Sarah A. Flanagan  
Vice President for Government Relations and Policy Development

Sarah Flanagan directs a comprehensive government relations effort focused on issues of government regulation, student financial assistance, and tax policy in coordination with NAICU’s related state associations.

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 under the late Senator Claiborne Pell (D-RI), and the staff director for the Senate Subcommittee on Children, Families, Drugs and Alcoholism under Senator Christopher Dodd (D-CT).

Flanagan earned a bachelor’s degree from Providence College (RI) and a master’s degree in teaching from Rhode Island College. She currently serves on the Board of Trustees of Beacon College (FL) and is a trustee emerita at Providence College (RI) and at Mary Baldwin University (VA).

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About the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities

The National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU) serves as the unified voice for the 1,700 private, nonprofit colleges and universities in our nation. Founded in 1976, NAICU is the only national membership organization solely focused on representing private, nonprofit higher education on public policy issues in Washington, DC.

NAICU’s membership reflects the diversity of private, nonprofit higher education in the U.S. Our member institutions include major research universities, faith-based colleges, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-Serving Institutions and other Minority-Serving Institutions, art and design colleges, conservatories of music, traditional liberal arts and science institutions, women’s colleges, work colleges, two-year colleges and schools of law, medicine, engineering, business and other professions.

Each year, private, nonprofit colleges and universities graduate more than 1.2 million students. Additionally, the economic impact of the private, nonprofit sector of higher education for academic year 2022-23 totaled $652 billion, and the sector generated $99 billion in tax revenues and supported and sustained 3.4 million jobs.