



NEWS RELEASE

from

AICUP

Association of Independent Colleges
and Universities of Pennsylvania

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HUNDREDS OF INDEPENDENT COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY STUDENTS CONVENE AT STATE CAPITOL TO URGE LEGISLATIVE SUPPORT OF FINANCIAL AID PROGRAMS THIS BUDGET SEASON

HARRISBURG, April 22, 2015 – Students from more than 30 independent colleges and universities took their studies from the halls of hallowed learning institutions to the mahogany-lined halls of the Pennsylvania Capitol Building yesterday as they convened for the Association of Independent College & Universities of Pennsylvania’s (AICUP) 2015 Student Lobby Day. Nearly two hundred independent college and university students and faculty wielded their informational packets as they wound their way through the building meeting with legislators and staff. Participants also had the chance to attend legislative session as Rep. Marguerite Quinn (R-Bucks) and Sen. Kim Ward (R-Westmoreland) offered resolutions declaring April 21, 2015 Independent College Day in Pennsylvania.

During their legislative meetings, participants asked lawmakers to increase their support for higher education through the many notable financial aid programs available to students and their families. The event at the Capitol also marked the kick-off of the “I am Independent” social media campaign. AICUP President Don Francis said the campaign will highlight one young motivated student per week whose life has been changed by attending a private Pennsylvania college or university.

Francis said, “It was an encouraging sight to see so many engaged, active students attend the lobby day to make their voices heard. We understand that state legislators have some very difficult decisions ahead of them in the coming months. However, we want to remind them that the policy decisions they make don’t simply impact institutions; choices made by the General Assembly will also have a direct impact upon students and their families, possibly for years to come.”

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As part of their state budget requests, the student lobbyists asked lawmakers to increase PHEAA state grant funding by 5 percent, or \$17.2 million, as Governor Wolf has proposed level funding for the program this year. Additionally, they asked lawmakers to support the governor's \$10 million increase for the Ready to Succeed Scholarship (RTSS) program and \$5 million increase for Institutional Assistance Grants. Finally, they requested a no-vote on the governor's plan to expand the sales tax to textbooks, meal plans and student fees, taxes which would all directly impact students' wallets to the tune of an additional \$400 per year.

The Association of Independent Colleges & Universities of Pennsylvania (AICUP), the only statewide organization that serves exclusively the interests of private higher education within the Commonwealth, exists to complement and support the work of campus leaders. With a membership of 89 private colleges and universities within Pennsylvania, the Association provides a variety of services and programs tailored specifically to the needs and situation of independent higher education. A list of AICUP's member colleges and universities is included on its website at www.aicup.org.

For more information about increased financial support for Pennsylvania's independent colleges and universities, [click here](#). Photos from yesterday's lobby day can be found [here](#).

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