





What is the NCI?

- A campaign to enact an agenda for reform
- A national dialog on student financial aid
 - Federal issues
 - State issues
 - Philanthropic and institutional initiatives
- Recommendations to the Obama Administration and other parties in April 2009

Why is NCI needed?

1. Gaps in college participation rates persist:

- 88.1% of high school grads from the highest income category went on to college in 2005, while only 56.4% from the lowest income category continued on to college in 2005.
- That is an (unacceptable) 31.7 percentage point gap between lowest and highest income students.

(Postsecondary Education OPPORTUNITY)



Why is NCI needed? (cont.)

2. Rising financial barriers face students and families:

- In the first decade of the new century, financial barriers will keep nearly two million low- and middle-income college qualified high school graduates from attending college.

(Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, 2002)

3. Encumbrances exist in delivering student aid:

- The FAFSA's complexity is a widely recognized obstacle to college access and success. Can the form change to get more students into school and keep them there?



Why is NCI needed? (cont.)

4. Absence of coherent framework for reforming student financial aid:

- There have been many studies and proposed solutions, but without a coherent framework of recommendations and a sustained program for building support and enactment the necessary reforms will languish.

5. Opportunity for constructive action with new leadership in U.S. and increased global interdependence and competitiveness.



What is the NCI dialog process?

1. **Open Listening Sessions (18 so far, with attendees from all 50 states)**
2. **Organized forums**
 - > Higher Education forum
 - > Business leaders forum
 - > Public officials forum
3. **Web 2.0 communication and collaboration**
4. **Telecasts and assemblies**



NCI Process: 4 Distinct Phases

Phase One:

- Information gathering
- Review of existing studies and reports
- Conducting region and state-based Listening Sessions and Town Hall Meetings
- Integrate Web 2.0 communication and collaboration



NCI Process: 4 Distinct Phases

Phase Two:

- Review and synthesize information generated through dialog process (PPRDG)
- Analyze current research (PPRDG)
- Formulate preliminary recommendations for change (PPRDG)
- Submit preliminary recommendations to new Administration during first 100 days
- Conduct current status Webinar



Who is on the work group (PPRDG)?

- **The Public Policy Research and Development Group (PPRDG) consists of:**
 - **CORE group** of NASFAA staff
 - **In-Field Professionals Group** (Paul Aasen, George Chin, Pam Fowler, Anna Griswold, Tally Hart, Pat Hurley, Elaine Rivera, Joe Russo, and Laurie Wolf)
 - **Policy Advisors Group** (Julie Bell, NCSL; David Breneman, UVA; Patrick Callan, National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education; Anthony Carnevale, Georgetown University; Don Heller, Penn State; Scott Pattison, NASBO; W. Scott Swail, The Educational Policy Institute)



What info will NCI generate?

- **Preliminary and Final NCI recommendations, which were developed using:**
 - Findings from existing studies and reports
 - Results of NCI Listening Sessions / forums
 - Feedback/Input from Public Policy Research and Development Group (PPRDG)
 - Feedback from the field via the Web



NCI Process: 4 Distinct Phases

Phase Three:

- Assess feedback from Administration
- Conduct follow-up forums:
 - Higher education
 - Business leaders
 - Public officials
- Monitor Web 2.0 communications
- Conduct telecasts and assemblies



NCI Process: 4 Distinct Phases

Phase Four:

- **Develop advocacy agenda and plan**
- **Solicit broad-based support within regions and states**
- **Implement plan at different levels as appropriate and necessary**



What is the NCI timetable?

Activity	Dates
Program Launch	Fall 2008
Listening Sessions	Oct. 2008 - Jan. 2009
Initial recommendations	Feb. 2009
Deliberation and dialogue	Feb. - April 2009
Final recommendations	April 2009
Continuing dialogue	May - Dec. 2009
National assembly	Nov. - Dec. 2009
Advocacy and enactment	Jan. 2010 and following



NCI Outreach So Far:

- **Listening Sessions have touched aid administrators hailing from all 50 states.**
- **We've communicated directly with members to solicit feedback on our policy questions, via the daily news email, direct emails to membership, and the President's blog**
- **Nearly 4,000 members have attended 16 sessions so far.**
- **And - we have 2 more sessions to go!**



What are we hearing?

- **Feedback on the sessions has been overwhelmingly positive**
- **Members have expressed support for the course that NASFAA leadership has set**
- **Many have remarked on the value of holding open forums to gain member input**



Themes have begun to emerge:

- **Refocus on Expanding Access**
 - Access and choice for needy students is crucial and should be the ultimate goal of financial aid.
 - All efforts at reform (budgetary, simplification, student loans, grants, or other means) should aim for this central goal.
- **Too Many Peripheral Programs**
 - FAAs are dissatisfied by the new numerous programs that continue to be introduced when flagship programs like the Pell Grant continue to be underfunded



Themes have begun to emerge:

- **Reasonable Simplification**
 - FAAs overwhelmingly support FAFSA simplification
 - BUT, simplification efforts must be done correctly so that we don't inadvertently add even more burdens on students or giving out funds inequitably.
- **Need Analysis**
 - an overhaul of the current need analysis formula may be needed
 - Many feel the current system does not accurately represent students' actual ability to pay.



Themes have begun to emerge:

- **Administrative Burden**

- FAAs report that the administrative burden caused by excessive regulating takes away from the time they spend helping students and families.

- **Increased Investment**

- FAAs believe a greater national investment in higher education is needed, noting that for years, money has been switched from program to program, with no new, significant increase in the Federal commitment to higher education.



Today's Listening Session



Who are the session participants?

- **Listening panel**
- **Volunteer speakers**
- **Notetaker**



What are the general topics for comment?

- Access to college and student aid
- Aid simplification
- Grants
- Loans
- Personal and family contribution
- State, philanthropic, and campus-based programs
- Tax policy
- Other



What is the session procedure?

1. Each speaker signs in, then clearly states his/her name, title and institution for recording purposes
2. Speak 2-3 minutes on views and recommendations
3. Address one or more questions/issues with suggestions (listening panel may ask questions)
4. Submit written statement or email comments to nationalconversation@nasfaa.org on any other area of interest
5. Submit comment sheet to receive notes, findings, recommendations, and announcements



National Conversation Initiative

Access and Aid for Student Success in Postsecondary Education

We NEED to do better!



We CAN do better!

EXPAND ACCESS

- ★ Reducing Barriers
- ★ Info/Advisement
- ★ Address Support Needs

ACHIEVE DIVERSITY

- ★ Proportional Representation
- ★ Sustained Commitment
- ★ Choice

PROMOTE STUDENT SUCCESS

- ★ Participation Rates
- ★ Completion Rates
- ★ Post-College Success

We WILL do better!




