



Partners for  
College Affordability  
AND PUBLIC TRUST

# Questions about College Affordability: Governing Boards of Public Colleges and Universities

Members of governing boards of public colleges and universities should have the resources they need to make more informed decisions about college affordability. These are questions that board members should ask themselves and the institutions they govern.

## My Role

- Do I have a clear understanding of the state's higher education **goals** and how the institution's **mission** aligns with those goals?
- Do I understand how to **balance my fiduciary duty to the taxpayers** I represent with the policies and practices of the institution I govern?

## The Institution's Business Model

- Do I know how much it **costs** to educate a student at the institution?
- What are the **differences in cost** by degree level and by program?
- Do I know how the institution **earns** its revenue?
- Do I know how the institution **spends** its revenue?
- Do I know how the institution ensures **operational efficiency** while improving academic quality?
- Do I know how the institution ensures that the cost of **future investments** in **educational quality** and student success don't unnecessarily get passed on to students and families?
- Do I have the information I need to make decisions about the **fiscal sustainability** of the institution?

## Tuition and Fees

- Do I understand how **tuition and fees** are determined at the institution?
- Do I understand the potential **impacts of changes** in tuition and fees that I approve?
- Do I have opportunities to **hear from students, families, and members of the public** before I make decisions about tuition and fees?

## Affordability for Students and Families

- Do I know how much grant or scholarship **aid students receive**?
- Do I know how much students pay **out-of-pocket** to attend?
- Do I know how many take out **student loans**?
- Do I know how much **debt** they accrue when they leave—whether they graduate or not?
- Do I know how many of them **repay their student loans**?
- Do I know how many of them **default** on their loans?
- Do I know if they **earn a living** after they graduate?
- Do I know if there are differences based on a student's **race, ethnicity, or family income**?

For more information about Partners for College Affordability and Public Trust and how to make high-quality, affordable college education a reality for all Americans, visit [www.pcapt.org](http://www.pcapt.org).