



ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT COLLEGES OF ART + DESIGN

Arts & Design Higher Education: Federal Policy Objectives for the Biden-Harris Administration and the 117th Congress

As the Administration and Congress look to rebuild the US economy and advance the nation's interests both domestically and abroad, we seek the following federal policy actions to support the critical contributions of the creative economy and the role of arts and design higher education in advancing democracy.

Racial & Economic Equity

In accordance with the Executive Order On Advancing Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government, we ask the Administration to support the following policies and efforts within higher education to achieve our mutual goal of strengthening equal opportunity as a bedrock of American democracy.

- 1. Promote access to arts and design education at all levels for all students**
 - a. *Ensure Federal Financial Aid continues to forefront student choice in higher education.* We support the administration's aims to double the maximum Pell Grant and Congress' recent expansion of students that will qualify for the Pell Grant. We urge support for the continued use of Pell Grants in any area of study and at whatever institution best suits the student's educational aims.
 - b. *Enshrine DACA and a reasonable path to citizenship for Dreamers in law.* We support the Administration's recent Executive Order reinstating the DACA program and encourage Congress to make the program permanent through legislation while also creating a reasonable path to citizenship for the Dreamers who contribute greatly to our institutions of higher education and the country.
 - c. *Ensure that all people have access to high speed broadband, regardless of income or location.* The COVID-19 crisis has illustrated the critical nature of high speed broadband to all, particularly those pursuing education. As more educational opportunities are likely to remain online in the future, access to broadband is a critical component of access to education.
 - d. *Reinstate the arts on the calendar of the US Dept of Education's National Assessment of Education Progress and support in routine data collection on the status of public K-12 education.* Experience has shown that the elements of K-12 education that are tracked are the elements that receive support, both federally and at the local level. Including the arts in data collection is critical to ensuring students receive a well-rounded education that prepares them for the future.
 - e. *Expand the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program.* After school time is a critical component of a child's overall education. Arts and design

are often not fully offered in schools, so support for after school programming is necessary to provide equitable access to these subjects for all students, regardless of economic background. The 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program is a proven model and should be expanded.

2. **Support the full functioning of the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program.** Congress enacted the PSLF program with bipartisan support in 2007, partly to create incentives for motivated and committed individuals to pursue careers in service to the public. PSLF is a vital tool in allowing talented and highly trained employees from all socioeconomic backgrounds to work at organizations that make an impact in their community, including those nonprofits in the creative economy and education.
3. **Ensure appropriate monitoring of for-profit higher education institutions to ward against predatory admissions practices and ensure equitable student success.** A substantial number of for-profit educational institutions offer arts and design degrees, placing students interested in studying these disciplines at disproportionate risk of experiencing educational fraud.
4. **Strengthen the federal commitment to graduate education.** Graduate education raises our nation's intellectual, cultural, scientific, and entrepreneurial capacity, benefitting our citizenship and maintaining our leadership in world affairs. Overall federal assistance for graduate education, much of which comes from agencies other than the Department of Education, is woefully inadequate and must be strengthened if we are to increase our nation's economic and intellectual potential.

Global Relations

Both higher education and the arts/culture/design sectors play central roles in shaping the United States' standing in the world. Both policymakers and diplomacy experts agree that cultural exchange, including at the student level, enhances international understanding. We ask the Administration and Congress to support these efforts to re-engage the US in global society.

1. **Revitalize the federal commitment to international education and the attendance of international students in the US.**
 - a. *Return access to ALL international students to US higher education, regardless of country of origin.* We thank the Administration for the Executive Order repealing the travel ban on certain countries, and encourage the continued support of all international students having access to US higher education.
 - b. *Support international students in having the time necessary to complete their degrees.* Recent efforts by the Department of Homeland Security to tighten the time limits on student visas do not allow for international students to complete their educational experiences in all instances. We encourage the Administration and Congress to ensure all students have the opportunity to complete their educations at their institutions of choice.
 - c. *Support institutional efforts to provide access for US students to international study and research opportunities.* American students must gain a greater appreciation of the world and its regional differences. In an increasingly global community, our economic future and national security depends on a

citizenry with a deeper understanding of diverse cultures and a broader, more inclusive world view. The federal government has an appropriate role to play in promoting study abroad for U.S. citizens, U.S. study for foreign nationals, foreign language acquisition, and increased interchanges with other cultures and peoples.

2. **Expand and publicly promote the use of the arts and design in diplomacy.** Increased funding and operational capacity for the Cultural Programs Division will strengthen exchange and collaboration in the arts and culture fields that build bridges among people of different countries, cultures, and faiths.

Recognize value of and support the Creative Economy

1. **Update the NAICS code system to reflect 21st century industry classifications/fields of work and study.** Work with national field experts to expand and realign the creative industries within the NAICS system to allow for better measurement and analysis of the creative economy and the fields it encompasses. The NAICS system is particularly lacking in design fields such as user experience/user interface design, interaction design, data visualization and interactive media.
2. **Expand STEM-designated fields to incorporate design.** Design fields such as product design, industrial design, architecture, interior design/architecture, and computational design are more akin to the STEM fields than any other classification and should be recognized as such. This is important for proper classification in the NAICS system, but also for access to research and funding opportunities.
2. **Expand funding opportunities for arts and design-based research that leads to new economic development opportunities.** Collaborations among researchers of diverse disciplines often lead to critical breakthroughs that have significant positive economic, environmental and social impact. Federal funding opportunities through agencies such as the National Science Foundation, Department of Commerce, Health and Human Services and National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Agency should encourage such cross-disciplinary collaboration.
3. **Realize the full potential of the arts to make communities healthier and more vibrant through the programs of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS).** Support for the arts and design through a dedicated Artist Corps would provide an opportunity for creative skills to be utilized in engaging with communities across the country.
4. **Safeguard access to online platforms.** As the government considers possible regulation for online platforms, it is essential that artists and designers have a voice in determining how such platforms allow creative professionals, many leading small and non employer businesses, to deliver content and communicate with audiences and customers.