



SHEEO

State Higher Education
Executive Officers Association

FY 2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

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.

SHEEO MEMBER EVENTS

The 2023 Annual Meeting was held in Portland, Oregon, July 17-20. The SHEEO Higher Education Policy Conference was held Aug. 7-10 in Denver, Colorado, with nearly 500 participants, a record attendance. During the conferences, SHEEO awarded the sixth annual SHEEO Excellence Awards. Michael Meotti, from the Washington Student Achievement Council, received the Exceptional Leader Award, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board received the Exceptional Agency Award, and Tracey Cook, from the University of Georgia System, received the David L. Wright Memorial Award. The 2024 Annual Meeting is being held July 15-18 in Washington, D.C. The 2024 SHEEO Higher Education Policy Conference is scheduled for Aug. 5-8, also in Washington, D.C.

CONSTITUENT GROUPS

During FY24, 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 2023 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.

62 MEMBERS

Our members represent all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Northern Mariana Islands. SHEEO is made up of 35 coordinating/policy boards and 27 governing boards.

\$27.67M IN GRANT FUNDS SINCE 2014

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.

ADEQUATE AND EQUITABLE FUNDING

SHEEO began a new project this year designed to help states review and assess the efficacy of current funding models. A growing number of states are exploring opportunities to more effectively leverage public funding to meet critical needs and improve success for all students regardless of their backgrounds. With support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Joyce Foundation, and Lumina Foundation, SHEEO is partnering with the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Student Success Through Applied Research (SSTAR) Lab to develop an analysis framework that states can use to examine current distributions of state funding and identify opportunities for improvement to more effectively meet state goals. Additionally, SHEEO is creating a learning community of state teams that will pilot the analysis framework, explore innovations in state funding models, and discuss how to incorporate the latest research into the design of funding models.

ASAP REPLICATION

SHEEO and the City University of New York's (CUNY) Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) | Accelerate, Complete, and Engage (ACE) National Replication Collaborative formed a new learning community that supports replication of the CUNY ASAP|ACE model to increase community college completion rates at scale. With support from PricewaterhouseCoopers Charitable Foundation, SHEEO and CUNY ASAP|ACE is partnering with higher education leaders in Colorado, New Jersey, North Carolina, Michigan, and Washington to develop action plans to close equity gaps and increase college completion rates at community colleges.

States received planning grants, consultative strategic planning, webinars, and technical assistance to design sustainable whole student support models within their unique contexts. Project topics include state investments and ROI, evidence-based strategies, and components of scaling.

Two convenings were held in FY24, including a learning community kick-off in Manhattan in November 2023, and the U.S. Department of Education's Raise the Bar Summit on Student Success in Washington, D.C., in April 2024.

CIVIC LEARNING AND DEMOCRACY ENGAGEMENT

SHEEO continues to be a leading partner organization in the Civic Learning and Democracy Engagement Coalition (CLDE). The CLDE brings together organizations and postsecondary institutions working on civic learning and collaborative community-based problem-solving in ways appropriate to their missions and students. This fiscal year, SHEEO hosted a national convening of the Multi-State Collaborative, a partnership of 11 states working on civic learning and democratic engagement, to discuss a range of issues, including boosting collective impact, connecting students' civic learning with inclusion, workforce readiness and positioning the collaborative as a national commitment to renew higher education's public good mission. In addition, SHEEO co-presented with CLDE members and partners at the Democracy360 conference in Charlottesville, Virginia in October 2023 and at the Complete College America national convening in Las Vegas, Nevada in December 2023.

COMMUNICATION EFFORTS

SHEEO's communications efforts have grown and expanded over the last fiscal year. SHEEO's websites received a much-needed refresh for consistency across sites, including updated headers and footers. SHEEO updated its logo to represent and celebrate our 70th anniversary across platforms. SHEEO's presence on LinkedIn has grown significantly over the past fiscal year, with followers nearly doubling from June 2023 to June 2024. SHEEO issued 24 press releases and appeared as a resource or reference for over 100 media stories. Email communication and newsletter groups continue to increase as well.

DIRECT ADMISSIONS

In May 2024, SHEEO issued, "[The Impact of the Idaho Direct Admissions Program on Institution Selectivity](#)," the culminating publication of the SHEEO Direct Admissions learning community. With funding from the Joyce Foundation, SHEEO launched the community in July 2021 with higher education agencies and systems in Hawai'i, Idaho, and Minnesota. Agency and system leaders collaborated with researchers from the University of Illinois, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and the University of Iowa on the different stages of their state policy implementation of common applications and direct admissions. Idaho's first-in-the-nation direct admissions policies, designed to simplify the path to college for high school students through proactive state-institution admissions, resulted in data about high school GPAs, standardized tests, gender, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, enabling analysis and findings about enrollment trends at more selective public institutions helpful to state agencies considering related admissions policies.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

During FY24, SHEEO staff promoted equitable student access and success across numerous policy projects and activities with members, including state authorization, comprehensive student support at community colleges, student and faculty mental health and wellness, postsecondary education in prison programs, admissions and financial aid. SHEEO convened chief DEI officers and academic officers to discuss state priorities and introduce collaborative opportunities, including in person at the August 2023 policy conference. SHEEO staff and organization partners made presentations on federal, state, and institutional policies to improve the equitable impact on diverse student populations at conferences on accreditation, state authorization, Department of Education summits, and Native higher education policy.

New or continuing learning communities with a stated intent to address inequities for students of color, low-income, and/or rural students include Pursuing Alignment for Student Success (PASS); digital wallets for veterans and servicemembers; CUNY ASAP|ACE state replication; student mental health and wellbeing; and state authorization, closures, and financial viability. Staff are participating in new collaboratives with leaders in Native American higher education college access and success policies, and exploring ways with DEI officers to better support their work.

EVIDENCE-BASED STUDENT SUCCESS COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

With support from Arnold Ventures, SHEEO hosted a community of practice focused on advancing an evidence-based student success policy agenda June 27-28, 2024, in Alexandria, Virginia. Teams from 11 states explored effective, scalable policies and practices to improve student outcomes. The convening included sessions on identifying effective student success strategies; designing and scaling comprehensive student success policies; strategies to better serve adult learners; addressing basic needs to improve student outcomes; evidence-based practices to address affordability; incorporating work-based learning into state strategies; and communication and outreach strategies. In the coming months, SHEEO will provide technical assistance to each of the state teams to help them carry out action plans for improving student success.

FAFSA SIMPLIFICATION

While the rollout of the 2024-25 FAFSA was plagued with delays and technical challenges that resulted in fewer students completing the application for federal aid, SHEEO worked closely to help states navigate and overcome these challenges. Through a learning community and a broader webinar series, SHEEO developed resources and shared best practices for communicating to students and families about the ongoing delays and solutions for the challenges states faced throughout the filing cycle. Additionally, SHEEO was in regular communication with the U.S. Department of Education (ED) to ensure staff at the Office of Student Aid were aware of and responding to the challenges states were facing.

Although the 2024-25 FAFSA filing cycle was a difficult one, changes to the federal financial aid methodology are expected to expand access to Pell Grants and may have a trickle-down effect on state aid programs. SHEEO published a guidebook that outlines how these changes at the federal level can impact eligibility and budgets of state aid programs. With ongoing challenges associated with the FAFSA, SHEEO's project has been extended for two more years. Over this time period, SHEEO will expand the learning community to 18 states and continue to provide guidance to states and communicate state-level concerns to the ED.

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

SHEEO continues to advocate for federal policies that support the mission of state higher education agencies and systems. SHEEO has called for building on the Pell Grant and other federal student aid programs, helped shape policy proposals from the U.S. Department of Education and Congress, and connected membership and their teams to federal officials. SHEEO has partnered with other higher education associations as part of the Washington Secretariat to advance policies and priorities of mutual interest. Over the past year, SHEEO has focused on the FAFSA rollout, along with issues related to student mental health, and federal data collection. SHEEO continues to offer a range of services to its member and their teams in policy and government relations, including daily policy emails, a weekly federal policy update, a monthly government relations Zoom call, and a quarterly state policy review.

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 2023, SHEEO staff visited the Arizona Board of Regents, the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education, the New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, and the Vermont State Colleges System.

NONCREDIT MOBILITY ACADEMY

In Fall 2023, SHEEO launched the Noncredit Mobility Academy (NMA), a two-year initiative in partnership with Education Strategy Group (ESG) and Opportunity America at the Progressive Policy Institute (PPI) and funded by Ascendium Education and the ECMC Foundation. The project supports states as they build data, policy, and communications capacity to better realize the potential of noncredit education and increase economic mobility for learners who begin their postsecondary journey through noncredit programming. In December 2023, SHEEO, ESG, and PPI selected six states - Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Montana, Texas, and Virginia - to participate in the NMA. Teams will work with coaches and subject matter experts to create taxonomies for noncredit programs, improve noncredit data collection, develop funding recommendations for noncredit programs, and better communicate about noncredit pathways. State teams convened virtually on April 30, 2024, to share vision plans and initial change plans.

PURSUING ALIGNMENT FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

SHEEO has partnered with Sova to form a new learning community promoting collaboration between state agencies and institutional academic leaders for more equitable student success. With funding from the Ascendium Education Group, the Pursuing Alignment for Student Success Across Higher Education Institutions & State Agencies (PASS) project team is partnering with higher education leaders in Kentucky, North Carolina, Louisiana, and Wyoming to better align student success policies and practices.

PASS will focus on scaling the impact of student success efforts by formalizing state networks and promoting strategies between institutional leadership teams and state higher education leaders. Institutional chief academic officers will provide insights into current initiatives and best practices to support student needs and catalyze campus-wide support for their success. In addition, institutions will benefit from enhanced access to policy development across sectors, missions, geographic regions, and services, while SHEEO agencies use their statewide platforms to serve as conduits of best-practice exchange and to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges institutions face and how best to coordinate advocacy for their students.

STATE AUTHORIZATION RESEARCH

With support from Arnold Ventures and Lumina Foundation, SHEEO's state authorization project is designed to provide states with new research and best practices to improve consumer protections. 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, SHEEO will be writing a series of white papers that compile the project's findings into actionable solutions for states.

STATE HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE

SHEEO published the 2023 State Higher Education Finance (SHEF) report in May 2024, including a website with customizable visualizations and maps, data downloads, and state profiles. The latest **SHEF report** finds that in 2023, public higher education appropriations increased 3.7% beyond inflation, surpassing pre-recession per-student funding levels for the second time since 2008. Fiscal year 2023 saw the largest decline in net tuition and fee revenue since the start of the SHEF dataset in 1980, and FTE enrollment continued to decline.

Using initial data from states, the **Grapevine report**, which provides a first, tentative look at state higher education funding in the new fiscal year was released in February 2024. For the third year, Grapevine included sector-level data and details on the sources of federal stimulus funding used for higher education.

In June 2024, 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. Also in June 2024, SHEEO published the FY 2021-2022 State Effort and Capacity report on the SHEF website.

STRADA ADVISORY GROUP AND PLANNING GRANT

In FY24, SHEEO continued to work with the Strada Education Foundation regarding state priorities related to postsecondary education and workforce alignment. An advisory group of SHEEO members met throughout the year to provide feedback on Strada's strategic plan.

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 FY24. 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.

In FY24, SHEEO published two reports based on the 2023 Strong Foundations survey administration. "**State Postsecondary Data: Evolving Systems, Improving Insights, and Enduring Value**" focused on the growth and development of state postsecondary student unit record systems (PSURs), including what data elements state agencies collect; how they disaggregate, connect, and use those data to support state goals and student outcomes; and the value of PSURs to state efforts. "**State Postsecondary Data: How Data Governance and Funding Influence Innovation and Sustainability**" examined the ongoing efforts and challenges associated with safeguarding data integrity and privacy and promoting the sustainable growth of PSURs. In January 2024, SHEEO also released the updated **Postsecondary Data website**, which includes a repository of Strong Foundations reports, CoP convening resources, and Strong Foundations survey results with new **interactive data dashboards**.

During FY24, SHEEO conducted two CoPs associated with Strong Foundations. The "**Connecting Funding Formulas to State Goals Using Postsecondary Data**" CoP, was held in Denver, Colorado, Sept. 19-20, 2023. Ten state teams convened to discuss 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. On Feb. 7-8, 2024, SHEEO convened the "**Exploring Multistate and Multisector Data Sharing Projects**" CoP in Alexandria, Virginia. During this convening, 13 states discussed the value, opportunities, and challenges of sharing and using cross-state and cross-sector data; ways to build better connections between education and workforce data; the necessary technical, legal, and personnel conditions to foster successful multi-state and multi-system data projects; and multi-state and multi-sector data projects focused on employment outcomes, prison to education pathways, veterans' pathways, and credentials of value.

STUDENT LOAN BORROWER SUPPORT

In May 2024, SHEEO contracted with Lumina Foundation to plan a Community of Practice to improve states' understanding of challenges faced by student borrowers. SHEEO is partnering with the Community Service Society of New York to identify opportunities for states to support borrowers navigating the loan repayment system. A call for state teams will be issued this summer, followed by a multi-state convening in late 2024.

STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

With support from Lumina Foundation, SHEEO and The Jed Foundation (JED) are partnering with higher education leaders in Arizona, Louisiana, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Texas to bolster institutions' capabilities to support student mental health and wellness.

The Student Mental Health and Wellness Learning Community provides a forum for states to reflect on current practices, refine their strategies, and identify areas for cross-state collaboration. The community will also help engage new policymakers and stakeholders in efforts to advance student mental health and wellness with special attention to underserved student groups that experience disparities in access to mental health care. The JED Campus Program and JED Equitable Implementation Framework serve as anchoring guides for technical assistance to the SHEEO membership and state policymakers.

The learning community's April 2024 convening in Minneapolis, Minnesota, included a pre-convening tour of the South Minneapolis George Floyd World Memorial, and panels by students, SHEEOs, participating states and researchers, describing life experiences, campus solutions, and best practices.

SHEEO STAFF

SHEEO made two new hires in FY24. Sean Baser became Senior Policy Analyst in October 2023, and Brenna Mathews became Administrative Coordinator in July 2024.

STAFF TITLES

- Robert Anderson, *President*
- Sean Baser, *Senior Policy Analyst*
- Rachel Burns, *Senior Policy Analyst*
- Sakshee Chawla, *Senior Policy Analyst*
- Jessica Colorado, *Policy Analyst*
- Jessica Duren, *Strategic Communications Director*
- Alicia Engels, *Director of Events*
- Gus Gluek, *State Policy Intern*
- Tom Harnisch, *Vice President for Government Relations*
- Kelsey Heckert, *Data Manager*
- Kahlea Khabir, *State Policy Intern*
- 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*
- Brenna Mathews, *Administrative Coordinator*
- David Szczesny, *Director of Finance*
- Dustin Weeden, *Associate Vice President*
- Christina Whitfield, *Senior Vice President and Chief of Staff*