



January 21, 2025

Dear members of the incoming presidential administration and members of the U.S. Congress:

On behalf of more than 28,000 members, the National Association for College Admission Counseling ([NACAC](#)) wishes to underscore our commitment to advancing policies that make postsecondary education available to all who seek it. NACAC is a non-profit, non-partisan association comprised of professionals who work as high school counselors, college advisors, and college or university admission officers. Together, these college admission counseling professionals are committed to centering the well-being of students as they transition from secondary to postsecondary education.

NACAC's core values include commitments to education, social responsibility, access and equity, and professionalism. Building on these values, our member-developed priorities for federal policy include:

- Student- and equity-centered postsecondary admission
- Ethical practices in student advising and recruitment
- Support for school counselors and college advisors
- Vigorous funding for public education and student financial aid for postsecondary education

The value of K-12 and postsecondary education has never been clearer. According to the Federal Reserve Bank's [Anchor Economy Initiative](#), higher education institutions and hospitals provide more than \$1.7 trillion in economic benefits to the U.S economy. Moreover, individuals with a bachelor's degree currently earn wages that are [65 percent higher](#) than those with a high school diploma (College Board, 2023). Completion of a postsecondary degree correlates with more community engagement, increased political efficacy, and greater life satisfaction. The benefits to society include lower rates of incarceration, a larger tax base, and lower unemployment rates (College Board, 2023). In short, education is an individual and public good.

A Vision for Building, Not Dismantling, Educational Opportunity in America

Important at this moment, as Americans endure natural disasters, economic distress, and a lack of upward mobility, are our priorities for federal policy in 2025. We encourage Congress and the administration to:

- **Ensure vigorous federal funding for education:** More than 75 percent of Americans oppose cuts to federal education programs, and more than 70 percent of Americans support more federal funding for education (Committee for Education/Navigator Research [poll](#), November 2023). The administration and Congress should increase funding for public K-12 education, as 49.6 million students across the U.S. rely on public schools (U.S. Department of Education, [Condition of Education](#), May 2024). Public schools are also the only schools available for many low-income students and families living in rural areas ([Wall Street Journal](#), Nov. 9, 2023).
- **Invest more in federal student aid:** According to the [Education Data Initiative](#), more than 12 million college students rely on federal financial aid to make college more affordable. Cuts to

student aid would further constrict a pipeline that already works to exclude low-income students, students who are first in their family to pursue postsecondary education, and adults wishing to obtain an education. Looking at institutions with connections to presumptive Education Secretary Linda McMahon, more than 1,100 students received more than \$6 million in federal grants to attend Sacred Heart University in 2023-24. More than 7,100 students received more than \$38 million to attend East Carolina University in the same year (NACAC analysis of federal aid funding, U.S. Department of Education, Common Origination and Disbursement System, 2023-24).

- **Lower student-to-counselor ratios:** The current national student-to-counselor ratio in American public schools is 385:1, far exceeding the recommended ratio of 250:1 (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2024). However, the national average masks wide disparities between states, with some state ratios approaching 1,000 students per counselor. Moreover, state ratios mask even greater disparities [between school districts](#), most often those serving low-income students in rural and urban areas. An analysis of the Department of Education’s High School Longitudinal Study (HSLs) [revealed](#) that by working one-on-one with a school counselor, students were seven times more likely to complete a FAFSA form, four times more likely to enroll in postsecondary education, and twice as likely to enroll in a bachelor’s degree program than students who did not work with a school counselor, even after controlling for income and other differences (Velez, 2016). As such, school counselors can and do make a significant, positive difference in the lives of students. We encourage Congress and the administration to prioritize funding to hire, train, and equip school counselors and college advisors to work with students in public schools.
- **Protect equality of opportunity in education.** If we are to grow as a nation, we must provide educational and economic opportunity for all. A [Harris poll](#) revealed that 76 percent of students making the transition to postsecondary education considered diversity to be essential to their experience (NACAC/Harris Poll, August 2023). We encourage Congress and the administration to consider that diversity, equity, and inclusion are concepts that benefit America and Americans overall, while also protecting the rights of those who have been systemically excluded from equal opportunity.
- **Preserve and strengthen critical student protections against predatory colleges.** According to a recent GAO [report](#), predatory institutions have cost taxpayers more than \$17 billion in losses in the last decade. Congress has had ample [warning](#) that unscrupulous institutions posed a significant risk to students and taxpayers absent stricter oversight of student aid funds against waste, fraud, and abuse (U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, & Pensions, July 2012). Rolling back regulatory oversight will result in greater financial harm to students and taxpayers.
- **Strengthen support for undocumented students.** Each year, tens of thousands of undocumented students graduate from U.S. secondary schools. These students seek a fair chance at educational and economic opportunity in America. Undocumented students and their families are not the cause of economic challenges and should not be scapegoated as such. In 2021, households led by undocumented individuals [contributed](#) \$30.8 billion in taxes (state and federal), supported businesses both large and small, and made lasting contributions in both K-12

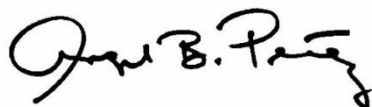
and higher education. (American Immigration Council, August 2023) At a minimum, we urge Congress to ensure a path to legal status for undocumented students.

- **Ensure that the Education Department infrastructure is preserved and strengthened.** The U.S. Department of Education (ED) occupies a critical role in supporting states, students, and families. Given the vast expanse of America’s educational landscape, including the interstate nature of postsecondary education and the essential enforcement of federal civil rights laws and laws protecting students with disabilities, the need for a centralized administration is what led to the establishment of ED as a cabinet-level agency. Education is critical for America’s future and warrants recognition at the highest levels of government, even given the responsibility that states maintain for policymaking and funding. Eliminating the infrastructure of ED will invite difficulties in administering programs and services that are orders of magnitude larger than those stemming from the 2024-25 FAFSA rollout and extending to all corners of American society, from pre-school to K-12 to higher education, threatening millions of students, educators, and families with unacceptable disruptions in their lives and well-being.

[Nearly every member](#) of the 118th Congress obtained a bachelor’s degree and most hold graduate degrees (Pew Research Center, February 2023). President Donald Trump and Vice President J.D. Vance are graduates of Ivy League colleges. We ask two simple questions of all elected officials: Would you be where you are if not for your educational opportunities, and would you deny other Americans of those same opportunities?

We urge you not to dismantle institutions from which you have benefitted. Instead, we urge you to support K-12 and higher education as a public good and enact the forward-looking policies above.

Sincerely,



Angel B. Pérez
CEO, National Association for College Admission Counseling