



POLICY STATEMENT

Higher Education Faculty and Staff Working in Learning Assistance-Related Fields

TOPIC: College Access

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Learning assistance programs are critical in ensuring equal access to higher education. These programs have historically expanded opportunities for marginalized groups, aligning with the principles of equality enshrined in various civil rights movements. However, underfunding or eliminating these programs can perpetuate educational disparities, particularly affecting communities of color and those from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

Ensuring college access is a shared responsibility for all educational institutions, public universities, community colleges, technical schools, or private institutions. The lack of resources in learning assistance disproportionately affects marginalized student populations, impeding their access to postsecondary opportunities.

Introduction

As postsecondary faculty and staff engaged in learning assistance, we stand united in our advocacy for universal access to higher education. We believe that education should be a right, not a privilege, and we are committed to ensuring that access is not hindered by race, gender, identity/expression, cultural background, language, disability, first-generation status, veteran status, or socio-economic status.

Strengthen Learning Assistance Programs

- Advocate for enhancing and expanding early developmental education departments, co-requisite education, intervention programs, and coursework across postsecondary education.
- Ensure continued funding and support for programs initiated under the Morrill Act of 1862 and the Higher Education Acts of 1965 and 1968.
- Promote the establishment and growth of community colleges to increase educational accessibility.

Secure and Increase Funding

- Lobby for sustained and increased state and federal funding for learning assistance programs, emphasizing their role in advancing educational equity.
- Highlight the importance of scholarships, low-interest student loans, and programs like the National Teachers Corps to policymakers.

Address Racial and Socio-Economic Disparities

- Implement targeted initiatives to support marginalized and low-income student populations, ensuring they can access the resources necessary for postsecondary success.
- Develop strategies to address the specific needs of students from different racial and socio-economic backgrounds.

Collaborate Across Educational Institutions

- Foster partnerships between public universities, community colleges, technical schools, private institutions, and secondary schools to create a unified approach to improving college access.
- Share best practices, resources, and assessment methodologies to ensure all institutions contribute to equal educational opportunities.

Promote Awareness and Advocacy

- Raise public awareness about the impact of underfunding learning assistance programs on educational disparities.
- Mobilize community and educational leaders to advocate for educational equity policies.
- Develop coordinated services and programs supporting the transition of marginalized populations to and through postsecondary education.
- Foster campus partnerships that encourage a holistic approach to supporting marginalized populations' unique academic and co-curricular needs.
- Promote learning assistance programs and services as an integral part of the college experience.
- Prioritize allocating resources to learning assistance programs that benefit marginalized student populations.
- Ensure that funding for initiatives like STEM education does not overshadow all students' need for comprehensive support services.

Address Systemic Inequalities

- Engage in broader societal efforts to tackle economic and social inequalities that affect educational access.
- Work with policymakers to address systemic issues that extend beyond the educational system but impact students' ability to succeed in higher education.

Evaluate and Adapt Programs

- Regularly assess the effectiveness of learning assistance programs and make necessary adjustments to meet students' evolving needs.
- Use data and student feedback to inform program improvements and ensure they effectively support college access and success.

CLADEA Value Statements

- Educational access is intertwined with broader social, cultural, political, and economic issues.
- Persistent inequalities in higher education access contribute to broader societal disparities.
- College access is a shared responsibility across educational institutions, including public universities, community colleges, technical schools, and private institutions.
- A concerted effort is needed to address educational inequities and promote inclusivity throughout academia.
- Learning assistance programs are crucial for ensuring equal access to higher education.
- These programs have historically aided marginalized groups and promoted principles of equality from civil rights movements.
- The lack of resources in learning assistance disproportionately impacts marginalized student populations, impeding their access to and progression through postsecondary opportunities.
- Sensible funding decisions, ongoing research into effective support models, and legislative measures are advocated to uphold equal access in higher education.

Conclusion

Organizations representing faculty and staff involved in postsecondary learning assistance advocate for sensible funding decisions, ongoing research into learning support efficacy, and legislative measures safeguarding equal access in higher education. The interconnectedness between educational access and broader social, cultural, political, and economic issues is critical. As long as inequalities persist in access to higher education, they will contribute to wider societal disparities. CLADEA believes in a concerted effort to address educational inequities and promote inclusivity across all levels of academia.