



**NCHER Legislative and Leadership Conference
February 6-8, 2023
The Westin Washington, DC City Center**

Program Agenda

Monday, February 6, 2023

8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Registration Open

8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

NCHER Board of Directors Meeting

The NCHER Board will meet to receive reports from the Chair, Treasurer, and President on the organization’s advocacy, communications, and regulatory strategies. The meeting is open to all members of NCHER.

12:00 p.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Bootcamp on NCHER’s Advocacy Priorities for 2023

NCHER has developed a comprehensive list of advocacy priorities geared toward improving federal student aid and private loan programs for students and families. During this session, the NCHER staff will hold a bootcamp for its members to discuss the policy and political environment and review NCHER’s Advocacy Priorities for 2023 in advance of Capitol Hill and Agency visits.

12:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

NCHER Members Hold Capitol Hill and Agency Visits

NCHER members are reminded to take this time to make appointments with their Congressional delegations, especially members of the House Education and Labor Committee and Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, to talk about their advocacy priorities for 2023. The NCHER staff is available to help members make appointments with House and Senate staff.

5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Welcome Reception

Tuesday, February 7, 2023

7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Registration Open

7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.

Breakfast

8:30 a.m. – 8:45 a.m.

Welcome

The NCHER leadership will welcome members to the conference and briefly discuss the conference program for the day.

Speaker

Christiana Thornton, Chair

National Council of Higher Education Resources

President and Chief Executive Officer

New Hampshire Higher Education Assistance Foundation Network

8:45 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.

Federal Update Impacting the Higher Education Finance Industry

It has been two years since the Biden Administration took office. Since then, the White House and U.S. Department of Education have extended the federal payment, interest, and collections pause put in place to assist borrowers impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic; announced a new federal student loan forgiveness program using waiver authority under the HEROES Act; announced the creation of a new Income-Driven Repayment Program; enacted borrower friendly changes to the federal student loan program such as revisions to the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program and the borrower defense to repayment process; announced that it will allow defaulted borrowers to get a fresh start back into repayment; and issued Dear Colleague Letter GEN 21-03, which requires guaranty agencies to assign those loans that defaulted during the pandemic to the agency. Recently, the U.S. Department of Justice announced new guidance governing how its attorneys will implement the “undue hardship” standard for borrowers in bankruptcy. With the start of the new Congress, divided government is back. Republicans enjoy a small majority in the U.S. House of Representatives while Democrats have a similar slim majority in the U.S. Senate – leading most observers to wonder what higher education policy will get enacted this year. This session will provide an update on federal developments and the outlook as we begin 2023.

Moderator/Speaker

Alex Nock, Principal

Penn Hill Group

Speakers

Lauren Maddox, Senior Policy Advisor

Holland & Knight LLP

Christopher Murray, Partner

Thompson Coburn LLP

9:45 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Break

10:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.

Higher Education Priorities of the U.S. Department of Education

From preparing student and parent borrowers for the restart of repayment to enacting new regulations around borrower defense to repayment, gainful employment, and Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program to carrying out new requirements passed by Congress to share taxpayer information to simplify the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, 2023 is sure to be a busy one for the U.S. Department of Education. During this session, Education Deputy Under Secretary Ben Miller will speak about the Department's policies and priorities, including reforms to the federal student loan program.

Introduction

Angela Baier, Chief Executive Officer
College Assist/College Invest

Speaker

Ben Miller, Deputy Under Secretary, Office of the Under Secretary
U.S. Department of Education

10:45 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Break

11:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Higher Education Priorities in the 118th Congress

House Education and the Workforce Committee Chairwoman Virginia Foxx (R-NC) will discuss her higher education priorities for the 118th Congress, including ideas to improve federal and private student loan programs and college access and success initiatives.

Introduction

Wendy McAlister, President
College Foundation, Inc.

Speaker

The Honorable Virginia Foxx (R-NC), Chairwoman
House Education and the Workforce Committee

11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Lunch and Celebration of Shelly Repp's Work with NCHER on Behalf of its Membership

1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Enrollment Trends in Postsecondary Education

Preliminary data from the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center saw higher education enrollment decline 1.1 percent in the fall of 2022, following a 2.1 percent drop in the preceding fall. These enrollment losses, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, represents a two-year decline of 3.2 percent since the fall of 2020. Both undergraduate and graduate enrollment decreased by 1.1 and 1.0 percent, respectively, while freshmen enrollment declined this fall by 1.5 percent after last year's increase of 2.2 percent. This session will review recent research and reports on postsecondary education enrollment and discuss current and anticipated trends at the public and private institutional level.

Introduction

Nathan Hench, Senior Vice President of Strategy and Public Affairs
Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency

Speaker

Aaron Pevitz, Research Analyst
National Student Clearinghouse

2:00 p.m. – 2:15 p.m.

Refreshment Break

2:15 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.

Viewpoint: Observations from College and University Leaders

Colleges and universities are on the front-line of working with students and families to ensure that they enroll in and then graduate from postsecondary education. As higher education and the workforce changes, colleges and universities must keep pace. In this session, college and university leaders will discuss what they are seeing on their campuses, including enrollment trends, and innovative approaches to create educational opportunities for a diverse student population to meet current and future workforce needs. The panel will provide perspectives on a range of current topics such as learner access, affordability, accountability, student outcomes, and value measures.

Moderator

Bryan Ashton, Chief Strategy and Growth Officer
Trellis Company

Speakers

Robert Collins, Vice President of Financial Aid
Western Governors University

Dr. Sue Ellspermann, President
Ivy Tech Community College

Jamie Fasteau, Vice President, Policy and Advocacy
Southern New Hampshire University

3:15 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Viewpoint: Managing During Uncertainty

The past year has been a time of unprecedented change and uncertainty for NCHER members. While we may have little to no control over many of the issues being released by the U.S. Department of Education, each of us still has to manage Board expectations and our staff's anxiety, while planning for an unknown future. In particular, as we await a decision on federal student loan forgiveness from the U.S. Supreme Court, additional details on the implementation and impact of Fresh Start, and confirmation on the future funding models and Voluntary Flexible Agreements for guarantors, we must continue to provide quality programs and services to students, borrowers, and families. In this

session, a panel of industry leaders will share how they are managing Board and staff through this period of ongoing uncertainty and change, ensuring their organizations stay true to their mission and business while exploring new opportunities. Audience discussion and participation is encouraged.

Moderator/Speaker

Kathleen Smith, Sr. VP, Director of Federal Relations, Outreach & Development, Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency

Speakers

Diana Barber, Executive Vice President
Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority

Debra Chromy, Ed.D, President and Chief Executive Officer
Trellis Company

Chad Tate, President
ECMC Group

4:30 p.m.

Conference Adjourns

Wednesday, February 8, 2023

7:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Registration Open

7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.

Breakfast

8:30 a.m. – 8:45 a.m.

Welcome

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Speaker

James P. Bergeron, President
National Council of Higher Education Resources

8:45 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.

Examining State Policy Impacting Higher Education Finance

Over the last year, numerous states have enacted new laws regulating private education loan programs on top of existing laws that require federal and private student loan servicers to obtain a license and meet competing requirements to protect borrowers. In this session, a panel of experts will discuss state consumer protection efforts impacting the higher education finance industry.

Moderator/Speaker

Phillip Wambsganss, Executive Director
Higher Education Servicing Corporation

Speaker

John L. Culhane, Jr., Partner
Ballard Spahr

9:45 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Break/Hotel Check Out

10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Congressional Staff Panel on Higher Education Policy

With the recent election, there are major changes coming to the House and Senate. Republicans now lead the House Education and the Workforce Committee while Democrats and Republicans have new leadership on the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. During this session, Democratic and Republican Congressional staff will discuss their higher education priorities for the 118th Congress and whether there are consensus areas for enactment of improvements to federal student aid programs.

Moderator

Ron Gambill, Executive Vice President of Student Lending and Legislative Affairs
ELFI (Education Loan Finance Inc.)

Speakers

Amaris Benavidez, Professional Staff Member
House Education and the Workforce Committee – Democratic Staff

Chance Russell, Professional Staff Member
House Education and the Workforce Committee – Republican Staff

11:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Conference Wrap Up and Closing Remarks

Speaker

James P. Bergeron, President
National Council of Higher Education Resources

12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

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