



We are pleased to present the annual report of the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO), highlighting the key themes and accomplishments of the past year. SHEEO's involvement in various initiatives and partnerships underscores its commitment to advancing higher education policy and practice. Projects such as the State Higher Education Finance report, state authorization research, state/federal partnership examination, and Communities of Practice demonstrate SHEEO's comprehensive approach to data-driven decision-making, equity advancement, and effective policy implementation.

As we move forward, SHEEO remains committed to promoting excellence and equity in higher education through collaboration, research, and advocacy. We look forward to the continued support and engagement of our members and partners in our shared mission of transforming higher education for the betterment of all students.

ANNUAL MEETING/POLICY CONFERENCE

After being canceled in 2021 due to COVID-19, the 2022 Annual Meeting was held in Boston, MA, July 11-14. The SHEEO Higher Education Policy Conference was held Aug. 8-11 in Indianapolis, IN. During the conferences, SHEEO awarded the fifth annual SHEEO Excellence Awards. Peter Blake, State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, received the Exceptional Leader Award, the Minnesota Office of Higher Education and Minnesota State received the Exceptional Agency Award, and Clantha McCurdy, Massachusetts Department of Higher Education, received the David L. Wright Memorial Award. The 2023 Annual Meeting is being held July 17-20 in Portland, OR. The 2023 SHEEO Higher Education Policy Conference is scheduled for Aug. 8-11 in Denver, CO.

CONSTITUENT GROUPS

During FY23, SHEEO continued to host regular virtual meetings of constituent groups among SHEEO agency staff. Convenings of agency leadership from academic affairs, communications, equity and diversity, finance, government relations, legal affairs, and research and data, include guest speakers, professional development, and the opportunity for collaboration and problem-solving with colleagues from other states. Many of these constituent groups convened in person during the 2022 SHEEO Higher Education Policy Conference.

VISION

Together with its members, SHEEO will promote an environment that values higher education and its role in ensuring the equitable education of all Americans, regardless of race/ethnicity, gender, or socioeconomic factors.

61 MEMBERS

Our members represent all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Northern Mariana Islands. SHEEO is made up of 34 coordinating/policy boards and 27 governing boards.

\$25.54M IN GRANT FUNDS SINCE 2003

Using grant funds, SHEEO has been able to support states through projects and research focused on important issues in higher education, including state higher education funding, tuition and fees, equity, diversity and inclusion, and state postsecondary data systems.

COLLEGE CLOSURES

With funding provided by Arnold Ventures, SHEEO's College Closure project published two reports (with a third and final report to be released at the end of July) that quantify the impacts of college closures on student persistence and completion. With approximately 12,000 campuses closing between 2004 and 2020, institutional closures present a significant challenge for students and for states to fulfill their consumer protection mission. Using a sample of more than 143,000 students who attended institutions that closed between 2004 and 2020, our results demonstrate that closure has a harmful effect on student outcomes. Overall, less than half (47.1%) of students who experienced a closure in our sample subsequently reenrolled at a postsecondary institution. Of those who reenrolled, 36.8% earned a postsecondary credential, likely their first-ever undergraduate credential, and an additional 10.4% remained enrolled as of February 2022. The remaining 52.9% left without earning a credential after reenrollment. Full results are available on our college closure website (<https://sheeo.org/project/college-closures/>), including an interactive tool that allows users to explore outcomes by student demographics and institutional characteristics.

COMMUNICATION EFFORTS

SHEEO's communications efforts have grown and expanded over the last fiscal year. SHEEO added several new project pages and membership resources to the SHEEO website. One communication strategy used in FY23 was to feature SHEEO staff on social media to help highlight the work being done across the organization. As a result, SHEEO's social media channels have seen a 20% increase in engagement, including 100,000 impressions across platforms. Despite our Twitter account losing more than 300 followers in fall 2022 due to Twitter's volatility, the SHEEO account saw a significant bounce back in spring 2023, bringing a net increase of 150 followers over the year. SHEEO's presence on LinkedIn has also grown over the past fiscal year, with followers growing from 988 (July 2022) to 1,500 (June 2023). SHEEO's three websites (sheeo.org, shef.sheeo.org and postsecondarydata.sheeo.org) reached a combined 77,634 unique users in FY23. SHEEO issued 19 press releases and appeared as a resource or reference in 130 media stories. Email communication and newsletter groups continue to increase as well.

STATE AUTHORIZATION RESEARCH

With support from Arnold Ventures and Lumina Foundation, SHEEO began a project that is designed to provide states with new research and best practices to improve state authorization. There are four primary components to this project. First, SHEEO has convened a working group of finance experts, state officials, accreditors, and academics to explore financial viability metrics to help state authorizing agencies improve financial screening. Second, SHEEO is working with researchers at the University of Georgia to study effective state authorization and renewal practices, given the capacity constraints of state authorization offices. Third, SHEEO is working with the University of Georgia research team to construct an inventory of current renewal practices. Finally, we will be writing a series of white papers that compile the project's findings into actionable solutions for states.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

During FY23, SHEEO convened chief DEI officers and academic officers in meetings to discuss state priorities and introduce collaborative opportunities, including in person at the August 2022 policy conference. Meetings included presentations by partners on federal, state, and institutional policies to improve the equitable impact on diverse student populations through community college completion, digital equity, equity through accreditation, direct admissions, and higher education in prison.

New or continuing learning communities with a stated design to address inequities for students of color, low-income, and/or rural students include CUNY ASAP state replication; student mental health and well-being; state authorization, closures, and financial viability; direct admissions; and credit transfer for equitable attainment. The learning community on credit transfer has facilitated a particular focus on centering diverse student voices, including students of color, adult students, and students experiencing disabilities to broaden policy and practice from articulation pathways only to include the supports needed for successful transfer for all students.

DIRECT ADMISSIONS

With funding from the Joyce Foundation, SHEEO, in collaboration with researchers from the University of Illinois, University of Wisconsin Madison, and the University of Iowa, is working with a variety of states at different stages of policy implementation related to common applications and direct admissions to (1) enhance policy development and knowledge-sharing by convening an ongoing Community of Practice around common applications and direct admissions to promote equity-minded college access policies; and (2) perform rigorous evaluations of the effectiveness of direct admissions and common application systems for wide distribution in academic, policy, and public spaces. The Direct Admissions Community of Practice, launched in July 2021, includes Hawaii, Idaho, and Minnesota. Additional states requesting technical assistance of our Community of Practice include Connecticut, Wisconsin, Indiana, Georgia, and Montana. Webinars have included presentations by practitioners and researchers about equitable student recruitment and state common application and direct admissions policies.

STATE/FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP

SHEEO has received a grant from the Kresge Foundation to examine the state-federal financing relationship in higher education and has been active over the past year on information gathering for a report. The research has included a mix of qualitative interviews with SHEEOs as well as a survey that has been distributed to the entire SHEEO membership this summer. The survey questions explore the views of SHEEO members on college affordability, the relationship between the federal government and states on making college affordable, and federal policy proposals pertaining to free community college and free public universities. The final report will be issued this fall and the themes from the report will be integrated into SHEEO's policy agenda.

FAFSA SIMPLIFICATION

Changes coming to the FAFSA and the federal financial aid methodology will provide greater access to Pell Grants and provide an opportunity to reconsider state financial aid programs, policies, and processes to improve outcomes for low-income, first-generation, students of color, and other underrepresented populations. The U.S. Department of Education has announced that the new FAFSA, which was supposed to launch on October 1, 2023, will be delayed until sometime in December 2023. Our FAFSA Simplification project is well timed to help states adjust to this new timeline, coordinate communication efforts, and provide technical assistance (TA) to all states. The project consists of four primary components: (1) provide TA to the U.S. Department of Education's office of Federal Student Aid (FSA); (2) serve as a communication bridge from FSA to the states and from the states to FSA; (3) provide TA to all states on the FAFSA Simplification Act and related financial aid topics; (4) coordinate a Learning Community of states that are dedicated to improving financial aid processes and policies.

NCES DATA CONFERENCE

SHEEO, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Education, organized the 2023 National Center for Education Statistics State Data Conference. The in-person convening was held May 1-3 in Arlington, VA, and nearly 100 state-level postsecondary data practitioners attended. Attendees received training and updates on upcoming developments in the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System. Sessions also addressed use of the IPEDS Finance Survey, state higher education funding models, cross-sector data collaboration through the Coleridge Initiative, using IPEDS data through an equity lens to improve outcomes, insights into the Post-Secondary Employment Outcomes (PSEO) coalition, using higher education data to inform federal policy debates, SHEEO's State Higher Education Finance (SHEF) survey results, modeling changes to student aid eligibility under the FAFSA Simplification Act, and federal policy change impacts on IPEDS and state data systems.

MEMBER SITE VISITS

Since 2017, the SHEEO staff have engaged in a series of site visits to SHEEO member agencies. The purpose of these visits is to identify issues of greatest importance to our members, receive updates on current projects, and promote engagement among SHEEO staff and SHEEO agency staff. Site visits typically include two members of the SHEEO leadership staff meeting with the agency chief executive, and leadership in academic affairs, finance, research/policy analysis, and communications/external relations departments. In 2022, SHEEO staff visited the Connecticut Board of Regents for Higher Education, the Connecticut Office of Higher Education, the Idaho State Board of Education, the Indiana Commission on Higher Education, the Minnesota Office of Higher Education, Minnesota State, the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and the State Council for Higher Education for Virginia.

GRAPEVINE AND STATE HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE

SHEEO published the 2022 State Higher Education Finance (SHEF) report in late May 2023, including an interactive website with customizable visualizations and maps, data downloads, and state profiles. The latest SHEF report finds that in 2022, public higher education appropriations increased 4.9% beyond inflation, surpassing pre-recession per-student funding levels for the first time since 2008. Fiscal year 2022 saw the second largest public FTE enrollment decline since the start of the SHEF dataset in 1980, and tuition revenue continued to decline.

Using initial data from states, the Grapevine report was released in February 2023. For the second year, Grapevine included sector-level data and details on the sources of federal stimulus funding used for higher education. The Grapevine report provides a first, tentative look at state higher education funding in the new fiscal year, with complete data, taking inflation into consideration, released with the SHEF report.

In 2023, SHEEO published the capital appropriations, performance-based funding allocations, and net tuition and FTE enrollment by residency datasets as individual data insight webpages on the SHEF website. SHEEO designed these data insight pages to provide tables, figures, and data downloads for each respective dataset using SHEF data collected from our members. A new series of issue briefs, focused on topics such as federal grant aid and local appropriations, will be released in the coming months.

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

SHEEO has been engaged in a wide range of government relations activities over the past year. SHEEO has championed federal investments in higher education, offered technical assistance for federal and policy proposals, and acted as a liaison between the states and the federal government. SHEEO has also been an active partner among DC higher education associations as part of the Washington Secretariat, working on issues including the implementation of the Postsecondary Student Success Fund (PSSF) and other issues. In addition, SHEEO has been engaged with the federal government to help implement new federal policies in higher education, including the redesigned FAFSA, digital equity, and other issues. Lastly, SHEEO's government relations team has been active in pursuing and securing research grants in collaboration with other divisions within the association, including on student mental health. Current areas of exploration for future grants include student basic needs and Pell Grants for prison education. SHEEO continues to offer a range of services to SHEEOs and their teams in government relations, including daily policy emails, a weekly federal policy update, and a monthly government relations Zoom call.

FEDERAL POLICY PRIORITIES

SHEEO, together with our members, is focused on six main federal policy priorities for 2023.

1. Make College More Affordable
2. Strengthen Institutional Capacity
3. Increase College Access and Student Success
4. Create a High-Skilled Workforce and Grow the Economy
5. Improve Institutional Quality and Strengthen Accountability
6. Build an Equity-Focused Research and Data Infrastructure

STRONG FOUNDATIONS AND COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

SHEEO continued work on its Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation-funded Strong Foundations and Communities of Practice (CoP) project in FY23. This multifaceted project promotes the effective use of state postsecondary data systems and provides a forum for states to convene and work on solutions to common issues with those systems. From November 2022 through January 2023, SHEEO developed the 2023 iteration of the Strong Foundations survey. As a part of this development, SHEEO held two virtual meetings and one in-person meeting with our Strong Foundations advisory board, who provided input into survey questions. The board is composed of chief data and research officers from our member agencies and postsecondary data policy experts from SHEEO's partner organizations. The 2023 survey was administered from February through March of 2023. SHEEO presented initial results from the survey at the 2023 AIR Forum in Cleveland, OH, on May 31, and is in the process of writing its first report based on those results. That report, which will be focused on the value of postsecondary data student unit record systems to state goals and outcomes, will be published in late September 2023.

SHEEO convened its "Improving Equity and Opportunity through Postsecondary Data" CoP on September 28-29, 2022, in Denver, CO. Eighteen state teams participated. The convening included sessions on using data and an equity lens to advance equity in higher education; equity- and opportunity-focused metrics and measurements; use of data disaggregation to inform insight and change; communicating equity and opportunity through data visualizations; embedding equity into data infrastructures; and engaging state boards and leadership in equity work. On April 11-12, 2023, SHEEO convened another CoP (also in Denver), "Connecting Funding Formulas to State Goals Using Postsecondary Data," with 14 state team participants. Convening topics included the funding formula landscape; connecting student record and finance data; operationalizing state goals; using data to improve cost analysis; and integrating data into funding formulas. Demand for this CoP was so great, SHEEO will be hosting this event again from September 19-20, 2023, in Denver, with 10 state teams participating.

TRANSFER POLICY STANDARDS

In FY23, SHEEO continued work on its ECMC Foundation-funded Transfer Policy Standards project, which promotes the development and adoption of state- and system-wide transfer standards that contribute to equitable attainment. SHEEO and its partner in this project, the Gardner Institute, worked extensively with participating states to develop action plans to improve transfer pathways for students of color and low-income students. SHEEO held a culminating convening in Denver February 28-March 1, 2023, during which teams from nine states learned more about the Gardner self-study process and the role of state policy in equitable transfer.

STRADA ADVISORY GROUP AND PLANNING GRANT

In FY23, SHEEO received a planning grant to help inform Strada regarding state priorities related to postsecondary education and workforce alignment. An advisory group of SHEEO members met throughout the year to provide feedback on initiatives related to Strada's new strategic plan.

SHEEO STAFF

SHEEO made a number of new hires and promotions in FY23. Jessica Duren became strategic communications director in December 2022, Alicia Engels director of events in January 2023, and Sakshee Chawla senior policy analyst in June 2023. Carrie Klein and Dustin Weeden were promoted to associate vice president in May 2023.

STAFF TITLES

- Robert Anderson, *President*
- Gloria Auer, *Executive Assistant*
- Pearson Brown, *Intern*
- Rachel Burns, *Senior Policy Analyst*
- Sakshee Chawla, *Senior Policy Analyst*
- Jessica Colorado, *Policy Analyst*
- Jessica Duren, *Strategic Communications Director*
- Alicia Engels, *Director of Events*
- Kristine Espinoza, *Intern*
- Tom Harnisch, *Vice President for Government Relations*
- Kelsey Heckert, *Data Manager*
- Jiah Kim, *IT Systems and Database Manager*
- Carrie Klein, *Associate Vice President*
- Kelsey Kunkle, *Policy Analyst*
- John Lane, *Vice President for Academic Affairs and Equity Initiatives*
- Andrea Maertens, *Human Resources Consultant*
- David Szczesny, *Director of Finance*
- Dustin Weeden, *Associate Vice President*
- Christina Whitfield, *Senior Vice President and Chief of Staff*

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**SHEEO**

STATE HIGHER EDUCATION EXECUTIVE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION