

## COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY

**Executive Director's Note:** *Previously, ASUM focused exclusively on securing additional state appropriations for higher education. We've expanded our college affordability mission to reflect existing realities relating to the student debt problem, which include, but go much further, than state appropriations.*

### **State Appropriations Request**

In accordance with established practice, we will continue to support the UM System's annual request for state appropriations. We will also advocate for increases in funding for statewide scholarship programs, such as Access Missouri.

### **Student Debt Legislation**

- "Student Debt Relief Act" – Legislation would establish policies and procedures enabling students and their families to refinance their debt at lower rates and to consolidate their debt to ensure easier repayment and lower likelihood of delinquency and default.
- "Student Borrower Bill of Rights" – Legislation would create the Office of the Student Loans Ombudsman to investigate borrower complaints against loan servicers; establish an informational course to ensure borrowers are aware of the complexities of student loans and repayment options; and would require student loan servicers to be licensed by the state.

### **Statewide Work Study Legislation**

- "Allan Purdy Work-Study Program" – Would expand funding available to and occupations eligible for work study programs to assist college students in paying for living expenses. Work study could be initiated with off-campus employers, which increases the number of opportunities to students and recognizes that commuting to on-campus employment is limiting for some students. Requires that no less than 60-percent of funding must go toward students demonstrating financial need.

### **Textbook Expenditures**

- Oppose any effort to impose additional costs on college textbooks, such as last year's "Streamlined Sales Tax Agreement," which would have increased the sales tax associated with buying a textbook in Missouri.
- Support efforts by the University of Missouri System to implement Open Educational Resources (OER; free textbooks) across all introductory courses. Will build support among lawmakers as appropriate or requested.
- Oppose any legislation—which has been seen in other states—that would attempt to preempt OER initiatives with "affordable textbook" programs. These programs are pushed by publishers and are a means of reducing costs but also ownership, and preventing more wholesale movement toward free and open textbook models.