costs down and reach more students. Nearly three-quarters of states are now members of the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA), which allows students more flexibility to take online courses from out-of-state providers.

A big issue facing many legislatures is how to treat undocumented students. While the majority of states do not explicitly allow students without documentation to attend public colleges, regardless of how long they have lived in the country, many states do allow them to do so. As of last year, undocumented students in 18 states can pay in-state tuition rates at state schools, and six of those states also allowed these students to receive financial aid.

It remains to be seen how much these policies will affect access to higher education as well as students’ and citizens’ expenses. Regardless, cost-cutting and tuition rates will remain high priorities in the next year.



Campus Gun Policies Vary Widely

Jenna A. Robinson

Laws governing firearms on campus have been among the most controversial changes to universities’ policies this year.

Prompted by shootings at college campuses across the country, lawmakers have started taking a closer look at policies regulating weapons on campus, but states’ reactions vary according to local attitudes towards guns and lawmakers’ party affiliations.

In some states, shooting incidents or fear of shooting incidents have prompted lawmakers to strengthen existing gun regulations. In 2013, for example, five states introduced legislation to prohibit concealed carry weapons on campus. (None of the bills passed.)

In the same year—moving in the opposite direction—19 states introduced legislation to allow concealed carry on public college campuses. Two of the bills passed. In 2014, legislators in another 14 states proposed legislation to allow concealed carry on campus, but these bills failed to pass. In 2015, Texas became the eighth state to allow concealed carry weapons on college campuses. (See page 2 sidebar for current state laws on campus carry.)

continued on page 2

Opponents of concealed carry on campus claim that such laws will lead to an escalation of violent crime and suicides by students. They also fear that guns on campus will detract from the learning environment and possibly stifle campus discussion and unpopular ideas. Others point out that legal gun owners on campus will be difficult to distinguish from active shooters and that campus defense should be left to the police.

Opponents of concealed carry on campus also credit existing "gun-free" policies with making colleges and universities relatively safe. From 2012-2014, for example, just 24 cases of murder or non-negligent manslaughter occurred on public university campuses nationwide.

Proponents of concealed carry disagree. They warn that 'gun-free' campus policies do not guarantee safety. The June 1 shooting at UCLA occurred despite a firearms ban on California campuses. Concealed carry proponents also claim that some gun owners likely carry on campus despite laws prohibiting the practice (suggesting that concealed weapons may be having a positive effect). They also point out that concealed handgun license holders are five times less likely than non-license holders to commit violent crimes. Additionally, the eleven U.S. colleges/universities that currently allow concealed carry on campus have not seen any resulting incidents of gun violence, gun accidents, or gun thefts.

In Colorado, for example, concealed carry has been legal since 2012 when the Colorado Supreme Court ruled that the University of Colorado's longstanding policy banning guns from campus violated the state's concealed carry law. In the three years following that decision for which data are available (2012-2014), there were no murders on public university campuses in the state.

Research by the Campaign to Keep Guns Off Campus, established in 2008 and joined by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, found no relationship between campus carry laws and rates of violent crime on campus. ■



Campus Concealed Gun Carry Laws	
State Policy	State
Concealed Carry Permitted	Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Mississippi, Oregon, Texas, Utah, Wisconsin
Each University Decides	Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia
Concealed Carry NOT Permitted	California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee and Wyoming

Source: National Conference of State Legislatures

Nationally, Higher Education Proposals Fall Flat

Stephanie Keaveney

While most higher education legislation occurs at the state level, federal lawmakers have long held considerable influence in higher education policy through the administration of federal student loans and programs authorized under the Higher Education Act of 1965.

In recent years, pressure has increased for federal lawmakers to intervene in other aspects of higher education. Addressing campus sexual assault, controlling rising costs of college, and regulating the growing for-profit higher education industry are just a few of the issues addressed by legislation currently introduced in Congress.

Student Aid

Student financial aid remains the top priority of federal lawmakers regarding higher education. Bills to reform Pell Grant administration, simplify the loan process, and expand repayment options are among the top proposals under current consideration.

Bill Number	Short Title	Primary Sponsor	Description
H.R. 3180	Flexible Pell Grant for 21st Century Students Act	Elise Stefanik (R)	Amends the Higher Education Act (HEA) to provide students with increased flexibility in the use of federal Pell Grants
H.R. 3177	Simplifying the Application for Student Aid Act	Joseph Heck (R)	Simplifies the application used for the estimation and determination of financial aid eligibility for postsecondary education.
H.R. 3179	Empowering Students Through Enhanced Financial Counseling Act	Brett Guthrie (R)	Amends loan counseling requirements under the HEA.

Cost of College

Despite President Obama's push for a nationwide free community college plan, proposals to lower college tuition at a federal level have failed to gain any traction inside Congress. The two main bills (one to make community college free, and the other to make all college free) are given only a 1 percent chance of success by the online database GovTrack.

Bill Number	Short Title	Primary Sponsor	Description
H.R. 4385	College for All Act	Alan Grayson (D)	Directs the Department of Education to award grants to states to eliminate tuition and required fees at public institutions of higher education.
S. 1716	America's College Promise Act of 2015	Tammy Baldwin (D)	Authorizes the Department of Education to award grants to states and Indian tribes to waive tuition and fees at community colleges.

Additional Proposals

Federal lawmakers have also authored proposals to address federal overreach, strengthen student privacy, and decrease campus sexual assault.

Bill Number	Short Title	Primary Sponsor	Description
S. 706	SOS Campus Act	Barbara Boxer (D)	Amends the HEA to require all title IV participating institutions to designate an independent advocate for campus sexual assault prevention and response.
H.R. 3157	Student Privacy Protection Act	Todd Rokita (R)	Amends the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) to require security practices to protect students' education records and personally identifiable information.

Do You Agree?

“Piling more federal programs and regulations on top of a broken higher education system is not in the best interests of students, families, taxpayers, and institutions. The best way to improve higher education is to improve the law.”

House Education and the Workforce Committee Chairman *John Kline (R-MN)* and Higher Education and Workforce Training Subcommittee Chairwoman *Virginia Foxx (R-NC)*

The goal of this newsletter from the Pope Center is to help university trustees and governors to be more effective leaders in higher education.

Jenna A. Robinson, President
Jane S. Shaw, Vice Chairman and Secretary
John W. Pope Center for Higher Education Policy

popecenter.org
info@popecenter.org
919-828-1400

Governance