



ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE



ACCESS & PERSISTENCE MONTHLY ANNOUNCEMENTS & NEWS ARTICLES

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JANUARY 2012

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The Higher Education Regulations Study **Final Report**, released on November 29, 2011, is now on our website.
- The press release, **Rationalizing the Pell Policy Debate**, released on January 30, 2011, is now on our website.
- The nontraditional student final report will be released shortly.
- Some articles listed below may require subscription or registration.

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ARTICLES OF INTEREST —Week of January 1, 2012—

- **Aspen Competition Drives Innovative Ideas for Community Colleges** (January 1, 2012)
By Jennifer Gonzalez
“When Valencia College became the first recipient of the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence last month, an unsung sector earned uncommon recognition. Now that the speeches are over and the prize money has been awarded, the Aspen Institute is sharing early lessons from its yearlong effort to determine the top community college in the country.” (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*)
- **Most—But Not All—Colleges Roll Out Net-Price Calculators** (January 3, 2012)
By Caralee Adams
“Despite a new federal requirement that colleges have a "net price calculator" on their websites, 272 institutions have yet to comply, and some calculators are hard to find. The assessment is provided by NetPriceCalculator.info, a new McLean, Va.-based company that tracks compliance with the mandate in the Higher Education

Opportunity Act of 2008 that went into effect on Oct. 29, 2011.”
(*Education Week*)

- **While Tuition Revenue Climbs, Discounts Do Too, Moody’s Says (January 4, 2012)**
By Lawrence Biemiller
“Tuition revenue per student continued to climb this year—by an estimated 5 percent at private colleges and 4 percent at public institutions—but tuition discounts grew as well, according to a report Moody's Investors Service released on Wednesday. The report, the third annual analysis of tuition revenue by Moody's, is based on responses from 257 of the institutions whose creditworthiness Moody's rates.” (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*)
- **Rapidly Rising Student Debt Harms Low-Income Students (January 4, 2012)**
By Equal Justice Works
“It’s a truism that a college education is the key to better jobs and a brighter economic future for low-income individuals. So what is the effect of the explosion in student debt on low-income students? The Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco's recent brief, "Student Debt and Default in the 12th District," is a fascinating look at student loan borrowing and default that focuses on students from low- and moderate-income (LMI) households.” (*US News & World Report*)
- **Best Values in Public Colleges, 2012 (January 5, 2012)**
By Jane Bennett Clark
“For public colleges and universities, the march out of the recession has become a long, slow slog. State appropriations for higher education have been gutted. The federal stimulus money that sustained colleges for several years is just about gone.” (*NASDAQ*)
- **Want a Job? Go to College, and Don’t Major in Architecture (January 5, 2012)**
By Catherine Rampell
“Say it with me, readers: College is worth it. For all the bellyaching about wasted degrees and the many indebted grads stuck on their parents’ couches, recent college graduates are still doing a lot better than their less-educated counterparts.” (*New York Times*)
- **Who Comes First? (January 5, 2012)**
By Paul Fain
“A debate over priorities at California’s community colleges is heating up, as the system considers putting more emphasis on first-time students who are working toward a credential or transferring to a four-year institution. The debate has deep national relevance, as the "completion agenda" may hinge on the 2.6 million students who attend the state’s community colleges.” (*Inside Higher Ed*)
- **Out-of-School Time Drawing Girls into STEM (January 5, 2012)**
By Nora Fleming
“A group of high school girls listen eagerly for their mission: Use the tools on hand to design a self-propelled boat that can cross water with 50 passengers on board. The passengers: pennies. The tools: pipe cleaners, popsicle sticks, and balloons. The water: an inflatable kiddie pool.” (*Education Week*)

- **All Your Jobs Belong to People Who Went to College (January 6, 2012)**
By Matthew Iglesias
“To steal and expand upon a point Betsey Stevenson made on Twitter earlier, it's striking the extent to which employment growth over the past month and the past year was concentrated among college graduates. In part that's just what you expect from a weak labor market.” (*Slate*)
- **Big Study Links Good Teachers to Lasting Gain (January 6, 2012)**
By Annie Lowrey
“Elementary- and middle-school teachers who help raise their students’ standardized-test scores seem to have a wide-ranging, lasting positive effect on those students’ lives beyond academics, including lower teenage-pregnancy rates and greater college matriculation and adult earnings, according to a new study that tracked 2.5 million students over 20 years. The paper, by Raj Chetty and John N. Friedman of Harvard and Jonah E. Rockoff of Columbia, all economists, examines a larger number of students over a longer period of time with more in-depth data than many earlier studies, allowing for a deeper look at how much the quality of individual teachers matters over the long term.” (*New York Times*)

—Week of January 8, 2012—

- **U.S.: Funding Cuts, Tuition Hikes Likely to Define 2012 (January 8, 2012)**
By Alison Moodie
“The higher education sector in the United States grappled with immense challenges in 2011, namely the deepening funding crisis and steep tuition hikes plaguing public colleges and universities. Bad as it was, the situation is likely to get worse as further cuts are expected this coming year.” (*University World News*)
- **Budget Deal Ushers In New Pell Grant Eligibility Rules (January 9, 2012)**
By Caralee Adams
“Despite concerns about the prospect of deep cuts in Pell Grants to help low-income students attend college, the final fiscal 2012 federal budget preserves the maximum grant at \$5,550—much to the relief of many in higher education. But changes in eligibility drop some students from the federal aid program and reduce grants for others.” (*Education Week*)
- **Consumer Credit Surges by Most Since 2001 (January 9, 2012)**
By Jason Lange
“U.S. consumer credit surged 10 percent in November, its biggest jump in a decade in a positive signal for the economy as consumers tapped their credit cards and the government doled out more student loans. Outstanding consumer credit increased by \$20.37 billion during the month, the Federal Reserve said on Monday.” (*Reuters*)
- **Listing Toward Order (January 10, 2012)**
By Steve Kolowich
“The results are in for *U.S. News & World Report*’s first attempt to rank online programs at colleges and universities, but the jury is still out on how well the publication has managed to

assess the programs on its first try. The inaugural online rankings assessed bachelor's degree programs, as well as master's programs in business, engineering, nursing, computer and information technology, and education." (*Inside Higher Ed*)

- **Minority-Serving Institutions Are Key to Achieving College-Completion Goals, Report Says (January 10, 2012)**
By Joanna Chau
“Minority-serving institutions, which enroll 2.3 million students, almost 14 percent of the college-going population, must play a key role if the country is to achieve President Obama's goal that by 2020, the United States will have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world, says a report released on Tuesday by the Institute for Higher Education Policy. Over the next eight years, the percentage of people of color nationwide is projected to rise to 40 percent, from 31 percent, the report says, and minority-serving institutions, now numbering 431, have long educated underrepresented students.” (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*)
- **Changes Could Ease Disabled Borrowers' Student-Loan-Forgiveness Hassles (January 11, 2012)**
By Kelly Field
“A year after *The Chronicle* published a series of articles that described the loan-discharge process for disabled borrowers as "broken" and "duplicative," the Education Department is taking steps to make it easier for such borrowers to have their student debts forgiven. At a meeting in Washington Wednesday, department officials proposed streamlining the process so that disabled borrowers with guaranteed loans would have to submit only a single discharge application to the Education Department, rather than applying to multiple lenders and guarantors.” (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*)
- **Efforts Are Under Way to Tie College to Job Needs (January 12, 2012)**
By Sandra Block
“Assaying the output of higher education in Texas, Michael Betterworth evoked the image of a crippled Apollo 13 craft hurtling into space, its future uncertain. “Houston, we have a problem, and it's not that too few people are going to college,” said Mr. Betterworth, an associate vice chancellor at the Texas State Technical College System.” (*The New York Times*)
- **Few Options Available to Help Pay Off Private Student Loans (January 12, 2012)**
By Sandra Block
“Last October, President Obama announced a broad initiative to provide relief for college graduates struggling to repay student loans. In a speech at the University of Colorado in Denver, Obama said the plan will lower monthly payments for 1.6 million borrowers. Jessica Fernandez won't be one of them.” (*USA Today/Money*)

—Week of January 15, 2012—

- **10 Least Expensive Private Colleges (January 17, 2012)**
By Ryan Lytle
“While choosing the best college or university for you can be difficult, strategizing a way to effectively finance your education can pose its own set of challenges. Although many private schools have high sticker prices, a survey by the National Association of College and University Business Officers notes that the average student who entered a private institution in fall 2010 received a tuition discount of nearly 50 percent.” (*U.S. News & World Report*)
- **Simon Calls for Improving Community College Graduation Rate (January 18, 2012)**
By Monique Garcia
“Almost a million students enroll in Illinois community colleges each year, seeking a more affordable and accessible alternative to traditional four-year universities, to try to learn new skills, or to brush up on old ones. But fewer than 1 in 5 first-time students who take full loads of classes graduate with associate degrees within three years — a statistic Lt. Gov. Sheila Simon says creates ‘revolving doors to the unemployment line.’” (*Chicago Tribune*)
- **Data: Bright Futures Not Just for Rich (January 19, 2012)**
By Scott Travis
“Florida’s Bright Futures scholarships may be perceived as financial aid for the elite, but 40 percent of the recipients come from families making \$50,000 or less, according to data released Thursday. The scholarships, funded by the Florida Lottery, are based on merit, not financial need.” (*Sun Sentinel*)
- **Plan Would Eliminate Tuition to UC’s Benefit (January 19, 2012)**
By Nanette Asimov
“It’s not every day that University of California students tell UC President Mark Yudof to abolish tuition - and he says he’ll consider it. But that’s exactly what happened at Wednesday’s regents meeting at UC Riverside, as Yudof praised the students’ tuition plan as ‘a constructive idea.’” (*San Francisco Chronicle*)
- **Forum Panelists Debate Efficiency, Structure of Pell Grant Program (January 19, 2012)**
By Jamaal Abdul-Alim
“When it comes to Pell Grants, the conversation needs to be elevated beyond just how important Pell Grants are to students who need them but how to make sure the Pell Grant program is ‘structured in the most effective way possible.’ That was the heart of the message delivered Wednesday by Dr. Sandy Baum, an independent higher education policy analyst and professor of education and economics, at a college access forum hosted on Capitol Hill by the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, or NASFAA.” (*Diverse Issues in Higher Education*)

—Week of January 22, 2012—

- **State Support Slumps Again (January 23, 2012)**
By Doug Lederman
“The news will come as no surprise to the public college administrators and faculty members who've seen their budgets slashed over the past year. But an annual study of state spending on higher education finds that state appropriations for colleges and students sunk by 7.6 percent in 2011-12, the largest such decline in at least a half century.” (*Inside Higher Ed*)
- **Outlook for Higher Education Remains Mixed, Moody's Says (January 23, 2012)**
By Scott Carlson
“In a report released on Monday, Moody's Investors Service sticks with the mixed outlook for higher education that it established last year: For leading colleges that are well managed and diversified, the market is looking stable. For the rest, not so much.” (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*)
- **Despite Budget Problems, States Continue Working on College Readiness (January 25, 2012)**
By Emma Roller
“Even with the continued tightening of state funds for elementary and secondary education, states are working to adopt new standards that would better prepare their students for college, says a report from the Center on Education Policy. The report, "Year Two of Implementing the Common Core State Standards: States' Progress and Challenges," was released on Wednesday by the center, an independent advocate for public education.” (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*)
- **Obama Highlights Education's Role in Reaching National Policy Goals (January 25, 2012)**
By Kelly Field
“With the presidential election less than a year away, President Obama focused his third State of the Union address Tuesday on the struggles of the nation's middle class, urging Congress to invest in worker retraining and make college more affordable for the average American family. In a speech that lasted just over an hour, Mr. Obama called for an expansion of job-training programs at community colleges, an extension of the tuition tax credit, and a doubling of Federal Work Study jobs.” (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*)
- **'Adrift' in Adulthood: Students Who Struggled in College Find Life Harsher After Graduation (January 25, 2012)**
By Dan Berrett
“College graduates who showed paltry gains in critical thinking and little academic engagement while in college have a harder time than their more accomplished peers as they start their careers, according to a report released today. The report, "Documenting Uncertain Times: Postgraduate Transitions of the Academically Adrift Cohort," follows up on the highly influential and controversial book *Academically Adrift*, which was published one year ago.” (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*)

- **Mixed Grades: A Survey of Provosts (January 25, 2012)**
By Scott Jaschik
 “Chief academic officers believe that higher education faces serious concerns about academic rigor, grade inflation and student cheating – but that their own campuses are exempt. Those are among the findings of a new *Inside Higher Ed* survey of provosts and chief academic officers at American colleges and universities.” (*Inside Higher Ed*)
- **Race Matters (January 25, 2012)**
By Paul Fain
 “The Department of Education has acknowledged using flawed data in a study on the impact of race on student loan repayment rates, having omitted black students from its calculation. The analysis was conducted during the debate over gainful employment regulations, in response to complaints that the rules would hurt colleges that enroll relatively high percentages of minority students.” (*Inside Higher Ed*)
- **Survey Finds That Dwindling Financial Aid Contributes to Fewer College Options (January 26, 2012)**
By Daniel Slotnick
 “College freshmen entering school last fall were less likely to attend their first choice of college, a function of both competition and cost, than at any other time since 1974, and fewer received financial aid through grants or scholarships, according to an annual survey of nearly 204,000 high school students. The survey also indicated that more students are focusing on academics and that more freshmen say they have adopted liberal social views.” (*The New York Times*)
- **A New Challenge for College-Aid Seekers (January 26, 2012)**
By AnnaMaria Andriotis
 “College financial aid season has just kicked off, and experts say students seeking state grants had better act fast. At least six states, including Illinois, Kentucky and North Carolina, now have ‘until funds depleted’ policies on grants, meaning late filers risk getting nothing.” (*Smart Money*)
- **College Grad Rates are ‘Bad Data’ (January 26, 2012)**
By Daniel de Vise
 “Dropouts. Lost. Vanished. According to the federal formula for calculating the graduation rates of colleges and universities, close to a majority of all college students are dropouts or lost to the system entirely, even if they have earned degrees.” (*The Washington Post*)
- **Obama Plan Links College Aid With Affordability (January 27, 2012)**
By Tamar Lewin
 “President Obama is proposing a financial aid overhaul that for the first time would tie colleges’ eligibility for campus-based aid programs — Perkins loans, work-study jobs and supplemental grants for low-income students — to the institutions’ success in improving affordability and value for students, administration officials said. Under the plan, which the president outlined on Friday morning in a speech at the University of Michigan, the amount

available for Perkins loans would grow to \$8 billion, from the current \$1 billion.” (*The New York Times*)

—Week of January 29, 2012—

- **College Officials Welcome Obama's Focus on Higher-Education Costs, but Raise Some Concerns** (January 30, 2012)

By Goldie Blumenstyk

‘President Obama chose a spiffy new indoor football field at the University of Michigan here on Friday to kick off a broad campaign for college affordability, calling higher education ‘an economic imperative that every family in America should be able to afford.’ Blending the personal with the political—and playfully responding to shouts of support from the audience—Mr. Obama made clear that the college-cost themes in this 35-minute speech would set the tone for a continuing national discussion that will be central not only in his administration's coming budget fight with Congress but also as he campaigns around the country for re-election.” (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*)

- **Education Department Turns Policy Attention to College Completion** (January 30, 2012)

By Eric Kelderman

“Following a flurry of higher-education policy proposals by President Obama, the U.S. Department of Education on Monday hosted a symposium meant to advance the administration's goal of increasing the nation's number of college graduates. The president has said that he wants the United States to have the highest rate of college completion in the world by 2020. So far, however, the administration has focused more on getting students into college than on helping them finish their degrees, Education Secretary Arne Duncan said to participants at the symposium.” (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*)

- **Big Data's Arrival** (February 1, 2012)

By Paul Fain

“New students are more likely to drop out of online colleges if they take full courseloads than if they enroll part time, according to findings from a research project that is challenging conventional wisdom about student success. But perhaps more important than that potentially game-changing nugget, researchers said, is how the project has chipped away at skepticism in higher education about the power of ‘big data.’” (*Inside Higher Ed*)

- **Official: White House Path on College Affordability Not Fully Mapped Out** (February 1, 2012)

By Jamaal Abdul-Alim

“The White House was purposefully vague on the college affordability plan that it announced last week because the administration wants the higher education community to help shape the plan, a White House official told a group of higher education leaders

meeting in Washington on Tuesday. “The reason it’s not more detailed is because the more we thought about it, it would be better to outline what the principles are, then engage in a dialogue with the entire higher education community, experts, students and families, and then talk about what would be the right way to relay these principles,” said Zakiya Smith, senior advisor for education at the White House Domestic Policy Council, at the annual meeting of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities.” (Diverse Issues in Higher Education)

- **No Money Down! February 2, 2012**

By Kevin Kiley

“With public university administrators continually arguing for tuition increases to counter state appropriations cuts, it seems far-fetched that their budget problems could be solved by eliminating student tuition and fees altogether. But that’s the idea put forth by a group of students from the University of California at Riverside, who in January proposed a new funding model for the University of California system that seeks to solve two of the system’s biggest problems: unpredictable and large decreases in state appropriations, and the steady increase in tuition costs.” (*Inside Higher Ed*)

- **Multiyear Study of Community-College Practices Asks: What Helps Students Graduate? (February 2, 2012)**

By Jennifer Gonzalez

“Community colleges are brimming with programs and policies designed to help students complete their studies. Practices like requiring orientation and establishing early-academic-warning systems have sprouted since 2009, when President Obama announced that he wanted to make the United States the best-educated country in the world by 2020.” (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*)

- **Senate Republicans Question Obama's Plan to Tie Federal Aid to Tuition (February 2, 2012)**

By Kelly Field

“Senate Republicans pushed back against President Obama's college-affordability agenda at an education-committee hearing Thursday, expressing doubts about the administration's plans to reward colleges and states that hold down tuition and maintain their higher-education budgets. ‘I don't believe the government's role is to pick winners and losers,’ said Sen. Richard Burr of North Carolina, explaining that he was uncomfortable ‘shifting the determination of affordability to Washington.’” (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*)