

2016 Policy Follow-Up Report

Jeanette Youngblood, AASAP President

The Council for Opportunity in Education's 36th Annual Policy Seminar was held in Washington, D.C. on March 6-9, 2016. Arkansas has a fifteen person delegation attend (see complete list at the end).

Through a combined effort, visits were made to the offices of all six members of Arkansas Congressional Delegation. AASAP members were able to meet personally with Senator Tom Cotton and Senator John Boozman. In addition, AASAP members were able to meet with designated staff personnel for Representative Rick Crawford, Representative French Hill, Representative Bruce Westerman, and Representative Steve Womack.

In preparation for the visit, team members discussed a strategy for each meeting. Because some meeting times overlapped, not everyone was able to attend every meeting, so determining a plan of action was important. For each meeting, it was decided what state and national information and data should be shared, as well as who was willing to share it. Also, the group determined how best to utilize the stories of our TRIO staffers who are also alums.

During each meeting we delivered our 2016 AR Fact Book and followed the general script outlined below we put together from materials provided by COE:

1. Welcome/Introductions/Word of Thanks (Team Leader)
2. Lay the Foundation
 - Know your facts: policy book pages 10-16 and page 39 & AR Fact Book
 - Understand the Return on Investment of TRIO programs (policy book 34-38)
 - Alumni/Success story—our alums in each meeting should share their personal story
3. Make the Ask
 - Will (name of Member of Congress) sign the FY2017 TRIO appropriations request letter and support a significant increase in TRIO funding to help restore services to the 90,000 students who were lost over the past decade? (policy book page 8--The House letter should be forthcoming. The Senate letter from co-sponsors Susan Collins and Jon Tester is circulating.)
 - Has (name of Member of Congress) or his staff visited a TRIO program within the last year?
 - Would (name of Member of Congress) or his staff be willing to visit a TRIO program within the next six months?
 - Would (name of Member of Congress) show their support for students by joining the Congressional TRIO Caucus? -- no AR members are on the list-pages 19-20
4. Dealing with Pushback
 - Show appreciation for the gains from last year's \$60 million increase
 - Important programs will get supported and this is a program with a strong Return on Investment
 - If they say they support TRIO then:
 - House Republicans should tell Appropriations Chairman Hal Rogers and Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman Tom Cole they support TRIO

--Senate Republicans should tell Appropriations Chairman Thad Cochran and Roy Blunt that they support TRIO

5. Things to Remember

--We must remember to focus on the ideas of: creating a skilled labor force, creating a qualified workforce, providing post-secondary training, using education to realize the economic initiatives within local communities for the good of the entire state

--We need our leaders to make TRIO a priority

Following each visit, the team was required to submit a feedback form to COE so they could track the progress made at each meeting. The feedback forms are attached.

As a follow-up to the Congressional Visits, a thank you letter was sent from AASAP to each Senator and Representative. This letter thanked them for taking the time to meet with the Arkansas team and asked them to make TRIO students a priority. In addition, each member of the Arkansas team has been encouraged to extend a personal invitation for their own congressional leader to visit their program as a follow-up.

Arkansas Team

Terrence Carter (OBU)

Lacey Gebhart (UA)

Michelle Hardin (UCA)—received partial AASAP funding to attend

Billy Ray Huggins, Jr. (UALR)

Stephanie Manning (SAU)

Ronda McLelland (UACCB)—received AASAP funding to attend

Cody McMichael (ASU—Heber Springs) —received partial AASAP funding to attend

Donna Mooney (UAPB)—received partial AASAP funding to attend

LaDonnia Mothershed (UALR)

Ashia Muhammad (UALR)

Steven Ogden (UACCH)—received partial AASAP funding to attend

Mary Kate Snow (PTC)

Eunice Walker (SAU)

Carla Williamson (SAU)

Jeanette Youngblood (Lyon)—received AASAP funding to attend