The American Council on Education (ACE) is the nation’s most influential, respected, and visible higher education association. We represent the presidents of U.S. accredited degree-granting institutions, which include two- and four-year colleges, private and public universities, and nonprofit and for-profit entities. No other association represents the broad interests of higher education’s top leaders like ACE.
Our strength lies in our loyal and diverse base of more than 1,700 member institutions, 75 percent of which have been with ACE for more than 10 years. We convene representatives from all sectors to collectively tackle the toughest higher education challenges, with a focus on improving access and preparing every student to succeed. Higher education is America’s best hope for long-term economic growth and social progress, and ACE’s core objective is to advance activities that support institutions, students, faculty, and staff.

ACE:

• **Leads and coordinates.** As the nation’s largest higher education organization, ACE is at the forefront of the major issues affecting postsecondary education.

• **Represents and advocates.** As the principal voice of higher education, ACE coordinates the advocacy efforts of the entire community.

• **Serves.** ACE addresses the rapidly changing needs of America’s colleges and universities by providing research and identifying innovative practices.

More specifically, ACE focuses on the following areas:

• Increasing **access to and success in postsecondary education** for all students, including adults and underrepresented minority populations.

• Providing **leadership programs** to help institutions leverage the rapidly changing postsecondary environment and meet the need for diverse and skilled leaders in higher education.

• Researching and promoting innovative strategies that support **increased postsecondary attainment** among nontraditional students.

• Fostering **international engagement** among higher education institutions.
who we represent

ACE is the nation’s most influential and respected higher education association. ACE represents nearly 1,700 organizations that collectively promote, protect, and advocate for students, faculty, and administrators in higher education. ACE members fall into two categories:

- **Members** include accredited degree-granting institutions, higher education systems, and national and regional higher education associations.
- **Associates** are corporations, executive search firms, foundations, and international organizations and institutions with an interest in higher education.

Our members represent two out of every three students in all accredited, degree-granting institutions.
The diverse institutional perspectives and national higher education policy insights offered through ACE membership provide a robust context for my day-to-day responsibilities on campus.

*Diana Natalicio, president of The University of Texas at El Paso*

No matter what type of institution you lead, we are all in this together. ACE provides a collective voice for all higher education institutions, and that is incredibly important in today’s changing landscape.

*James H. Mullen Jr., president of Allegheny College (PA)*
As many of today’s higher education leaders begin to retire, America faces a significant challenge. The higher education community must cultivate a diverse and robust pool of leaders to fill these positions and help lead our nation into the future.

As a respected representative for all sectors of higher education, ACE provides administrators multiple opportunities to learn from colleagues and experts. Our programs, services, and research equip leaders with practical skills and tools to make day-to-day decisions and plan for an increasingly challenging future.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR ACE MEMBERS

ACE is supporting current leaders and developing the next generation of higher education leadership through the work of four intersecting groups:

- The **Executive Leadership Group** offers special programming for presidents and other senior leaders.
- The **Emerging Leaders Group**, including the highly regarded ACE Fellows Program, focuses on promising administrators, including department chairs.
- The **Inclusive Excellence Group** fosters diversity and inclusion in higher education, particularly among senior leaders.
- The **Institutional Leadership Group** is focused on programs, research, and resources that assist senior leaders in improving institutional capacity and effectiveness.
ACE is consistently at the center of federal policy debates in areas critical to higher education. Because of our role as a convener of higher education organizations, the higher education community is able to speak with one clear voice on vital issues affecting institutions and students. In recent years, we have led discussions about Pell Grant funding, scientific research, tax proposals, and many other issues.

As the only organization representing presidents from all sectors, ACE is the key point of contact on higher education matters for Congress and the White House. ACE also regularly represents higher education in relevant court cases, including at the U.S. Supreme Court, and is the most frequently cited organization in the national media on higher education issues.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR ACE MEMBERS

ACE’s efforts on behalf of the nation’s colleges and universities ensure our members are:

• **Informed and up-to-date** on significant public policy issues affecting higher education
• **Connected** to federal policymakers as they make critical decisions about institutions and students
• **Championed in federal and state courts**—including the U.S. Supreme Court—on critical legal issues
As a woman of color, I am so grateful for ACE’s efforts to diversify the pipeline leading to leadership positions at colleges and universities.

*Judy C. Miner, president of Foothill College (CA)*

ACE membership makes me a better leader.

*Freeman A. Hrabowski III, president of University of Maryland, Baltimore County*
ACE’s Center for Policy Research and Strategy (CPRS) provides thought leadership at the intersection of public policy and institutional strategy to create an evidence base for senior college and university leaders and policymakers to responsibly promote emergent practices in higher education, with an emphasis on long-term and systemic solutions for an evolving higher education landscape and changing American demographic.

CPRS organizes its research in three forward-looking themes that we believe help to frame strong analysis, foster productive dialogue, and inform good decision making. These broad themes are:

1. Reimagining Diversity and Equity in Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century
2. Public Finance and Higher Education Systems
3. Transformational Leadership

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR ACE MEMBERS

CPRS publishes:

- **Original research** that uses data to explore public policy and institutional strategy topics related to change/reform that are not yet well understood
- **Action-oriented issue briefs**, based on more well-understood data, for senior college and university leaders and policymakers to promote higher education change
- A **regular blog** that features guest posts from our “field researchers”—the thousands of members on the front line innovating in real time

CPRS convenes:

- **Higher education policy experts** to explore research topics and challenges
- **College and university leaders** to discuss change strategies on the front line
- **Policymakers** to explore policy implications
ACE and its member institutions have a historic commitment to helping institutions serve nontraditional learners. That means we are well positioned to support the increasing number of Americans who take nontraditional paths to a postsecondary education credential, and who are key to our national goal of increasing the attainment rate and keeping America competitive on the world stage.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR ACE MEMBERS

We support institutional efforts to engage, cultivate, and retain successful nontraditional learners through the following programs and initiatives:

- The **Center for Education Attainment and Innovation** works to expand the awareness, acceptance, and application of ACE’s various programs and initiatives to support increased educational attainment among nontraditional students.

- **Thought leadership initiatives** to conduct research and disseminate information about innovative ways to serve nontraditional learners include projects such as the *Presidential Innovation Lab*, where college and university presidents have examined new instructional and business models in higher education.

- The **College Credit Recommendation Service (ACE CREDIT®)** helps translate workplace learning and other nontraditional education experiences into potential academic credits at colleges and universities.

- **ACE’s Military Programs** recommend equivalent college credits based on the military training and experiences of armed services members and veterans.

- **ACE’s Veterans’ Programs** provide institutions with resources and tools for supporting military and veteran students on campus.
I’m counting on the Council, as a matter of fact, as we try to adjust to post-traditional students. It’s a big part of our strategy at the college to begin to pay more attention to the adult market and returning veterans.

Sanford C. (Sandy) Shugart, president of Valencia College (FL)

In the rapidly changing higher education landscape, ACE is a clear, steady, and trusted advocate for our nation’s great universities.

Phyllis M. Wise, chancellor of University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
ACE is the association for all college and university presidents. You won’t find these collaboration opportunities anywhere else.

Richard J. Pappas, president of Davenport University (MI)

ACE gives me the tools I need to lead.

Nancy L. Zimpher, chancellor of The State University of New York
The **Center for Internationalization and Global Engagement** (CIGE) provides in-depth analysis of critical international education issues and administers programs and services to support higher education institutions’ internationalization and global engagement strategies.

**WHAT THIS MEANS FOR ACE MEMBERS**

CIGE works in the following areas to support ACE’s international priorities:

- **Expert advice** on internationalization to member institutions
- **Professional development** for campus leaders on internationalization
- **Research** from the field on best practices and effective tools
- **Timely analysis** of critical issues in global higher education
- **Convening of global leaders** in higher education to address common challenges
American College Application Campaign (ACAC) is an ACE-led initiative to increase the number of first-generation and low-income students pursuing a college or university degree or other higher education credential. ACAC reached more than 200,000 students in all 50 states in fall 2014. Seed funding was provided by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Lumina Foundation, and The Kresge Foundation. Bank of America, the College Board, and USA Funds also have been supporters. The primary purpose of this effort is to help high school seniors navigate the complex higher education admissions process and ensure that they apply to at least one postsecondary institution.

Through its seats on the board of directors of the GED Testing Service (GEDTS), ACE continues to provide direction and oversight to GEDTS, which was created in 2011 as a joint venture between ACE and Pearson. GEDTS recently launched the 2014 GED® program, a comprehensive, learner-centered program that will better support adult learners, provide them with the tools they need to perform well on the test, and bridge the gap from high school dropout to middle-skill job holder. Key to the program is a new computer-based GED® test, aligned with state and national college and career readiness standards.

Photo courtesy of ACE member institution Minnesota State University Moorhead.
Cover photo courtesy of ACE member institution Michigan State University.