

Sarah Flanagan
Vice President for Government Relations and Policy Development

Sarah Flanagan has headed the government relations staff of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU) since 1994. As vice president for government relations, Flanagan directs a comprehensive government relations effort, in coordination with related state associations, that focuses on issues of government regulation, student financial assistance, and tax policy.

NAICU, which represents more than 1,000 independent colleges, universities and related associations nationwide, is the primary advocate for private higher education before Congress, the U. S. Department of Education and other federal agencies, and monitors state initiatives affecting private higher education.

During her tenure at NAICU, Flanagan has been instrumental in a number of successful policy efforts, including securing sustained bipartisan political and funding support for the core federal student aid programs; creating new tax incentives for families to save and pay for college; and helping to ensure an appropriate balance between federal support for students and oversight of colleges and universities. Flanagan has an extensive background in higher education policy, education, and the federal government.

Before joining NAICU, she was the professional staff member for higher education on the Senate Subcommittee on Education, Arts and Humanities. In this capacity, she was responsible for federal student aid programs and was intimately involved in the drafting of the 1992 reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. The Subcommittee was chaired by Senator Claiborne Pell of Rhode Island.

From 1993-94, she served as staff director of the Senate Subcommittee on Children, Family, Drugs and Alcoholism under Senator Christopher Dodd (D-Conn.) Prior to working in the U. S. Senate, Flanagan worked for the Close Up Foundation as an instructor, teacher trainer, and curriculum specialist.

Flanagan holds a bachelor's degree in humanities from Providence College, a master's degree in teaching from Rhode Island College, and a secondary teaching certificate in social studies and history from the State of Rhode Island. She is a trustee of Mary Baldwin College, a Trustee Emerita of Providence College, and an occasional teacher on higher education policy and politics.