HIGHER EDUCATION ASSOCIATION LOBBYING:
GRASSROOTS OUTREACH AS A SIGNAL OF CONSTITUENT OPINION

BY

STACY M. BENNETT

DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Organization and Leadership
in the Graduate College of the
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2012

Urbana, Illinois

Doctoral Committee:

Assistant Professor Jennifer Delaney, Chair
Assistant Professor Lorenzo Baber
Regent Professor and President Emeritus Stanley O. Ikenberry
Professor William Trent
ABSTRACT

This study sought to gain a better understanding of lobbying by the major DC-based higher education associations. To understand this phenomenon, this study looked at the lobbying tactics used by the associations and how they decide on what lobbying tactics to use. A qualitative, multiple case study approach was used with a sample comprised of association representatives and Congressional staffers. Overall, associations used a variety of tactics, but the for-profit association used more tactics and used all tactics more intensely compared to the non-profit associations. Particular focus was given to the tactic of membership mobilization using a signaling theory framework. Signaling theory explained why membership mobilization is an effective tactic because it signals to legislators that constituents care about an issue and could cause re-election consequences.

Keywords: higher education lobbying, lobbying tactics, membership mobilization, signaling theory
**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 3 METHODS</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 4 DESCRIPTION OF THE CASES</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 5 CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 6 CONTRIBUTIONS, IMPLICATIONS, FUTURE RESEARCH</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX A</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX B</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX C</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX D</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Higher education lobbying at the federal level has increased dramatically in the past 30 years. Between 1981 and 2003 there was a 2000% increase in the number of registered higher education lobbyists (Pusser & Wolcott, 2006). The amount spent by higher education on lobbying activities has also been increasing and can be seen in data from the Center for Responsive Politics. In 1998, the education industry spent slightly more than $31 million on lobbying compared to nearly $100 million in 2009 (Center for Responsive Politics, 2010). While these figures do include K-12 spending, the vast majority of the spending was from the higher education community. The amounts spent on lobbying were based on the amounts disclosed by an organization, which includes money spent on in-house lobbying activities as well as outside contract lobbyists (Center for Responsive Politics, 2010).

The increased role of the federal government in higher education issues is related to this increase in federal lobbying (Parsons, 2004; Cook, 1998). As some higher education associations and institutions spend more on lobbying, it puts pressures on others in the community to do the same (Amstutz, February 1, 2010). Savage likens this pressure to an “arms race” to keep up with lobbying activities (Amstutz, February 1, 2010). Despite the millions of dollars spent on lobbying activities each year, very little research has been completed on the practice in the higher education community and very little is known about the strategies used to lobby government officials. Much of the existing research focuses on other types of interest groups and may not apply to higher education’s uniquely diverse community.
Statement of the Problem

The higher education community relies heavily on the federal government in a variety of ways. Federal student aid is vital for survival of nearly all higher education institutions and the federal tax codes have numerous implications for college and university operations (Cook, 1998). Federal research dollars are also vital to many college and university operations and prestige (Cook, 1998). Additionally, federal actions on issues such as affirmative action, campus safety, accreditation, faculty retirement age, graduation rates, telecommunications, and student outcomes assessment all impact higher education institutions (Cook, 1998).

The federal government has increased its role in many areas, not just higher education, so numerous interest groups are increasing their lobbying activity as well (Cook, 1998). This increased interest group activity leads to increased competition for limited federal resources. The most recent recession combined with mounting pressure to lower the federal deficit has made federal funds even scarcer. As the availability of federal funds decreases, competition for those funds is increasing. While it is clear that the higher education community has increased its lobbying activity, it is unclear how the higher education community will fare in this increasingly competitive lobbying environment. Observers of higher education lobbying have concerns about the community’s ability to compete in this atmosphere. Parsons (2004) said, “if the past is a prelude to the future, the higher education advocates have shown neither the ability to respond to the challenge nor an understanding of the changes in the new context of higher education policy making” (p. 229).
If higher education is not able to effectively compete for federal funds, they may receive less funding and have less influence on issues that impact the community. Since the higher education community is spending a great deal of resources on federal lobbying activities, it is important to understand what they are doing. While literature exists about the lobbying tactics used by other interest groups, there is limited research focused on the tactics used in lobbying for higher education. Lobbying in higher education has been looked at broadly, and generally in terms of specific bills, but not in terms of specific tactics. This study builds on previous literature by looking at the specific lobbying tactics used by higher education associations and by also asking Congressional staffers about the effectiveness of these tactics.

**Context of the problem**

The atmosphere in Washington, D.C. is always changing and evolving. This atmosphere is impacted by election results, economic conditions, international events, and public opinion. As this evolution occurs, the power structure shifts, and the issues of importance continually change. Interest groups must adjust their lobbying strategies and tactics based on the changing climate. The atmosphere for higher education has been changing at both the micro and macro levels. It is important to understand the context in which this study developed. The time period covered in this study, January 2009 through June 2011, was a volatile time in Congress.

**Community context.** The landscape of higher education has seen some dramatic changes in the past 20 years. Following World War II, higher education was seen as a public good with public benefits that should be available to all (Parsons, 2004). This idea was manifested through the G.I. Bill and the Higher Education Act, both of which
dramatically increased access to higher education (Parsons, 2004). This idea has shifted in recent decades with higher education increasingly seen as a private good (Parsons, 2004; Washburn, 2005; Ehrenberg, 2002). Instead of being seen as a public good that benefits everyone, higher education is increasingly seen as a private good that primarily benefits the student and since it primarily benefits the individual student, the student should be responsible for the cost (Parsons, 2004). According to Parsons (2004), if higher education is no longer seen as a social good, it will increasingly look like any other special interest asking for money from the federal government.

The explosion in enrollments at for-profit higher education institutions has also changed the higher education landscape. For-profit colleges and universities have been a part of American higher education for much of its history, but the recent proliferation of these institutions has attracted attention and for some observers, signals a new era (Kinser, 2006; Tierney & Hentschke, 2007). Between 1998 and 2003, enrollment at for-profit institutions increased by 91% (Tierney & Hentschke, 2007). The profit-motive of for-profit institutions has been difficult for many in the higher education community to accept. As profit-seeking companies, for-profit institutions are run like other business, but their educational mission exposes them to the same public policy issues of non-profit colleges and universities (Tierney & Hentschke, 2007). In the 1972 HEA reauthorization, Congress made for-profit institutions eligible for student aid by changing the eligibility term from “higher education” to “postsecondary education” (Cook, 1998; Kinser, 2006). Federal student aid is vital for for-profit institutions’ survival and expansion (Kinser, 2006; Tierney & Hentschke, 2007). Tuition at for-profit institutions is more costly than public colleges and universities on average, but student aid brings
down the student cost to make for-profits more price competitive (Tierney & Hentschke, 2007). Being price competitive allows for-profit institutions to grow, which is necessary for increased profits and market share (Tierney & Hentschke, 2007).

The for-profit sector has been under scrutiny ever since it became eligible for federal student aid, but the level of scrutiny often depended on which political party was in control of the White House and Congress. For example, the for-profit sector had a great deal of clout in the early part of this century with the Bush White House and Republican controlled Congress (Burd, September 5, 2003). For-profit institutions were often praised for their efficiency and responsiveness to the market (Burd, September 5, 2003). This changed in 2008 with the election of President Obama and a Democratic Congress. Scrutiny of the for-profit sector increased in both the Department of Education and Congress. Currently, Congressional scrutiny has been focused in the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (H.E.L.P) and particularly by its chair, Senator Tom Harkin (Basken, June 22, 2010). Much of the focus in the H.E.L.P. committee has been related to a General Accounting Office (GAO) report released in August of 2010 that showed examples of unethical recruiting practices and incorrect information being provided to potential students about costs and earning potential (Field, August 4, 2010). Some predicted that the climate for the for-profit higher education sector would improve with the House returning to the Republicans in 2011 (Hebel & Kiley, November 3, 2010). More time needs to pass to see if this in fact was true.

Perhaps the most contentious issue has been the “gainful employment” rule proposed by the Department of Education in January of 2010. Under this rule, an institution would no longer be eligible for federal student aid if a majority of students at
the institution had excessive loan payments compared to their earnings after graduation (Blumenstyk & Field, May 19, 2010). For a student to be “gainfully employed” their loan payments over a ten year period could not be higher than 8% of the lowest expected earnings in that field (Blumenstyk & Field, May 19, 2010). The for-profit sector argues that this rule would cause many for-profit institutions to close and keep five million students from participating in higher education over the next 10 years (Blumenstyk & Field, May 19, 2010). The non-profit sector believed that the rule is fair and programs that do not provide gainful employment should be closed (Blumenstyk & Field, May 19, 2010).

Some observers warn that increased scrutiny on for-profit institutions in terms of the value of their product could lead to heightened scrutiny for all higher education institutions (Basken, June 22, 2010). With federal student aid increasingly coming in the form of loans and with higher education institutions across the country raising tuition, similar concerns could be raised in the non-profit sector (Basken, June 22, 2010). The for-profit sector is encouraging policymakers to spread scrutiny to all of higher education. After the release of the GAO report, a for-profit website launched a “Double Standard” page that highlighted the different treatment the for-profit sector received compared to the non-profit sector (Epstein, August 9, 2010). The for-profit sector spent millions of dollars to fight the rule and was able to soften the final rule that was released in June of 2011 (Field, June 2, 2011). The revised gainful employment rule increased the amount of time programs have to meet the requirements of the rule (Field, June 2, 2011).

**Economic context.** Higher education has not been immune from the recent recession. Since spending on higher education is discretionary, it often falls prey to
funding of entitlements like Medicaid and social security (Tandberg, 2008). Higher education tends to be hit particularly hard in economic downturns, but continues to suffer when funding is not increased, or even returned to prior levels when the economy improves (Tandberg, 2008). Many colleges and universities were helped by federal stimulus dollars (Field, November 13, 2008), but most of that money is now gone. State funding has been cut throughout the country (Nelson, January 19, 2010). Additionally, donations to colleges and universities continued to fall in 2010 after declining by 11% in 2009 (Basken, February 20, 2011).

Higher education institutions are playing a balancing act between cutting budgets and maintaining or increasing enrollment levels. Many institutions have raised tuition to generate additional revenue in light of budget shortfalls, but are apprehensive about increasing tuition too much out of fear of losing students (Nelson, January 19, 2010). Due to higher tuition at four-year colleges and universities, community colleges have seen an increased demand for their services, but without additional funding to cover the increase in students (Laster, April 15, 2010). Even colleges and universities with large endowments are feeling the pressure. These endowments were depleted with the stock market decline, yet some elected officials expect that these institutions use their endowments to make up for budget shortfalls, particularly for student aid (Blumenstyk, March 9, 2010).

Observers of higher education are concerned that the recession will cause the U.S. to fall further behind in educational attainment worldwide. Thirty-four states have made significant cuts in higher education budgets while most countries have avoided cuts to
higher education, with some, especially in Asia, focusing more attention on higher education (Fischer, February 24, 2010).

Political context. In his first address to a joint session of Congress, President Obama announced his goal of returning the U.S. to the top spot in the world in terms of the proportion of college graduates (Field, February 25, 2009). To achieve this goal he placed particular focus on community colleges and challenged them to generate an additional five million graduates by 2020 (Field, February 25, 2009). President Obama’s original plan called for $12 billion to help community colleges towards this goal (Gonzalez, January 20, 2011). Higher education leaders were pleased and hopeful by the amount of focus given to post secondary education by President Obama (Hebel & Selingo, March 6, 2009).

President Obama’s graduation initiative was lumped in with his controversial health care reform bill, and many concessions were made to allow the bill to pass (Gonzalez, January 20, 2011). In the end, the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act, signed by President Obama on March 30, 2010, provided community colleges with $2 billion for career training and eliminated the bank-based system for providing student loans (Gonzalez, January 20, 2011; Basken, March 19, 2010, www.whitehouse.gov). Obviously, this was much less for community colleges than had originally been proposed. A large portion of the money saved by the change in the method of delivery of student loans, estimated at $36 million, went to increasing Pell Grant funding, a program designed to provide need-based grants to low-income students to go to college (Basken, March 19, 2010). The elimination of the bank-based student loan system took a lot of the
attention away from other higher education initiatives because of the intense lobbying efforts of the student loan industry (Lederman, March 30, 2009).

The political climate in Washington, and throughout the country, became increasingly contentious upon President Obama’s arrival. The Tea Party emerged as a response to Republicans who were perceived to be spending like Democrats and led to Republicans taking control of the House of Representatives after the 2011 mid-term elections (Schneider, November 14, 2010). The Tea Party came to Washington with one goal in mind; cutting the federal budget and no spending area, including higher education, was safe from cuts. Early in 2011, there was a $10.7 billion budget shortfall for the Pell program (Field, March 20, 2011). Numerous cuts were mentioned with one bill proposing that funding be cut in half (Field, March 20, 2011). In the end, Pell Grants avoided the most drastic proposed cuts for 2011, but uncertainty remains for the future.

The rise of the Tea Party brought back memories of the Republican Revolution in 1994 when Republican’s took over both the House and the Senate on a platform of making major cuts to the federal budget (Parsons, 1997). In spite of many threats to higher education funding in 1994, most of the threats were not realized (Parsons, 1997). The Tea Party movement is similar to the Republican Revolution in that they were sent to D.C. to cut government spending (Field, November 4, 2010). One major difference between the current situation and 1994 is that Democrats still have control of the senate, so sweeping changes may be difficult to achieve (Field, November 4, 2010). However, the economy is in worse shape now than in 1994 and the national debt is much higher, so pressure to make significant cuts has been strong (Field, November 4, 2010).
Additionally, the new Speaker of the House, John Boehner, is considered a friend of the for-profit higher education sector (Kiley, October 3, 2010).

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of the lobbying activities of the major higher education associations. Historically, these associations have done the bulk of lobbying at the federal level (Cook, 1998). This study not only explored the lobbying tactics used by the associations, but also looked for differences in tactics based on the sector (non-profit versus for-profit) represented. Particular focus was given to the use of outside lobbying, specifically membership mobilization, by the associations because this tactic has potential to increase higher education’s competitiveness in the lobbying arena.

Signaling theory was used to study this phenomenon. Studies looking at outside lobbying by other interest groups showed that this type of lobbying serves as a signal of the strength of constituent opinion on a specific issue (Kollman, 1998). This approach has not been used to study higher education lobbying and helped to explain the tactics used by the higher education community in this study. By interviewing both association staff and congressional staff, this study aimed to gain an understanding of higher education lobbying. This study provided a unique look into the perceptions of both lobbyists and congressional staff.

**Significance of the Study**

This study extended previous work on higher education lobbying and sought to fill several gaps in the literature. Research on lobbying by the major higher education associations is limited and outdated. The most recent, comprehensive study, Cook
(1998), is now more than ten years old. Lobbying by the associations has increased dramatically in that time period and should be revisited. No existing research focuses on the lobbying tactics used by higher education associations.

This study also provided a new perspective on higher education lobbying by looking at variances in tactics by sector. Previous research has not paid much attention to the differences in sector in terms of lobbying tactics. Cook’s (1998) study of higher education lobbying purposely excluded the for-profit sector because she found that the lobbying tactics used by the for-profit sector “differ substantially” from the non-profit sector (p. 84). By looking at differences in sector type, this study explored the lobbying tactics of the for-profit higher education sector as well as the non-profit sector. Very little literature exists on the for-profit sector in general, with virtually no literature on for-profit lobbying, yet this sector is playing an increasingly important role in higher education policy.

Signaling theory had not been used to examine higher education lobbying in prior studies. This study furthered the development of signaling theory in studying lobbying, while also extending it to a new issue area, higher education. Since most studies utilizing signaling theory have been quantitative, this qualitative study provides a different perspective and a different use for signaling theory. This alternative use of signaling theory may extend beyond the study of higher education and could potentially be used to study all types of lobbying.

This study may also be significant to higher education lobbyists. It would appear that higher education has the potential to gain a competitive advantage in lobbying with the use of outside lobbying because of its large constituency. Learning more about the
tactics used by higher education lobbyists and interviewing congressional staff about their perceptions of these tactics may provide guidance for future higher education lobbying activities and lead to more positive outcomes.

**Research Questions**

This study is based on several research questions:

1. What lobbying tactics are most frequently used by higher education associations?
2. How can signaling theory be used to interpret or predict the impact of a higher education association’s decision on the tactics to be used?
3. How do higher education associations use grassroots outreach in their lobbying efforts?
   a. How well does grassroots outreach work as a signal to policymakers of constituent support according to these associations?
4. How well does grassroots outreach work as a signal to policy makers of constituent support or opposition for an issue according to Congressional staffers?

**Definition of Terms**

This section defines frequently used terms used throughout this study.

*Higher education* refers to education that occurs after high school or secondary school. This could include certificate programs, associates degrees, bachelor’s degrees, and graduate degrees in both the non-profit and for-profit sectors. This term is used interchangeably with the term postsecondary education.

*Higher education community* refers to the national associations focused on higher education issues, as well as presidents/chancellors and governmental relations professionals at higher education institutions.
**Big Six higher education associations** refer to the major associations historically representing a variety of institutional types (Cook, 1998). The American Council of Education is the umbrella organization of the Big Six. The remaining associations include: the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU), the Association of American Universities (AAU), the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU), the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU).

*Non-profit sector* refers to higher education institutions with non-profit status. These are often considered “traditional” institutions and make up the vast majority of higher education (Kinser, 2006; Tierney & Hentschke, 2007). This sector includes both public and private institutions.

*For-profit sector* refers to higher education institutions that are run like business and are profit-seeking (Tierney & Hentschke, 2007). Some are small “mom and pop” operations with one site, while others are massive, publicly traded operations with hundreds of sites and hundreds of thousands of students (Kinser, 2006). The University of Phoenix is one of the most recognized in this sector.

*Interest groups* refer organizations and membership associations that are organized around a specific issue or interest (Schlozman & Tierney, 1986).

*Lobbying* refers to activities designed to influence policymakers. These activities can range from one-on-one meetings with policymakers and campaign donations to large campaigns involving constituents of the policymaker (Schlozman & Tierney, 1986; Kollman, 1998).
Outside lobbying refers to “attempts by interest group leaders to mobilize citizens outside the policymaking community to contact or pressure public officials inside the policymaking community” (Kollman, 1998, p. 3). This can include mobilizing a group’s members and attempting to influence public opinion.

Mobilization of members is a major activity of outside lobbying and refers to groups encouraging their membership to reach out to their elected officials.

Grassroots outreach is the term generally used in the professional community for outside lobbying (Goldstein, 1999) and has a legal definition set by the IRS. According to the organization Non-Profit Action, the legal definition refers to encouraging people outside of a group’s membership to participate in lobbying activities (www.npaction.org).

**Delimitations and Limitations**

Because this study used a multiple case study method, clear boundaries were identified. This study focused on lobbying activities that took place during the 111th Congressional session and the first six months of the 112th Congressional session that spanned from January 2009 to June 2011. I chose this time period because it was most recent and fresh in participants’ minds. Additionally, as can be seen in the context section above, it was an active time period for higher education. A benefit of these limits is that they provide clear guidance of what data should be collected. If these boundaries did not exist, the document review process could have been endless. This time boundary also allowed the participants to focus on a specific period of time, rather than their entire career. Having the participants all focused on one specific time period helped keep the data consistent and hopefully made participant reflection easier. A drawback of this time boundary is the potential limits it puts on the data. Perhaps a time period that contained a
reauthorization of the Higher Education Act would have provided more examples of lobbying.

This study looked at lobbying at the federal level and did not look at the state level. This distinction made sense since I was interested in the major national higher education associations whose focus is at the federal level (Cook, 1998). These associations do very little at the state level. Additionally, the majority of existing literature on lobbying focuses on the federal level, so there was more research to build upon. This study focused specifically on the United States Congress and did not look at lobbying of the Executive or Judicial branches. Prior research has stated that most lobbying is directed at Congress (Heinz, et al, 1993; Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993). A drawback of focusing only on Congress is that the higher education community does have significant contact with the Department of Education, so this focus may have limited the lobbying activities available for this study.

There are hundreds of higher education associations (Cook, 1998), but this study only focused on the major associations that represent each major type of higher education institutions. There is precedence for selecting these associations for study as they are the same associations used in Cook’s (1998) study. Of course, some perspectives were left out, particularly those representing minority-serving institutions and very specified associations. Additionally, each of the associations has multiple staff members, but I only interviewed one representative from each. While this limited the perspectives I collected, I am more concerned with the lobbying activities of the associations and not the perspectives of individual lobbyists.
This study only looked at lobbying activities of seven higher education associations. While I believe the results of this study may be representative of the higher education community, they are not generalizable outside of higher education. Higher education is unique and has many differences from other special interests because it has been historically viewed as a public good and in regards to the legal restrictions the non-profit institutions must abide by.

This study only focused on the lobbying activities of the major associations. Individual institutions are increasingly lobbying on their own behalf, which has created a unique dynamic in Washington. Much of this institutional lobbying grew out of a belief that the national associations could not adequately represent their interests in Congress (Cook, 1998). As will be discussed in the literature review, institutional lobbying can conflict with association lobbying. Literature on institutional lobbying is very limited, but individual institutions play a major role in Washington. By only focusing on association lobbying, this study left out an important component of higher education lobbying.

Additionally, signaling theory, the theory used in this study, is based on the assumption that all legislators are concerned with re-election. This singular focus ignores alternative impacts on legislator decision-making. If a legislator is not solely concerned about re-election then the predictive qualities of signaling theory are no longer applicable.

**Summary of findings**

This study found that lobbying in non-profit and for-profit associations in differed significantly. While the associations used many of the same lobbying tactics, the for-
profits tended to be more proactive and used tactics more often and more intensely. The for-profits also used financial incentives not utilized by the non-profit associations. All of the associations used member mobilization in their lobbying efforts and it was seen as an effective tactic. This tactic can signal constituent support for an issue as well as potential re-election consequences for a legislator.

**Review of Subsequent Chapters**

The following chapters lay out the foundation, theory, methods, and findings of this study. Chapter 2 provides a historical perspective and looks at existing literature about higher education lobbying. This chapter also looks at previous studies about lobbying tactics, with a particular focus on outside lobbying. Chapter 3 lays out the theoretical framework, signaling theory, and presents the research questions used in this study. The research design, methods for data collection and analysis, as well as limitations of this study are also presented in this chapter. Chapter 4 introduces the seven cases on which this study is based. These case summaries are based on interviews, document reviews, and previous literature. Chapter 5 provides a cross-analysis of the seven cases presented in Chapter 4. The analysis is organized by themes based on theory and previous literature and additional themes that emerged from the data. Chapter 6 summarizes the study and provides contributions to theory, opportunities for future research, and policy implications and recommendations.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter reviews literature on policymaking in higher education and the study of lobbying. It starts by looking at the background of higher education, policy the higher education community, and higher education lobbying with a particular focus on the major higher education associations. It then introduces literature on lobbying tactics and decision to use specific tactics, looking at literature in political science and management. This chapter looks specifically at outside lobbying tactics both generally and in terms of their use in higher education. Finally, this chapter introduces the theoretical framework used in the study.

Higher education policy

Kerr (1994) argued that federal action in higher education has played a major role in making the United States the “greatest center of intellectual and scientific activity in the world” (p. 31). Yet, many in higher education were initially not in favor of federal involvement in higher education (Cook, 1998). Some were concerned that the massive expansion of higher education opportunities that federal aid would provide to students would lower educational standards (Cook, 1998). Some were concerned that federal aid would lead to complete control of the higher education system by the federal government (Parsons, 1997). Others had religious and racial concerns that included providing federal funds to religiously affiliated colleges and racially integrated or segregated schools, depending on one’s views (Parsons, 1997).

Historically, many in the higher education community took pride in how little lobbying they did (Cook, 1998). The community thought of itself as a “national treasure,
a public good whose value should not be questioned” (Cook, 1998 p. 3). Initially, on the rare occasions the associations did lobby, they often lobbied to limit governmental involvement in higher education (Cook, 1998; King, 1975). The associations representing higher education were originally organized to stay out of politics and to “ride above the waves,” for nearly 100 years (Murray, 1976, p. 90).

Not everyone in the higher education associations was against lobbying. In 1969 Richard Sullivan, the president of the Association of American Colleges, suggested creating a new organization that would be dedicated to lobbying for higher education issues called Higher Education Inc. (King, 1975). Sullivan summarized the need for such an organization by saying,

Our present structures and people in Washington do a good job in proposing language, but not as well as might be done when Congressmen or Senators start re-writing bills. We can usually get a bill introduced, but not always by just the right man. We know a lot about the committees handling legislation on higher education, but many votes in committee have gone against us. And we are not staffed for, nor are we experienced, getting the votes on the floor, or in getting the friend Congressmen to the floor to vote. “Higher Education, Inc.” could help at all those stages, and I think there may be…a reasonable conclusion that we need it (King, 1975, p. 62).

Sullivan’s view of increased lobbying was in the minority within the higher education community. Much of the community still held the traditional perspective of being above lobbying and other political activities. The response from one higher education representative to Sullivan’s proposal was quite telling:

No thanks. We don’t lobby. We don’t feel that education should have to use that method. Congress is not made up of a bunch of morons, although it may have been in the past. Most of them are fairly intelligent and are willing to listen to good ideas. We find it much more effective to approach problems in a low-key manner that does not offend the taste and judgment of the individual congressman (King, 1975, p. 73).

Needless to say, Sullivan’s proposal did not move forward.
The passage of the Morrill Land Grant Act in 1862 was the first major federal action related to higher education, but it was not until the passage the Higher Education Act (HEA) in 1965 that the federal government truly defined a major role in higher education (Cook, 1998; Heller, 2008). The federal role in higher education has continually increased since the initial passage of the Higher Education Act and impacts all types of higher education institutions. Eventually, the higher education community accepted that the federal role was only going to increase and got involved on a limited scale (Cook, 1998; King, 1975). The associations began to realize that in the absence of association involvement their members were developing their own federal efforts and utilizing the services of private consultants (King, 1975). The associations have traditionally taken a very careful, low-key approach to lobbying and it was not the primary activity of these associations (Cook, 1998).

**Higher education associations**

There is no shortage of higher education associations in the United States. According to the *Encyclopedia of Associations* there are several hundred associations that focus on higher education issues and constituencies, many of which are located in the Washington, D.C. area (Cook, 1998). When discussing the higher education associations, most literature focuses on six associations, commonly known as the “Big Six”, with the American Council for Education (ACE) serving as the umbrella organization for the rest (Cook, 1998; King, 1975, McMillen, 2010). The remaining associations include: the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU), the Association of American Universities (AAU), the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU), the American Association of Community Colleges
(AACC), and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU). Except for ACE, the associations are organized by institutional type and focus on the issues that concern a particular type of institution (King, 1975; Cook, 1998). Each association has found its own niche, but the boundaries are often blurred (Cook, 1998; McMillen, 2010).

ACE is focused on developing consensus positions to represent the higher education community (Cook, 1998). In order to satisfy its diverse membership, ACE policy positions tend to be general and non-controversial (King, 1975). While consensus is seen as important in the higher education community, each ACE member is independent and there are no penalties for straying from the association’s position (Cook, 1998). With this many associations representing similar issues there is a great deal of overlap in memberships and some difficulty in organizing efforts on issues of mutual concern (Cook, 1998; King, 1975). The various sectors have different priorities, which often makes consensus difficult (Cook, 1998). For research and doctoral universities, federal research funding often dwarfs other issues (Cook, 1998). Even on a common issue such as financial aid the priorities differ by institutional type. Research and doctoral universities focus on federal fellowships for graduate students, while community colleges focus on Pell Grants, and private institutions focus on tax breaks (Cook, 1998). Despite the differing goals of the associations and numerous name changes, the association structure has been “remarkably stable” (Cook, 1998, p. 19).

While ACE has institutional members, most colleges and universities consider one of the other five Big Six association their primary association (Cook, 1998). The Big Six associations offer numerous benefits to their members with their federal relations.
work being one of the most important benefits (Cook, 1998). Federal relations benefits provided to members include advocacy, continuous information and analysis of federal issues and actions, conferences and workshops, and networking (Cook, 1998; McMillen, 2010). According to Cook’s (1998) study, members are pleased with the federal relations activities and often renew their membership based on the perceived benefit of the associations’ federal relations work.

Any current discussion of higher education is incomplete without including the for-profit sector. As mentioned earlier, enrollments in for-profit institutions have increased dramatically in the past 20 years. The for-profit higher education sector is represented by the Association of Private Sector Colleges and Universities (APSCU). The for-profit and non-profit sectors differ significantly, which can be summarized best in Ruch’s (2001) table (p. 10).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Profit</th>
<th>For-Profit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tax- exempt</td>
<td>tax-paying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donors</td>
<td>investors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endowment</td>
<td>private investment capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholders</td>
<td>stockholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared governance</td>
<td>traditional management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prestige motive</td>
<td>profit motive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultivation of knowledge</td>
<td>application of learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline-driven</td>
<td>market driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of inputs</td>
<td>quality of outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty power</td>
<td>customer power</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The for-profit and non-profit sectors have different governance structures, organization, funding models, and styles of delivery. The for-profit higher education sector differs significantly from the non-profit sector because it is run like a corporation and not like a traditional college or university.
For-profit institutions are required to meet three criteria in order to be eligible for federal funding: they must have been in operation for two consecutive years; they must be accredited or seeking accreditation; and they must abide by the 90-10 rule which requires that less than 90% of the institution’s income can come from federal grants and loans (Kinser, 2006; Tierney & Hentschke, 2007). For-profit institutions fought, and continue to fight against this rule. They argue that it is biased against the for-profit sector and hurts low-income students because institutions will have to locate in higher income areas to meet the 10% requirement (Kinser, 2006; Tierney & Hentschke, 2007).

**Higher education community**

Parsons (1997) described higher education as a communications community where a small, stable group of players worked together to define and solve problems related to higher education policy. He argued that this community was formed in the mid-1960s with the Higher Education Act and lasted for nearly thirty years (Parsons, 1997).

Yet, many observers of higher education would not agree with this assessment of the higher education community. One observer stated that “probably no other segment of American society has so many organizations and is yet so unorganized as higher education” (King, 1975, p. 19). Rosenweig (1998), described the higher education community as being “far from the seamless web that its more romantic observers had thought it to be… it was a web to be sure, but with more seams than could be counted” (p. 46). Murray (1976) said, “the [higher education] lobby is at best a loose confederation rather than a strong union” (p. 86). Hartle (1975) in reviewing lobbying activities of the previous ten years found that the associations were “rather ineffective
power brokers in the political process” (p. 42). While there is a lot of cooperation among the associations there is also tension and competition (Cook, 1998). Rivalries and battles over turf occur frequently as Big Six associations, in an attempt to stay relevant to their members, claim credit for policy achievements and battle for access to legislators (Cook, 1998, McMillen, 2010).

Seven years after his initial description of a cohesive higher education policy community, Parsons (2004) changed his mind. He now believes that historically “a narrow overlap of social and economic rationales shared by liberals and conservatives was enough to nurture, develop, and support a massive higher education policy arena,” but that the idea of a historic common ground “was an illusion” (p. 221 & p. 216). The success of higher education after the passage of the Higher Education Act had more to do with a large supply of federal funds than with any efforts by the higher education community (Parsons, 2004). While Cook (1998), argues that the higher education associations were successful in fighting proposed Republican cuts in the 1990s, Parsons (2004), disagrees and argues that those successes were in large part due to the efforts of President Clinton and the outcome could have been very different with another president. Parson’s (2004) outlook for the future of higher education policy and the community is grim. He characterized the higher education policy arena at the turn of the 21st century as “fragmented, specialized associations, with each one trying to protect and expand its share of the budget” (p. 222). Cook (1998) shares this view and observed that as federal resources have become increasingly limited, the higher education community has become increasingly fragmented.
Parsons (2004) argues that competition for earmark money has further divided the higher education community. Academic earmarks are a response to the traditional peer review method of awarding federal research funds (Cook, 1998; Savage, 1999). Instead of going through the peer review grant process, members of Congress can appropriate money for specific projects at colleges and universities (Savage, 1999). Supporters of academic earmarks believe that the merit review system rewards only a limited number of universities, leaving the vast majority of colleges and universities without access to this source of funding (Cook, 1998). Opponents of earmarks argue that the merit review system protects research funds from politics (Savage, 1999).

The higher education community had long been against earmarking, with the AAU taking a leadership role in discouraging the practice (Rosenweig, 1998; Savage, 1999). In recounting the AAU’s efforts against academic earmarks, Rosenweig (1998) referred to higher education as a historically “polite society” that was committed to the merit review system (p. 37). This polite society was interrupted when several of its members pursued academic earmarks (Rosenweig, 1998). University budgets were tight in the early 1980s and federal funds for facilities and other institutional projects had not been available for 10 years (Rosenweig, 1998). Most universities were borrowing or increasing fundraising, but in the late 1970s Tufts University president Jean Mayer hired lobbyists to seek earmarked funds for the university (Rosenweig, 1998; Savage, 1999). Then, in 1983 Columbia University and Catholic University, surprised the rest of the community by appearing in an appropriation bill (Rosenweig, 1998). Columbia’s acceptance of earmarks signaled a shift in the community. The AAU continued its fight against academic earmarking, but more and more of its members and other higher
education institutions gradually began seeking earmarks (Rosenweig, 1998). Rosenweig (1998) who was president of the AAU at the time said that the issue of academic earmarking was the most divisive issue the organization had faced.

The indirect return on investment for lobbying for earmarks is quite high for some universities. For example, Clemson University has invested more than $1.7 million on lobbying activities in the past 10 years, but has received more than $25 million in federal earmarks in the past three years (Chebium, February 22, 2010). In 2009, Harvard spent $720,000 on lobbying and received $383 million in federal earmarks (Amstutz, February 1, 2010). De Figueiredo and Silverman (2006), found that lobbying for earmarks almost always garners some return on investment—much more if the university has appropriations committee representation from an alumnus. Savage (1999), believes that academic earmarking will continue because the incentives are strong and the higher education community is too fragmented to change the practice.

Earmarks will no longer be an issue for the associations, at least for the time being. After a great deal of political debate, a moratorium was placed on earmarks in appropriations bills early in the 2011 and 2012 budget cycles (Lederman, February 2, 2011).

**Higher education lobbying**

As was mentioned earlier, higher education associations were reluctant to get involved in policymaking. Even though most of the major associations were formed in the early 20th century, the six largest associations did not have offices in Washington, D.C. until the 1960s (Gladieux & Wolanin, 1976). According to Gladieux & Wolanin (1976),
“Symbolically, the full-fledged emergence of a higher education lobby can perhaps be dated from the acquisition in 1968 of a building, the National Center for Higher Education (familiarly known by its address, One Dupont Circle) to house most of the higher education associations (p. 253).

This building was funded by a $2.5 million grant from the Kellogg Foundation to facilitate coordination among the associations (King, 1975). According to Adler (2007), ACE owns the building and leases space to other associations at below-market rates. In its earlier years the building housed 39 associations (King, 1975). In the late 1990s that number was closer to 20 (Parsons, 1997). Based on the websites of the Big Six associations, it appears that only two remain at the One Dupont Circle building, ACE and AACC. Most of the associations have moved to the “K” Street corridor that spans from the Georgetown area of D.C. to the Capitol (Birnbaum, 1992). This strip is known for being the home for thousands of lobbyist offices (Birnbaum, 1992). The exodus from One Dupont took place while Cook (1998) was writing her book, and she wondered if ACE would still be able to continue to bring the associations together for consensus and continue to serve as the umbrella association.

Forming consensus positions on policy issues has been an important strategy for the associations (Cook, 1998). Opinions on the value of the consensus positions are mixed. According to Cook, many public officials see consensus positions as useful and lead to successful policy outcomes (Cook, 1998). Wolanin (1998) supports the use of consensus positions and argues that multiple positions would “cancel each other out” and leave policymakers to create policy without a clear direction from higher education (p. 60). Others felt that hearing different opinions would be helpful since the consensus positions are often “watered down” and “not particularly enlightening” (Cook, 1998, p. 121). The associations had seen an erosion of support from key policymakers because of
their lack of action when consensus could not be reached (King, 1975). Many observers criticized the associations for their “generic, lowest-common denominator policy positions” (Cook, 1998, p. 199). Additionally, some institutions may publicly agree with the consensus position, but work in their own interest in private (Cook, 1998). This is particularly apparent with the pursuit of earmarks.

The 1972 reauthorization of the Higher Education Act is often pointed to as a turning point for the associations. As the reauthorization approached, the higher education associations, under the leadership of ACE, were not participating in the policy development and hearings since the associations were focused solely on keeping institutional aid (Cook, 1998; Parsons, 1997). The associations believed that Congress was simply deciding how to award institutional funding in the 1972 reauthorization and did not seem to understand that Congress was seriously considering changing delivery method of financial aid (Cook, 1998).

The 1972 legislation is important because it signaled a dramatic shift in higher education policy moving financial aid from the institutions to the students (King, 1975). This shift represented Congress’ need for accountability, reform, and innovation in higher education. Since they put all of their efforts into maintaining institutional aid, once that was lost, the higher education associations did not have anything else to bargain with (Parsons, 1997). According to Cook (1998), the associations’ focus on institutional aid “made them appear greedy and paternalistic as well as politically inept” (p. 27). It also created bitterness among key policy actors and led to long-term damage to the associations’ political capital (Parsons, 1997). According to Wolanin (1998), the associations’ early lack of involvement in the policy process has led to diminished
influence well beyond 1972 on issues such as student loans. Gladieux & Wolanin (1976) summarize the impact of the higher education associations’ activities during this period of time:

If there was an element of backlash against the higher education establishment in the final legislative outcome, it was partly generated by the aloofness of the Washington representatives of higher education. The associations also met a wave of criticism on another level, the quality of research and documentation they offered. Many of the legislators complained that the associations were unable to supply basic information needed to formulate intelligent policy, that they simply enunciated their position on institutional aid without adequate research and data to back it up (p. 242).

The community colleges and for-profit schools expressed strong support for direct student aid, which was particularly embarrassing for the remaining Big Six associations (Cook, 1998). After the failures in 1972, the associations increased the resources dedicated to governmental relations (Cook, 1998). After being called the “worst lobby in Washington” in the late 1970s, the higher education community has slowly accepted the necessity of greater participation in the political process and has expanded both its lobbying techniques and intensity (Cook, 1998, p. 26). They worked on building and repairing relationships on Capitol Hill, increasing visibility, and providing comprehensive information to legislators (Gladieux & Wolanin, 1976). In spite of these efforts, the associations have seen increased competition within the higher education community with specialized professional groups and individual colleges and universities getting involved in the federal policymaking arena (Gladieux & Wolanin, 1976). One observer in Cook’s (1998) study summarized the volatile position of higher education in policymaking, “the goddamn arrogance of higher education. Higher education tries to intimidate lawmakers at the same time it is begging. It knows that higher ed is the key to
the American dream” (p. 193). This quote shows the frustrations felt by policymakers, but also the special status and power higher education seems to possess.

One of the biggest challenges the associations faced in increasing their federal relations activity was the distaste for political activity in the higher education community (Hartle, 1975). As mentioned earlier, many in higher education see it as serving the public good and not like other interests (Cook, 1998). One higher education representative in Cook’s (1998) study summarized this view by saying,

Higher education is significantly different from other sectors and special interests. It is not self-serving, it is other-directed, it serves society; and it does little special interest pleading. Higher education can usually be regarded as more of a public interest than a special interest (p. 140).

This view has limited higher educations lobbying activities. Wolanin (1998) argues that the problem with the Big Six lobbying efforts is not consensus positions, but instead the methods used to communicate them (Wolanin, 1998). Traditionally, higher education has been limited in the tactics it uses and relies on more formal forms of tactics such as statements, testimony, and policy papers (Wolanin, 1998). The passive approach often used by the higher educations “stands in sharp contrast to the aggressive negotiating and bargaining style of other lobbies” (Murray, 1976, p. 91). Several observers believe the associations need to be more assertive and proactive in their lobbying activities and need to utilize their political potential (Murray, 1976; Wolanin, 1998). Adler (2007) provides a different view and argues that the higher education associations are, “plenty aggressive, but in an understated way.” The associations rely on their relationships with legislators, their expertise, and the information they can provide to legislators (Adler, 2007). The associations often use their district influence since colleges and universities play a major role in their surrounding communities (Adler, 2007). They utilize legislator nostalgia as
well by focusing on alumni connections in Congress (Adler, 2007). The higher education associations utilize the above tactics instead of relying on the monetary influence that many other special interests use. For example, in 2005, the higher education associations spent $6.2 million on lobbying, compared to $24.2 million by one company, General Electric (Adler, 2007).

Many interest groups use Political Action Committees (PACs), non-party organizations that donate funds to political campaigns, to influence policy (Schlozman & Tierney, 1986). Yet, the higher education community has very rarely used this strategy, particularly at the federal level (Cook, 1998). Because of their non-profit status, higher education associations and institutions are not permitted to form PACs, but individuals within those organizations could (Cook, 1998). For example, in 2002, supporters of the University of North Carolina (UNC) system created a political action committee (PAC) called Citizens for Higher Education. Each of the 150 members of the PAC is asked to donate $2500 each year and that money is then combined to make donations to state candidates (www.citizensforhighered.org). In 2006, the PAC donated $425,000 to 103 candidates, 102 of which won (www.citizensforhighered.org). The UNC PAC is rare and was limited to the state level.

Cook (1998) found that elected officials were well aware of the fact that higher education did not provide financial donations with one referring to the community as “the worst cheapskates in the political business” (p. 167). King (1975) found that “higher education offers very little to the political decision maker to compensate for the services expected of him by higher education,” and that it did not seem that the community had put much thought into the idea (p. 117). Yet, the higher education community has
remained strongly opposed to the idea of forming PACs. In Cook’s (1998) survey of 500 university presidents, 85% were against the idea of the associations forming PACs. Many of the association officials she talked with were also opposed (Cook, 1998). There are a variety of reasons for this view. First, many in higher education still hold on to the view that higher education is special and should be treated differently than other interests (Cook, 1998). Many feel that they already have good access to policymakers and creating a PAC would make higher education look the same as all of the other special interests (Cook, 1998). They also worry that higher education PACs would not be able to be competitive with other PACs and that it would be very difficult to decide which policymakers would receive donations (Cook, 1998). Some of the college and university presidents worried that in order to form a PAC annual association dues would have to be increased (Cook, 1998). The presidents of associates of arts institutions were more supportive of PACs because many of the two-year for-profit schools they compete with have been using PACs for a long time (Cook, 1998). The for-profit sector uses PACs heavily (Cook, 1998; Pusser & Wolcott, 2006). AACC tried to form a PAC with community college presidents in the 1980s, but they were not able to collect enough money to make it worthwhile (Cook, 1998).

While the Big Six face legal restrictions in terms of making campaign donations, there are other ways in which they could reward legislators. Several elected officials in Cook’s (1998) interviews commented on the lack of graciousness of the associations and suggested that they say “thank you” more often. One congressional staffer said, “Universities constantly ask for more. You can never do enough for them. They never say thank you.” (Cook, 1998, p. 193). Showing gratitude could be as simple as sending
thank you letters instead of asking for something. Several officials in Cook’s (1998) study suggested inviting legislators and staff to campus more often and providing media opportunities while they are on campus. This not only allows legislators to become more familiar with the school, but also provides them with free media opportunities (Cook, 1998). These free media opportunities are quite valuable to legislators. According to Wolanin (1998),

This coverage in the "free media" has greater credibility and penetration across the constituency, and therefore has much more value to the member of Congress than all the advertising that he or she might otherwise purchase with campaign contributions from a higher education PAC (p. 61).

By using their positive reputation and name recognition in the district, colleges and universities and their associations can, “have the advantages of direct involvement in electoral politics without being sullied or identified as partisans” (Wolanin, 1998, p. 61).

In light of the association’s poor political track record, individual universities have increased their own lobbying efforts. The University of Houston and the University of Oklahoma were the first universities to open offices in Washington and actually moved into the National Center for Higher Education, along side the major associations (King, 1975). They opened these offices because they felt that “the major associations simply did not have the staff resources, facilities, or inclination to pursue the interests of a single school” (King, 1975, p. 34). The institutions need more specialized attention to institutional issues in an increasingly federal atmosphere, while the large associations need to appeal to their broad membership and cannot offer the level of specialized attention on institutional issues that may colleges and universities desire (Cook, 1998). Other institutions augmented their lobbying efforts because of the increased availability of earmarked funds (Cook, 1998).
This does not mean that the associations are irrelevant. In her survey, Cook (1998) found that nearly 43% of college presidents rely on resources other than the Big Six, yet 88% of them do rely on the associations for at least some of their federal relations activities. Cook (1998) also found that the relationship between the association staff and government staff was interdependent with both relying on one another for information. McMillen (2010) who studied in-house institutional lobbyists stated that, “institutional governmental relations personnel efforts pale before the titanic struggles between the higher education associations in Washington and the federal government” (McMillen, 2010, p. 102). According to him,

The associations tackle the broad education issues that affect the greatest number of member universities. They deal with large dollar amounts, such as what the final figure will be for the Federal Pell Grants. They halt maverick amendments that might cap tuition. They keep a lame-duck secretary of education from having too much influence over policy. These are issues and battles that those of us at Ordinary State University and Really Small Private College are only dimly aware are even taking place (p. 103).

According to Cook (1998), the relationship between the associations and government officials is “interdependent” with each providing the other with information and opinions (p. 186). Having these types of relationships can be very valuable in lobbying. Still, with an increase of institutional lobbyists in Washington, the associations do not have the same uniqueness and power that they had in the past (Cook, 1998).

Criticism of the higher education associations still remains. Adler (2007) titled his article, “Welcome to One Du Pont Circle, where good education-reform ideas go to die”. He refers to “the higher education lobby’s misplaced priorities” and that they have “hidden behind the argument that America’s system of higher education is the best in the world to insulate themselves from scrutiny and accountability” (Adler, 2007). He argues
that higher education has a great deal of autonomy from the federal government considering the large amount of federal funding they receive (Adler, 2007). Instead of focusing on the public mission of higher education and needs of students, Adler (2007) says the higher education associations act like other special interests. In fact, he argues that, “one of the most significant roadblocks to fixing many of the pressing problems of our troubled system of higher education is the higher education lobby itself” (Adler, 2007). Recently Senator Dick Durbin criticized the non-profit sector for not doing enough to protect student aid and not fighting the for-profit sector in regards to the gainful employment rule (Field, February 1, 2011). In a speech at NAICU’s annual meeting, Senator Durbin warned attendees, “I’m here to tell you that you cannot afford to sit on the sidelines of this conversation anymore” (Field, February 1, 2011).

Again, it is important to take a separate look at the for-profit sector, particularly in regards to their lobbying. Some have argued that APSCU is the “most sophisticated” higher education lobbying group (Waldman, 1995, p. 138). Because of their for-profit status, they have fewer restrictions on the lobbying tactics they can use. APSCU has the largest PAC in the higher education community (Pusser & Wolcott, 2006), giving $358,497 in the 2010 election cycle, an increase from the $132,047 contributed in the 2008 election cycle (Center for Responsive Politics, 2010). The tactics used by the for-profit sector are more similar to those of business and industry (Cook, 1998). Many of the for-profit institutions are also members of the US Chamber of Commerce and receive Washington representation from them as well (Blumenstyk & Field, May 19, 2010).

Because of their business orientation, Republicans have tended to be more supportive of the for-profit sector, but the APSCU is actively working to change this
Under Republican administrations and Republican congresses, the for-profit sector has had success in relaxing regulations. They have been successful in relaxing the 90-10 rule. It was originally an 85-15 requirement, but it was amended to 90-10 in 1998 (Kinser, 2006; Tierney & Hentschke, 2007) and also had success in relaxing requirements for distance education and on-line programs (Pusser & Wolcott, 2006).

For-profit institutions have made strategic efforts to lessen the distinction between them and non-profit higher education institutions by hiring senior level staff from the non-profit sector (Epstein, October 19, 2010). For example, Kaplan University hired Geri Malandra who previously worked for ACE and the University of Texas system as their provost in 2010 (Epstein, October 19, 2010). The for-profit sector has also worked to integrate themselves with policymakers (Pusser & Wolcott, 2006). For example, the Apollo group invited a former House committee chair to join its corporate board and a former Apollo group lobbyist was appointed to a top post in the Department of Education in 2001 (Pusser & Wolcott, 2006). The for-profit sector has also been strategic in selecting lobbyists. When referring to the lobbyists for the for-profit sector, Senator Durbin said, “it’s like a full-employment program for former members of Congress” (Field, February 1, 2011).

With a shift to a Democratic congress and administration in 2008, the APSCU replaced their Republican president with a prominent Democratic donor, Harris Miller in hopes that his Democratic credentials would increase access and credibility for the association (Field, April 11, 2008). The association has made a concerted effort to seek out newly elected Democrats in the past two elections to share the for-profit story (Field,
APSCU has not only meet with newly elected Democrats, but also sets up campus visits for them (Field, April 11, 2008). According to Miller, these newcomers are more open-minded and less likely to focus on past scandals involving for-profit institutions (Field, April 11, 2008). The APSCU have also increased outreach to minority legislators and their caucuses, focusing on the access for-profit institutions can provide to minority groups (Field, September 5, 2010). The association has had mixed results with these caucuses, but has gained several supporters, including members of the Congressional Black Caucus (Field, September 5, 2010).

Miller stresses that telling the for-profit story should not be limited to certain legislators, but needs to be shared with everyone (Field, April 11, 2008). He believes that the APSCU has allowed numerous negative messages and notions about the for-profit sector to go unchecked (Field, April 11, 2008). Miller has attempted to simplify the for-profit story by focusing on the access for-profit institutions provide to groups who have been traditionally been left out of higher education and that past indiscretions in the sector have been remedied (Field, April 11, 2008). The for-profit sector spends a great deal of money sharing this story with the general public. It is difficult to watch television and not see a commercial for a for-profit institution that touts the convenience of these institutions and often provides examples of successful students (Wilson, February 7, 2010). The Apollo Group typically spends 20% of its net revenue on advertising (Wilson, February 7, 2010).

The aggressiveness of for-profit lobbying rubs many in non-profit higher education the wrong way. For example, when lobbying against the cohort-default-rate amendment, an amendment supported by community colleges and historically black
colleges (HBCUs), for-profit lobbyists talked to legislators about how the amendment would not only hurt the for-profit sector, but would also have negative impacts on community colleges and historically black colleges (Field, April 11, 2008). In other instances, for-profit lobbyists contacted individual community colleges urging them to contact the AACC and ask the association to change its stance on cohort-default-rate amendment, (Field, April 11, 2008).

The for-profit sector of higher education is able to set itself apart from the rest of higher education by the amount and types of financial resources it uses. The non-profit higher education associations are limited in the amount of money they can spend on lobbying activities because of their non-profit status. There is no such restriction for the for-profit sector, and therefore, they often spend much more on lobbying. For example, in the 3rd quarter of 2010 the AACC and the Association of Community College Trustees together spent $45,000 on lobbying, while the APSCU spent $350,000 (Epstein, October 22, 2010). For-profit institutions have also purchased advertising space in major publications and utilized the media in the form of commentaries and op-ed pieces to make their case (Blumenstyk & Field, May 19, 2010). The biggest difference between the two sectors is the for-profit sector’s use of campaign donations (Cook, 1998). In the 2010 election, cycle 16 education PACs made donations, but only four were from the non-profit sector (Rochester Higher Education & Research, Wayne State University Medical School, University of South Alabama, and Friends of Central Michigan University) and their donations were dwarfed by the for-profit sector (Center for Responsive Politics, 2010). The total education PAC contributions for the 2010 election cycle was $625,761, with the non-profit sector accounting for just under $40,000 of that
total (Center for Responsive Politics, 2010). In the first seven months of 2010, the for-profit sector donated $94,000 to members of Congress who had publicly questioned the gainful employment proposal (The Ticker, September 17, 2010).

While the for-profit sector only constitutes less than 5% of higher education enrollments, they are a major player in federal higher education policy (Kinser, 2006; Pusser & Wolcott, 2006). In reference to the for-profit sector’s response to the proposed gainful employment rule, Senator Dick Durbin said that he had, “never seen a lobbying effort like this” (Field, February 1, 2011). This is quite a statement coming from a senator who has challenged both the tobacco and credit card industries in the past (Field, February 1, 2011).

**Research on higher education lobbying**

As mentioned earlier, there are few empirical studies that explicitly focus on higher education lobbying. The limited amount of existing literature is focused on two areas: association lobbying and institutional lobbying. The studies that do exist will be detailed below, but do not focus on lobbying strategies and tactics. The most pertinent literature for this study is the literature about lobbying by the national associations.

King’s (1975) study looked at the emergence of lobbying by the higher education community. This study looked at both institutional representatives and the higher education associations’ relationship with the federal government and their involvement in politics. Many of King’s findings have been discussed earlier, but overall his study described the tumultuous relationship between higher education and the federal government and the community’s reluctance to get involved, especially with lobbying (King, 1975). King’s study was the first to look specifically at higher education lobbying
and provides a valuable historical context. Yet, the study is more than 30 years old and out-of-date.

Cook’s (1998) study of higher education lobbying focused on the activities of the national associations from a variety of perspectives. This study consisted of data from 1554 completed surveys from college presidents and 140 interviews with university presidents that sit on Big Six boards, campus lobbyists, association staff, and legislative staffers. Many of Cook’s findings have been summarized in the review of literature above. Overall, she found that the major associations are still relevant in federal policy, but that individual universities are increasing their own efforts to supplement efforts of the associations (Cook, 1998). Respondents said that the associations were lobbying more effectively, were doing better at coordinating efforts, and were successfully involving more college and university presidents in lobbying (Cook, 1998). While the associations’ lobbying efforts have improved they are still considered average in terms of influential interests in Washington (Cook, 1998). Respondents in her study suggested that associations improve their policy analysis and provide better information by utilizing the expertise at their member institutions (Cook, 1998). They also recommended that the associations work in a more bipartisan manner and be more proactive in their lobbying efforts (Cook, 1998). One respondent stated, “Higher education associations tend to be too comfortable with the status quo… Their institutional preservation comes first” (Cook, 1998, p. 191). Because of the changing context at the federal level, Cook (1998) thought that the focus of the associations lobbying may shift to the state level in the future.

Cook’s study of higher education lobbying is by far the most in depth study on the topic, yet several gaps still remain. First, her study excluded the for-profit sector of
higher education. She acknowledged this exclusion, but stated that the for-profit sector was so different than the non-profit sector and needed a study of its own. Second, Cook’s study focused primarily on the lobbying activities of the major higher education associations and did not look at the efforts of individual colleges and universities. Additionally, because the study focused on the major national associations, it did not explore lobbying activities at the state level. Finally, her study is more than 10 years old and lobbying has increased dramatically in that time period.

De Figueiredo and Silverman (2006) used statistical analysis of federal earmark data and federal lobbying disclosures to determine the returns of lobbying by universities. They found that if a university participated in some lobbying and had an alumnus as a representative that served on the appropriations committee they received $3 million more in earmarks than a similar university without appropriations committee representation (De Figueiredo and Silverman, 2006). This equals a $36 return on every dollar spent on lobbying (De Figueiredo and Silverman, 2006). Universities that lobby, but do not have appropriations committee representation still receive some return on their investment, but at much lower rates (De Figueiredo and Silverman, 2006). Overall, De Figueiredo and Silverman (2006) found three factors that determined the amount of earmarked funding a university received: lobbying efforts, political representation, and characteristics of the university like size or ranking.

This study provides valuable information about university lobbying in the form of numerical values of return on investment. It is limited in scope in that it only focuses on federal earmarks. This is limiting because universities lobby on issues other than federal earmarks and they also lobby at the state level. The study also treats outside lobbying
and PAC participation as activities separate from lobbying. Additionally, the data used for this study only cover a two-year period, 1997-1999, which is likely not enough time to develop generalizations beyond those two years and, as mentioned earlier, a lot has changed in the last 10 years.

Ferrin’s study (2003) of the characteristics of in-house university lobbyists is the only study of its type. He argues that these in-house lobbyists play an important role in their universities and should be studied further. Ferrin used a mixed-method approach to study these lobbyists (Ferrin, 2003). He interviewed 20 in-house lobbyists, 10 from private universities and 10 from public universities, and used 10 follow-up interviews with university presidents as a validity check. He also used responses from 105 surveys completed by in-house lobbyists.

Prior research on lobbyist characteristics generally focused on other issue interests like agriculture, energy, health, and labor (Milbrath, 1963). The higher education lobby is rarely even mentioned in studies of lobbying. Ferrin (2003) posits that the reason so little is known about university lobbyists is due to the reluctance of universities to publicize their lobbying efforts. In fact, it is unclear how many university lobbyists exist because there is no central list or registry. In developing the sample for his study, Ferrin asked representatives of the major higher education associations to estimate the number of in-house lobbyists and received a wide range of estimates. ACE, the umbrella organization, estimated 50 full-time federal lobbyists, 100 full-time state lobbyists, and that there was at least one person at each of their 1800 member institutions that has some sort of legislative job responsibilities (Ferrin, 2003).
Instead of examining the tactics used by in-house university lobbyists, Ferrin’s study focused on the professional and educational backgrounds and titles of higher education lobbyists (Ferrin, 2003). He found that the in-house lobbyists came from diverse backgrounds. In fact, only 12.5% had previous experience working in the legislature (Ferrin, 2003). Their titles also varied greatly with some having the word “government” in their titles, while other titles were more vague (Ferrin, 2003). While Ferrin’s study is a welcome start, it is largely descriptive and lacks information about lobbying activities. The study provides a profile of who the in-house lobbyists are, but does not provide any information on the tactics they used or how those tactics are similar or different from interests.

McMillen’s (2010) study is the most recent focusing on institutional lobbying. His study is both an examination of college and university governmental relations professionals and a “how to” manual for institutional lobbying. He describes the evolution of how in-house governmental relations officers came to be. While it is a relatively new position at many colleges and universities McMillen (2010), argues that “today, government relations is a necessary senior administrative unit for academic institutions” (p. 1). Much like the major associations, individual colleges and universities were not eager to get involved in the policymaking process and institutional presidents were under increasing pressure to not add administrative positions (McMillen, 2010). Yet, these presidents were also under increased pressure to keep up with state and federal policy (McMillen, 2010). Many presidents attempted to solve this issue by assigning governmental relations activities to the research administrators, but they did not have much familiarity with government and the time intensive process of working on research
grants did not allow them to focus on governmental relations (McMillen, 2010). The governmental relations responsibilities were then given to the community relations staff, but they were more connected to the local community and were often at lower rank, leaving them with little power (McMillen, 2010). Next, colleges and universities turned to former politicians to work on governmental relations (McMillen, 2010). While they were politically connected, their contacts were often partisan and the former politicians were not familiar with the inner workings of a college or university (McMillen, 2010). Finally, outside, professional lobbyists were used for this work, but faculty and trustees were concerned about their reputations and did not like paying so much for lobbying (McMillen, 2010). Eventually, most colleges and universities settled on an in-house administrator who focuses solely on governmental relations activities (McMillen, 2010). While this study fills an important gap in the literature regarding institutional lobbying, it does not update the literature on association lobbying.

**The study of lobbying**

Most studies that have explored lobbying tactics do not apply directly to higher education. Empirical work on lobbying is centered in the fields of political science, economics, and sociology and tends to look at lobbying by interest groups focused on other issues such as healthcare and agriculture. A great deal of interest group research looks at the collective action challenges faced by interest groups and the necessity to offer incentives to overcome those challenges (Olson, 1965; Wilson, 1973). Other scholars have looked at how interest groups and lobbyists decide whom they are going to target (Austen-Smith & Wright, 1994; Bauer, Pool, & Dexter, 1963; Denzau & Munger, 1986), the impacts of interest group resources on their lobbying strategies (Gais &
Walker, 1991; Schlozman & Tierney, 1986), and when and how organizations decide to form coalitions on common issues (Hula, 1999; Gray & Lowery, 1998). Most research on lobbying focuses on the legislative branch because that tends to be the branch that is most lobbied (Heinz, et al, 1993; Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993).

Milbrath (1963) was the first to fill a major gap of knowledge about lobbyists in terms of their preferences and tactics (Eulau, 1964; Jones, 1964; Quinney, 1964). Prior to Milbrath’s study, most research had been focused on lawmakers, making Milbrath’s focus on the lobbying profession rather groundbreaking (Eulau, 1964). Milbrath interviewed 101 Washington lobbyists to learn about their profession, their backgrounds, and their preferences (1963). He found that 80% of lobbyists preferred direct methods of lobbying, such as personal meetings and presentation of research, to indirect methods like letter writing and public relations campaigns (Milbrath, 1963). While lobbyists prefer direct communication with lawmakers, access was not easy and intermediaries often become necessary (Milbrath, 1963). Lobbyists in Milbrath’s study preferred to use constituents, rather than friends of lawmakers when using a third-party messenger (Milbrath, 1963). Milbrath’s interviews dispelled many of the common impressions of lobbyists at the time. Activities such as entertaining, bribery, and monetary contributions ranked lowest among lobbying tactics (Milbrath, 1963). While Milbrath’s work did provide information about lobbying tactics, it focused more on lobbyists’ preferences and not on the interactions with legislators.

It took 20 years for another round of systematic interviews of lobbyists to take place. In the early 1980s, Kay Schlozman and John Tierney completed a somewhat similar study looking at the lobbying tactics used and the amount of lobbying activity
occurring. While Schlozman and Tierney (1983, 1986) were more concerned with determining whether or not lobbying activities had increased, their study provided a nice follow up to Milbrath’s work and found many similarities to his study. They found that lobbyists preferred direct methods to indirect methods, that lobbyists conceded that testifying at committees is not particularly influential, but still feel they must participate, and they rank contributions and electoral work very low (Milbrath, 1963; Schlozman & Tierney, 1983, 1986). They developed a list of 27 different lobbying activities to assess their use by all groups (Schlozman & Tierney, 1983, 1986). Schlozman and Tierney (1986) believe an organization’s resources are the most important factor for deciding which lobbying tactics will be used. These resources include money, supporters, and information (Schlozman & Tierney, 1986). If an organization has a lot of money they will be able to utilize more activities and engage more people including hiring outside help (Schlozman & Tierney, 1986). If the organization has a large, widespread membership, mobilizing members may be most effective (Schlozman & Tierney, 1986). Yet their analysis of organization resources did not include corporations, which one would assume would have the most resources. Their study was also more concerned with the prevalence and increased use of tactics rather than differences between types of groups or their relationships with legislators.

Kollman’s (1998) findings reinforced previous studies. He interviewed 50 groups from a sample of 328 organizations to learn about the prevalence of tactics. He built upon Schlozman and Tierney’s (1983, 1986) findings by developing three categories that encompassed the most prevalent tactics used by interest groups. These categories,
detailed below, include inside lobbying strategies, outside lobbying strategies, and organizational maintenance (Kollman, 1998).

**Table 1**

*Interest Group Activities*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Tactics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inside Lobbying</td>
<td>• Contacting congress personally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Testifying in congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Presenting research to government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Contacting agency personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Contributing to campaigns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Testifying at agency hearings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Service on public advisory boards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Participating in litigation over policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside Lobbying</td>
<td>• Talking with the press</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Mobilizing group members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Organizing letter-writing campaigns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Presenting research to the press</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Holding press conferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Publicizing voting records of candidates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Endorsing candidates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Protesting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Polling the public on policy issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Advertising policy positions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Hiring public relations firms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Contributing personnel to campaigns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Maintenance</td>
<td>• Entering coalitions with other groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sending letters to group members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Polling group members on policy issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Fund-raising with direct mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Advertising to attract new members</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Kollman, 1998, p. 5)

By dividing tactics into three distinct categories, Kollman provided a useful taxonomy to study many interest groups. Kollman’s study focused on outside lobbying which he defines as “attempts by interest group leaders to mobilize citizens outside the policymaking community to contact or pressure public officials inside the policymaking community” (p. 3). This type of lobbying can include mobilizing group members, public relations, polling activities, and advocacy advertising (Kollman, 1998). Legislators are
constantly bombarded with people trying to influence their decisions, but outside lobbying campaigns can move those issues to the forefront (Kollman, 1998). Kollman (1998) argues that lobbying is no longer limited to high-paid lawyers and lobbyists. The outside public is playing a greater role in the process and is a major player in outside lobbying along with interest groups and policymakers (Kollman, 1998).

Most outside lobbying campaigns are focused on a few key legislators and include a couple thousand citizens or less, but some large-scale campaigns can include national print and television ads and thousands of citizen activists (Kollman, 1998). One of the best known examples of a large-scale advocacy advertising campaign was the Harry and Louise commercials launched by the Health Insurance Association of America (HIAA) in opposition to President Clinton’s health care proposal in 1993 (Berry, 1999). The HIAA spent $14 million on the campaign (Berry, 1999). While it is often credited with bringing down the health care proposal, survey data did not confirm the campaign’s effect (Berry, 1999). Common Cause is an organization that was built on the concept of outside lobbying (McFarland, 1984). They consider themselves the “people’s lobby” that fights against the power of special interests (McFarland, 1984). They utilize constituent correspondence and are successful in placing articles and editorials in both the influential national newspapers as well as small town, local papers (McFarland, 1984). They also provide ratings on candidates and develop a campaign booklet for their members that includes answers to questions posed by Common Cause to candidates for elected office (McFarland, 1984). They have received feedback from legislators that they are concerned about their Common Cause “rating” (McFarland, 1984).
Literature on lobbying is not limited to the field of political science. The literature on corporate lobbying primarily resides in the field of management. Some of the same interest group and collective action theories have also been used in the corporate lobbying literature, but are limited to describing the motivation to participate in political activities and not the specific tactics used (Getz, 2001). According to Lerbinger (2006) “the grand strategy of business has been to curb the growth in power of three challenging forces: interest groups, media, and government” (p. 347).

Aplin and Hegarty (1980) used data from 435 surveys completed by legislative decision makers to develop a preliminary taxonomy of lobbying strategies. They divided actors in the legislative influence process into three groups: societal interest groups, non-legislative government bodies, and industry and business groups (Aplin and Hegarty, 1980). Aplin and Hegarty (1980) believed that the organization’s power base determines the lobbying strategies used. Their data showed four distinct types of strategies with 12 techniques within those strategies:

Table 2

*Categories of Influence Strategies and Specific Techniques Employed to Influence Legislation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Strategy</th>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Public Exposure/Appeal</th>
<th>Direct Pressure</th>
<th>Political</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Method of Influencing</td>
<td>Expert witness</td>
<td>Publishing voting record</td>
<td>Threat of harm</td>
<td>Constituent contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal visit</td>
<td>Third party influence</td>
<td>Financial support</td>
<td>contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Providing specific argument</td>
<td>Letter campaign</td>
<td></td>
<td>Colleague contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Technical reports</td>
<td>Media campaign</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Aplin and Hegarty, 1980, p. 445)
Salisbury (1969) used exchange theory to explain interest group development and maintenance. He argued that the success of an interest group depended on a series of exchanges between the group entrepreneur/organizer and the customers/members of the group (Salisbury, 1969). Hillman and Keim (1995) built on exchange theory to describe the policy process in economic market terms with policy demanders and suppliers. The policy demanders include voters, interest groups, firms, and political parties, while the supply side includes government actors who make policy decisions (Hillman and Keim, 1995; Bonardi, Hillman, and Keim, 2005).

Table 3

*Comparison of Economic and Political Markets*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Economic</th>
<th>Political</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demanders</td>
<td>Customers</td>
<td>Citizens, firms, interest groups, voters, other governments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suppliers</td>
<td>Firms, individuals</td>
<td>Elected and nonelected politicians, bureaucrats, legislators, members of the judiciary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product</td>
<td>Good, service</td>
<td>Public policy, regulation, deregulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of exchange</td>
<td>Money, other goods (barter)</td>
<td>Votes, information financial support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Bonardi, Hillman, and Keim, 2005, p. 400)

Hillman and Hitt (1999) aggregated prior research to develop a taxonomy of lobbying activities based on the resources exchanged. These resources fall into three broad categories: information, financial, and constituency building and represent the three goods that are exchanged; information, money, and votes (Hillman and Hitt, 1999). In short, the lobbying process can be boiled down to three types of exchanges: the exchange of information, the exchange of money, and the exchange of votes (Hillman, Keim, &
Schuler, 2004). An interdependence between the policy demanders and suppliers always exists, so each party has incentives to interact and remain in the exchange relationship (Lord, 2000). The mediums of exchange for the policy demanders are information on policy issues and constituent preferences, financial support, and constituent support while the medium of exchange for the policy supplier is access to himself/herself and potentially positive policy results (Lord, 2000; Bonardi, Hillman, & Keim, 2005).

Through each of the strategies used, the repeated exchanges build relationships that further strengthen the exchange (Hillman & Hitt, 1999).

Table 4

**Taxonomy of Political Strategies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Tactics</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information strategy</td>
<td>• Lobbying</td>
<td>Targets political decision makers by providing information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Commissioning research projects</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Testifying as expert witness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Supplying position papers or reports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial incentive strategy</td>
<td>• Contributions to politicians or party</td>
<td>Targets political decision makers by providing financial incentives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Honoraria for speaking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Paid travel, etc...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Personal service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constituency-building strategy</td>
<td>• Grassroots mobilization of employees, suppliers, customers, etc...</td>
<td>Targets political decision makers indirectly through constituent support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Advocacy advertising</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Public relations/Press conferences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Political education programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Hillman and Hitt, 1999, p. 835).

**Choice of tactics.** According to Schlozman and Tierney (1986), the amount of resources an organization has is the most important factor in determining its lobbying
tactics. Obviously, the more resources a group has the more options they will have in the intensity and variety of tactics available. The size and location of a groups’ membership also impacts the decision of what lobbying tactics will be used (Schlozman & Tierney, 1986). Finally, the type of issue an organization is focusing on will impact the choice of tactic (Schlozman & Tierney, 1986). For example, if it is an emotional issue that the general public can relate to, outside lobbying tactics may be used, but if an issue is technical or too self-interested a group may stick with inside lobbying techniques (Schlozman & Tierney, 1986).

Hillman and Hitt (1999) developed a sequential decision tree model to examine the process a firm uses to determine the general approach, the level of participation, and the specific strategies that will be used. The first decision a firm makes is whether they will take a transactional or relational approach to their political strategy (Hillman & Hitt, 1999). The transactional approach is more reactionary, where the firm will wait until a particularly important issue arises to get involved, whereas the relational approach is an ongoing strategy where the firm will build strategic political relationships over time with or without specific issues of concern (Hillman & Hitt, 1999). Next, the firm decides if they will work individually or with others collectively (Hillman & Hitt, 1999). This decision can be impacted by a variety of factors including the financial resources available to the firm, the political climate, and issue prominence (Hillman and Hitt, 1999). While, the description of the first two decisions may seem a bit simplistic and may not apply to all situations, it does provide a useful framework for examining the process of developing a lobbying strategy. Once the first two decisions have been made,
firms move to the final stage of decision tree and decide which specific strategies to employ (Hillman & Hitt, 1999).

**Mobilizing group members.** The literature cited above provides examples of the variety of lobbying tactics available to interest groups. Existing literature on higher education lobbying focuses primarily on “inside” lobbying, which entails personal contact with legislators (Kollman, 1998). While inside lobbying techniques are vital for influencing Congress, Kollman (1998) argues it may not be enough in today’s political landscape. He argues that modern lobbying also requires public mobilization efforts, or outside lobbying (Kollman, 1998). Since many of the activities included in the Kollman (1998) and Hillman and Hitt’s (1999) taxonomy such as advocacy advertising and polling are very expensive, most interest groups are limited in the lobbying tactics they can use (Berry, 1999). Grassroots outreach is one outside lobbying technique that refers to constituent communication to policymakers that is stimulated by an organization (Goldstein, 1999). While still costly, mobilizing group members tends to be accessible to most groups in some form.

This study will focus on Kollman’s (1998) “outside lobbying” category and Hillman and Hitt’s (1999) “constituency building” category, specifically on mobilizing group members. Groups contact their members asking them to contact their legislators in a variety of ways about a particular issue (Schlozman & Tierney, 1986; Kollman, 1998; Berry, 1999; Goldstein, 1999; Hillman & Hitt, 1999; Lerbinger, 2006). Members may be asked to contact legislators via phone, letter, or e-mail, via a web-based program controlled by the interest group that will send messages on behalf of the member, or meet with the member in person (McFarland, 1984; Kollman, 1998; Berry, 1999; Kanter and
While designed to look like spontaneous constituent concerns about an issue, most constituent communications to legislators are stimulated by a group (Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993). Goldstein (1999) states, “issues alone do not mobilize citizens to political activity. Political leaders recruit citizens to political activity for political reasons” (p. 21). For corporations, this means reaching out to employees, shareholders, vendors, and other constituencies impacted by the corporation’s success (Keim, 1985). For interests groups, this means reaching out to the group’s membership (Schlozman & Tierney, 1986).

In their study, Schlozman and Tierney (1986) found that member mobilization activities, or grassroots lobbying as they refer to it, were not only widespread among interest groups, but also on the rise. Approximately 80% of their respondents reported mobilizing group members, making it the fourth most used technique out of the 27 options provided. (Schlozman & Tierney, 1986). They found that all types of groups “have developed elaborate systems for producing a flow of “spontaneous” communications from concerned citizens to their legislators, “ (Schlozman & Tierney, 1986, p. 186). Kollman’s (1998) study found that 70% of groups had used membership mobilization at least once. He also found that most membership mobilization tends to focus on a few key legislators and their constituents and will involve a few thousand citizens at the most (Kollman, 1998). According to Kollman (1998) groups that have organizations as members utilize member mobilization less than groups with individual people as members (p. 55).

Membership mobilization is a newer development, but labor unions have used the technique for many years and are the “exception and not the rule” (Berry, 1999, p. 97).
Using membership mobilization allows unions to take advantage of one of their biggest assets, their large membership numbers (Schlozman & Tierney, 1986). Nownes and Freeman (1998) found that unions and citizen groups were more likely to use membership mobilization or grassroots outreach than corporate and intergovernmental groups. The group Common Cause was formed in 1970 based on a model grassroots outreach (McFarland, 1984). They utilize a variety of tactics including letter writing campaigns, constituent meetings with legislators, organized “action teams” of constituents to target individual legislators (McFarland, 1984, p. 137). In the mid-1990s, the Christian Coalition garnered attention for their use of grassroots outreach. The organization only had three full-time lobbyists, yet spent $5.9 million in the first six months of 1996 on political advocacy activities (Berry, 1999). With such a small lobbying staff, the vast majority of their resources were spent on communications to their members (Berry, 1999).

Membership mobilization is not a silver bullet, but a complementary activity and is generally used with inside lobbying tactics (McFarland, 1984). Many groups believe that the constituent communications that are generated through membership mobilization strengthen the arguments their lobbyists are making in their direct lobbying contacts with legislators (Berry, 1999). Many interest groups acknowledge that mass letter/postcard/email campaigns are not enough to persuade a legislator, but they are a necessary component. Lerbinger (2006) outlined three steps necessary for membership mobilization: constituency building, constituency communication, and constituency activation (p. 254). Constituency building involves finding and recruiting people who would be willing to advocate on behalf of the organization (Lerbinger, 2006). Once
advocates have been identified, it is important to communicate with them regularly to keep them apprised of policy issues that impact the organization (Lerbinger, 2006). Building on constituency communication, the organization must provide opportunities for action in order to mobilize its advocates (Lerbinger, 2006). These advocates are generally notified by an action alert that provides a variety of ways to contact their legislator on an issue (Lerbinger, 2006). Advocates are generally encouraged to call, e-mail, or use the organization’s web form to contact legislators (Lerbinger, 2006).

This is a resource intensive process, for both financial and staff resources, but groups are willing to use those resources because they need the campaign to be a success (Berry, 1999). It is vitally important for the group to look strong and successful, not only to legislators, but also to the groups’ members (Berry, 1999). Many non-profit interest groups are limited in the amount of direct lobbying of legislators they can perform due to legal restrictions, but indirect access through membership mobilization helps to provide additional access (Schlozman & Tierney, 1986). Goldstein (1999) identified three ways that membership mobilization can have an impact. This tactic can illustrate constituency opinion, show the level of constituent intensity regarding an issue, that an organized instigator exists, and provides the group with an opportunity to frame the issue (Goldstein, 1999, p. 41). Additionally, constituents may serve as more credible messengers of a group’s message to legislators than a group’s lobbyist since they are the ones who vote in elections (Goldstein, 1999). Groups tend to target constituents who are mostly likely to have an impact on the legislator, either because of their power or connections (Goldstein, 1999).
Member mobilization can also serve as a membership maintenance activity. By providing their members with information about happenings on Capitol Hill, groups serve an important function of keeping their members informed about issues that may impact them (Schlozman & Tierney, 1986). Interest groups also provide members with a means of action, so that they can easily provide their input on issues that affect them (Schlozman & Tierney, 1986). Membership mobilization also allows groups to build an infrastructure and gather additional information about members that can be used in the future (Goldstein, 1999). Groups are able to maintain detailed, targeted databases that can be accessed whenever needed (Lerbinger, 2006).

It is often assumed that mobilizing members to contact their legislators on behalf of an interest group is the sole focus of outside lobbying, but it serves a dual purpose. Outside lobbying can also influence public opinion (Kollman, 1998). In fact, Kollman argues that influencing citizens is just as important as influencing legislators. According to Kollman,

The duality of purpose makes outside lobbying a powerful tool in the hand of interest groups. It can simultaneously fan the flame of constituent anger and bring the heat of those flames to the attention of representatives far away, whose job it is to put out or contain the fire (p. 10).

**Electronic advocacy.** Advances in technology, particularly the emergence of the Internet, have provided many new ways to carry out membership mobilization activities. It is important to pay particular attention to electronic advocacy because it is the primary way in which membership mobilization has occurred in the past decade (McNutt, 2010). The Internet has made outreach to members easier and more efficient.

Unlike the telephone, which primarily supports one-to-one communications, or radio and television, where information flows in only one direction, from a single source to an audience that can only listen passively, the net allows information to
flow back and forth among millions of sources at practically the same time (Browning, 2002, p. 5).

Electronic advocacy involves multiple techniques for reaching constituents including e-mail, targeting and mapping software, blogs, websites, online petitions, banner ads, text messaging, and social media (McNutt, 2010). It provides lower costs means to reach large numbers of people and eliminates the challenge of distance (McNutt, 2010). Technology has made reaching a large audience and generating large amounts of communication much easier and cost-effective because it is now possible through the group’s website (Lerbinger, 2006).

Initially, many saw the Internet as a means to put all interests groups on a level playing field (Davis, 1999). The low cost and vast reach of communication and information flow on the Internet eliminates resource barriers that were once a hindrance to smaller, less-funded groups (Bimber, 1998; Davis, 1999). However, some were concerned that the Internet would simply reinforce existing power structures (Rethemeyer, 2006). The idea of a digital divide began as concern in regards to disparities in technology between developing and developed countries, but became a concern within nations as well (Selwyn, 2004). The concern is that if a person or groups of people do not have access to technology, they will not have access to the benefits it provides (Selwyn, 2004). In addition to the individual digital divide, an organizational digital divide also exists (McNutt, 2010). Many organizations lack the capacity to attain the technology needed and the staff resources required to maintain an Internet presence (McNutt, 2010). According to McNutt (2010) “advocacy organizations are often engaged in lopsided battles with the forces of power and privilege” (p. 1). The Internet appears to continue existing power structures rather than provide access to new groups.
(Rethemeyer, 2006). Some even wondered if the Internet would bring an end to interest groups altogether and that, “traditional groups would be replaced, not by new groups, but by nothing” (Davis, 1999 p. 63). Citizens could now get political information and communicate with their elected officials more easily on their own and may no longer have a need for interest groups (Davis 1999). Instead it appears that most traditional groups have adapted to the Internet and are using it as communication tool for their own purposes (Davis, 1999). Suárez (2009) found that an organization’s resources had little impact on whether or not the used Internet advocacy. In fact, non-profit groups like MoveOn rely solely on the Internet for their activities (www.moveon.org).

Technology can be both a blessing and a curse. While it provides new means of advocacy, it is also constantly changing. According to Lutz (2009) 90% of Americans are within arms reach of their cell phones 24 hours a day (p. 10). They no longer pay as much attention to their e-mails, but read 90% of their text messages (Lutz, 2009, p. 10). Another challenge with technology is the need to keep up with demand and new developments. Friendster, a popular social networking site in the mid-1990s, did not have the capacity for its dramatic growth causing frequent problems with the site (boyd & Ellison, 2008). Frustrated users simply moved to different social networking sites like MySpace and Facebook and Friendster floundered (boyd & Ellison, 2008). Continuous maintenance and improvements are necessities in the era of electronic advocacy.

Social media is the latest technological advance that has changed the political landscape. In 2009, 60% of adults in the U.S. were a member of a social network (Lutz, 2009). This number is likely higher now. Social media includes social and professional networking sites like Facebook and LinkedIn, along with other means of interactivity like
YouTube, and smart phone applications (Lutz, 2009; Stroud, 2008). Kanter and Fine (2010) divide social media tools into three categories. Conversation starters include blogs, YouTube, and Twitter; collaboration tools include Wikis and Google groups; and network builders include social networking sites like Facebook and MySpace (Kanter and Fine, 2010).

The Millennial generation, people born between 1978 and 1992, fueled the explosion of social media (Kanter and Fine, 2010), but it is now age-neutral with people from all generations regularly using these tools (Stroud, 2008). Stroud (2008) encourages companies and organizations to develop a social media presence by creating profiles on existing sites, advertise on these sites, and incorporate social media into its website. Non-profits are also using social media as a way to reach out to current and potential members (Waters, et al, 2009). When Facebook created the opportunity for organizations to have profiles in 2006, more than 4000 groups joined in the first two weeks they were available (Waters, et al, 2009, p. 102).

While many forms of social media are free in terms of financial resources, it is important to consider the staff resources required as well. Just having a presence on social networking sites will not produce much in terms of results (Waters, et al, 2009). The organizations must create an interactive relationship with its members on social networking sites, which requires frequent posting and monitoring (Waters et al, 2009). This is very time intensive and often requires a full-time person dedicated to electronic advocacy. Social media has similar concerns as the Internet in terms of a digital divide. Even when the barrier to access to the Internet is eliminated, there are differences in use once online (Hargittai, 2008). Women are more likely to use most social networking
sites, while Hispanics are less likely to use Facebook and Asians/Asian Americans are less likely to use MySpace (Hargittai, 2008). This illustrates the importance for organizations to have a presence on multiple sites in order to reach the broadest audience.

President Barack Obama’s use of social media in his 2008 campaign is often credited with playing a major role in his victory (Lutz, 2009). By using social media, the campaign converted “everyday people into engaged and empowered volunteers, donors, and advocates” (Lutz, 2009, p. 2). Through social media, the campaign was able to target activities and messages to specific groups and was accessible on a wide variety of sites and types of media (Lutz, 2009). They utilized social networking sites, e-mail and text messaging, and provided a free iPhone application where supporters could follow the campaign and receive up-to-date information (Lutz, 2009). The campaign used all of these outlets to direct people to the campaign website, ensuring a unified message (Lutz, 2009). The key to the success of the campaign’s use of social media was that they incorporated online advocacy into every component of the campaign (Lutz, 2009).

The Obama campaign was not the first or only campaign to use social media, but they were the most successful. According to Lutz (2009) in 2004, Howard Dean was not able to translate the online excitement about his campaign into a successful ground operation, while in 2008 John McCain simply was not able to convert his online supporters into enough votes. Looking at the numbers related to online use in the 2008 campaign shows the vast differences in the use of electronic advocacy by the two campaigns. The Obama campaign had twice as much website traffic, four times as many YouTube viewers, five times as many Facebook friends, and ten times as many staff dedicated to online activities (Lutz, 2009). That last number is important. While
Obama’s campaign was far more successful at using social media, it is a resource-intensive activity. They spent more than $2 million on the necessary hardware and software, in addition to the salaries of their staff dedicated to online activities (Lutz, 2009). The campaign tracked every communication and used multiple versions of each communication to continually test what was most successful (Lutz, 2009). The campaign tracked their online activists’ activity and gave the most reliable activists increased opportunities and responsibilities (Lutz, 2009). This allowed supporters to feel empowered and encouraged them to do more.

Research on social media’s impact on advocacy or lobbying is limited. Kane et al. (2009) provide an example of a proposed biomedical research center at Boston University that would study weaponized viruses. It was initially viewed as a great opportunity for the university and the surrounding community, but the mood shifted as more information was released (Kane et al., 2009). When members of the surrounding community learned about the proposal, they organized a campaign focused on the dangers of the project to the community that was based on a single-issue website and social media outlets to generate opposition (Kane et al., 2009). The proposal was delayed indefinitely and went to court (Kane et al., 2009).

Kanter and Fine (2010) present the Surfrider organization, a group that focuses on keeping oceans and beaches clean, as an exemplar of a non-profit utilizing the internet and social media. The group provides opportunities for supporters at a variety levels. At the basic level, supporters can use the organization’s website to buy t-shirts or sign up for e-mail alerts, while more dedicated supporters can find local meetings and beach clean ups (Kanter and Fine, 2010). The group also utilizes a variety of social media outlets like
Facebook and Twitter and even hold online events (Kanter and Fine, 2010). Leaders of the organization can use the database generated by these basic activities to organize large-scale events and meetings with legislators (Kanter and Fine, 2010). The organization provides supporters with the tools to enable them to share their passion for the organization’s mission with their personal networks (Kanter and Fine, 2010). In 2008, Surfrider was able to count 145,000 volunteer hours on behalf of the organization (Kanter and Fine, 2010).

Effectiveness. Many political scientists and other observers have been skeptical of the effectiveness of outside lobbying campaigns orchestrated by groups (Berry, 1999; Goldstein, 1999). Some scholars have referred to outside lobbying as “astroturfing” and argue that it is not effective because legislators are aware that these efforts are orchestrated (McNutt, 2010). However, the respondents in Schlozman and Tierney’s (1983) study believed that if congressional offices received enough communications from constituents it did not matter how contrived the communications may appear. While studies have shown that legislators are aware that many constituent contacts are orchestrated, they still feel they need to pay attention (McFarland, 1984; Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993; Goldstein, 1999). The higher the volume of constituent correspondence on an issue, the more difficult it is to ignore (McFarland, 1984). In response to this common belief, one lobbyist said mockingly, “sure, we spend tens of millions of dollars on all of this because it does not work” (Goldstein, 1999, p. 6). Goldstein (1999) argues that organized campaigns may actually be more effective,

A communication stimulated by an interest group may carry more weight than a spontaneous communication because it carries more information. A stimulated communication may matter more because a group’s organizational ability and intensity are key pieces of information that are also being relayed, (p. 45).
Keim (1985) provides three reasons why outside lobbying, or grassroots programs as he called them, have increased potential for being effective: the political parties have less control over individual legislators then in the past, committee chairpersons also have less control over individual legislators, and voter participation continues to decline. Keim’s research on corporate outside lobbying found that it can be enormously successful as long as it is framed in the correct way (Keim, 1985). They should be framed as education programs, where both sides of an issue are presented along with the potential impacts on the company (Keim, 1985). The means to contact their legislators are provided to constituents, but it is left up to the individual to form their own opinion (Keim, 1985). Keim argues that outside lobbying programs can actually serve a team-building function, and allows employees feel like they are part of the larger company team (Keim, 1985). A major focus of corporate outside lobbying is constantly evaluating their efforts (Keim, 1985). Keim also argues that the use of outside lobbying has particular potential for corporations because they have such a large number of people associated with them, compared to many non-profit groups (Keim, 1985). This may be true in many cases, but higher education would likely be competitive with most corporations in terms of constituent numbers.

Empirical evidence of the effectiveness of outside lobbying is limited, with many claims of success based on anecdotal examples (Bergen, 2009). For example, a Congressman in Fenno’s (1978) study stated,

I sponsored a bill to increase the size of trucks on our highways. But I got an awful lot of mail on that and it would have cost me a lot of good people,. confidentially, I tell you it was a good bill; and I’m still in favor of it. But because so many people were opposed to it, I decided not to support it. I’m not here to vote my own convictions. I’m here to represent my people (p. 146)
Anecdotal statements like these are powerful, but several studies have attempted to provide empirical evidence. Using survey data from interest groups, Caldeira and Wright (1998) studied the impact of outside lobbying, or grassroots lobbying as they called it, in confirmation votes on Supreme Court nominees in the Senate. Their study found that lobbying had a statistically significant effect impact on senators’ votes, even after controlling for party, ideology, constituency, and campaign contributions (Caldeira & Wright, 1998, p. 520). In their study looking at lobbying involving information about constituent opinion, Austen-Smith & Wright (1992) concluded that overall lobbying leads to “better” legislator decisions because it provides them with valuable information about the importance of an issue (p. 229). Similarly, Ainsworth and Sened (1993) argue that legislators appreciate interest group lobbyists because it helps them to provide public goods only when they are cost-effective.

Fowler and Shaiko (1987) used survey data from environmental groups and data on individual lawmakers to evaluate the impact of outside lobbying, or grassroots lobbying as they called it, on environmental outreach in the 1978 Senate. They found that outside lobbying had a modest effect on voting patterns (Fowler & Shaiko, 1987). They believe that larger, national groups are more suited for successful outside lobbying efforts, but the costs are still high and suggest that these types of campaigns should be highly targeted instead of reaching out to a group’s entire membership (Fowler & Shaiko, 1987).

Bergen (2009) used a field experiment of a public health campaign focused on smoke-free workplace legislation in New Hampshire. The campaign was led by the American Cancer Society and the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (Bergen, 2009).
Bergen (2009) randomly assigned legislators to either a treatment group or control group. The treatment group received communications from the campaign, while the control group did not (Bergen, 2009). The results showed that the outside lobbying campaign impacted legislative voting on the targeted legislation, with a magnitude of 0.2 (Bergen, 2009). While this study did show that outside lobbying can be effective, it does not show why this outreach is effective (Bergen, 2009, p. 345).

*Use in higher education.* While numerous studies have shown the value of outside lobbying, the use of this tactic has been limited in the higher education community. According to Cook (1998) the higher education associations rarely use outside lobbying, or grassroots lobbying as she called it, in their lobbying activities and their member institutions have historically dissuaded the associations from using outside lobbying. Institutions have concerns about the correct messages being shared with legislators since outside lobbying removes some of the control from the institutions (Cook, 1998). Institutions have even been hesitant to utilize faculty experts to meet with legislators or provide testimony (Cook, 1998). Cook also found that the higher education associations have rarely attempted to identify alumni who are now congressional staffers or legislators, but Adler (2007) argues that the associations often rely on legislators having a “soft spot for their alma mater”.

As mentioned earlier, Kollman (1998) found that groups that have organizations as members utilize outside lobbying less than groups with individual people as members. Perhaps, this is one of the reasons that the higher education associations appear to use outside lobbying less than other interest groups. The associations are fairly dependent on their individual institutional members to conduct outside lobbying, so if the institutions
are not willing to utilize outside lobbying it limits what the associations can do. Adler (2007) argues that the higher education associations do not use much outside lobbying because of the limits of their 501c(3) status, and rely on direct lobbying methods instead.

The lack of outside lobbying by the associations is surprising to some observers because of the large numbers of people that could potentially be organized on behalf of higher education issues (Cook, 1999; Warren, 1999). The respondents in Cook’s study thought the associations should better utilize their constituencies which could include not only millions of students, but also parents, alumni, university administrators, faculty, trustees, vendors, mayors, city councils, and senior citizens (Cook, 1999). Current students and alumni can be particularly convincing because they have personally invested in higher education and have “put their money where their mouth is” (Weerts & Ronca, 2008, p. 276). Alumni are also likely to have strong social capital (Weerts & Ronca, 2008). Surprisingly, Weerts’, et al, (2009) study at one large university found that many alumni were already lobbying on behalf of the university on their own. If this activity is already occurring, it would be beneficial to provide them with training and messages so they are in line with the efforts of the higher education associations (Weerts et al, 2009).

Warren (1999) believes that higher education is “wasting a unique and valuable resource” by not using outside lobbying and that it is the “key to our goals” (p. 6). Pusser and Wolcott (2006) agree, pointing out that there are 2 million people directly linked to higher education in California alone. They believe the traditional view in higher education about outside lobbying may be changing,

The non-profit sector has politically speaking been a sleeping giant, given the emerging shifts in policies and potential conflict with market models, it appears there are now significant incentives for the giant to awake, (p. 190).
The potential for the use of outside lobbying in higher education may best be seen in the President Obama’s 2008 campaign’s success in reaching the Millennial generation. This group is the largest living generation and tends to be passionate about causes because of their exposure to social media (Kanter and Fine, 2010). Since most current college students and many recent alumni fall into this group, the potential impact they could have if properly engaged is vast.

While historically, the higher education community has not utilized outside lobbying, Cook (1998) felt the tactic was gaining acceptance. There appears to be evidence of this shift in attitude. Over the past five years, there are more references in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Inside Higher Education* to associations urging their members to contact legislators on an issue. A quick scan of the associations’ websites also provides examples of them encouraging members to contact Congress. This appears to be particularly true with the AACC. This may be in part due to the fact that competition from the for-profit colleges tends to have the most direct impact on community colleges. It may also be related to their new president, Walter Bumphus, who has made it clear that he wants the association and its members to be more aggressive in their lobbying (Gonzalez, April 10, 2011). He advised member institutions that an increased lobbying effort would require “all hands on deck,” and that, “we need to be both brave and bold in our efforts to influence decisions that affect us” (Gonzalez, April 10, 2011). Additionally, community colleges stood to gain the most from President Obama’s graduation proposals, with a proposed $12 billion dollars going to community colleges (Field, February 25, 2009). When this money was threatened in the revised student aid bill, the AACC sent out an “urgent alert” to members to contact their
legislators (Lederman, March 15, 2010). As mentioned in the introduction, community colleges only ended up receiving $2 billion in the bill.

The exception to the general lack of outside lobbying in the higher education sector appears to be the for-profit sector. The proposed gainful employment rule has spurred an unprecedented lobbying campaign by the for-profit sector (Field, February 1, 2011). While the sector had always been active in inside lobbying tactics and campaign donations, they had only used limited outside lobbying until 2010. Prior to that they did hold an annual “Hill Day” event in Washington, D.C. where they would educate members on the issues and schedule meetings for them with their representatives (Field, September 5, 2010, www.career.org). In 2010, they stepped up their efforts and used the same aggressive approach they have used with their other lobbying techniques.

APSCU urged its members to get in touch with their representatives in their districts during the August recess (Field, September 5, 2010). The association provided webinars for their members to prepare them for the meetings (Field, September 5, 2010). In the webinars, APSCU encouraged members to include students in their meetings with legislators because students are “our best asset” (Field, September 5, 2010). The association also provided various materials for members to use in their meetings (Field, September 5, 2010). The press secretary for a Virginia congressman, Jim Moran, assisted with the development of these materials because the congressman’s brother works for APSCU (Field, September 5, 2010).

In addition to their annual “Hill Day” APSCU organized an additional day in Washington called “Career Day” in September of 2010 which included a rally and meetings with legislators (Blumenstyk, September 24, 2010). APSCU estimated that
approximately 2000 people from 26 states rallied outside of the U.S. Capitol in support of
for-profit institutions, while opponents of the gainful employment rule argued that there
were no more than 500 people in attendance (Epstein, September 30, 2010). Several
members of Congress spoke at the rally and included both Republicans and Democrats
My Choice” and often chanted the phrase (Epstein, September 30, 2010).

At the 2010 “Hill Day” event a student group was formed, but many outside the
for-profit sector question whether the group formed out of genuine student concern or if it
was created by APSCU and its member institutions (Field, September 5, 2010). The
group, Students for Academic Choice, urged students to provide “testimonials” about
their experience at a for-profit institution (Field, September 5, 2010). Their website was
developed with the help of APSCU and numerous for-profit institutions have included
links to the group’s site on the universities’ home pages (Blumenstyk & Field, May 19,
2010). APSCU has at least provided financial and technical assistance to the group
(Field, September 5, 2010). The group circulated an online petition against the gainful
employment rule that had 32,000 signatures in September of 2010 (Field, September 5,
2010). The petition uses strong language with connotations of segregation by claiming
the rule would cause students at for-profit institutions to be treated, “as separate and
inherently unequal” (Blumenstyk & Field, May 19, 2010).

APSCU member institutions have also been active in utilizing outside lobbying.
For example, Education Management, which owns Argosy University and the Art
Institutes, asked all of its employees and students to provide comments to the Department
of Education about the gainful employment rule and even provided a website where they
could customize a message that would automatically be sent to their representatives (Field, September 5, 2010). A non-profit group, the Institute for College Access and Success has attempted to counter the for-profits efforts, but according to most media accounts their efforts have been dwarfed compared to the for-profit (Blumenstyk & Field, May 19, 2010; Field, September 5, 2010). The Department of Education received more than twice as many comments about the gainful employment rule than it had on any other issue (Blumenstyk, September 24, 2010).

**Theoretical framework**

Spence (1973) developed signaling theory to describe hiring practices and wages. During the hiring process employers do not know applicants’ true “productive capabilities” when hiring and must depend on applicants’ observable characteristics (Spence, 1973, p. 357). Characteristics that can be manipulated by the applicant are called signals (Spence, 1973). In the model, applicants “are assumed to select signals so as to maximize the difference between wages offered and signaling costs” (p. 356). Applicants use education to signal their skills, while employers will offer higher wages to applicants with more education because it is assumed they are more skilled (Spence, 1973; Spence, 1974).

Signaling theory has been used in a variety of fields outside of economics including political science to study lobbying. An important assumption in using signaling theory to examine lobbying is that the legislator’s main interest is in being re-elected (Birnbaum, 1992; Wright, 1990; Goldstein, 1999; Austen-Smith & Wright, 1992 & 1994; Ainsworth, 1993; Ainsworth & Sened, 1993; Kollman, 1998; Caldeira & Wright, 1998). According to Birnbaum, 1992, “every lawmaker’s chief interest is getting re-elected” (p. 6). In fact,
Arnold (1992) assumed that, “when legislators have to make a decision they first ask which alternative contributes more to their chances for re-election” (p. 7). Austen-Smith and Wright (1992) provided a broader view of re-election by saying that the decision of which direction to vote on a bill is determined on which one has the most support in the legislator’s district.

While these studies focused on the re-election desires of legislators, or the representational view of congressional voting, two alternate explanations exist (Wilson, 2000). Another view of congressional voting decisions, the organizational view, assumes that it is not necessary to please constituents because most of them do not pay attention to how a legislator votes (Wilson, 2000). The attitudinal view of congressional voting assumes that a legislator can vote based on his/her beliefs because there are so many opposing pressures that offset one another (Wilson, 2000). Additionally, Fenno (1978) argued that legislator decision-making varies based on tenure, with newer legislators acting differently than legislators who have been re-elected multiple times. The single focus on a legislator’s re-election desire is a limitation of signaling theory, yet is the focus of many studies of lobbying.

Wright (1990) used signaling theory to look at the impact of campaign contributions on Congressional voting. He hypothesized that the amount of financial support a group provides may signal the level of influence that group has over the legislator’s constituents (Wright, 1990). This would signal to the legislator that the group may be able to influence constituents in the next election. Wright’s (1990) study found that voting decisions are most impacted by the number of lobbying contacts the legislator had from groups. It appears that while contributions may not have a direct impact on
voting decisions, they can increase access to legislators, so groups base their lobbying activities on previous donations (Wright, 1990). If a group had donated in the last election, then they would assume they would have good access to the legislator, which would impact the lobbying strategy used (Wright, 1990). Wright (1990) posited that one explanation for the lack of influence of money in his study was that most of the organizations in his sample did not have PACs, so money would not have played a major role for those groups.

Austen-Smith and Wright, (1992 & 1994) used signaling theory to introduce the concept of counteractive lobbying. Previously, researchers argued that interest groups only lobbied those legislators who were already supportive, but counteractive lobbying claims that this only occurs after the supportive legislator has been lobbied by groups on the opposing side of the issue (Austen-Smith and Wright, 1994). Legislators are surrounded by “noisy signals” from interest groups and use these signals to determine the level of support for an issue (Austen-Smith and Wright, 1992 p. 233). According to Austen-Smith & Wright (1994) “the legislator observes the mobilizational efforts of either or both groups, evaluates any claims they might make about the productivity of their campaigns, and then decides how to vote” (p. 30).

Mobilization of group membership is a costly activity. Legislators rely on the costliness of a group’s activities and signals to help determine the credibility of the signal (Austen-Smith & Wright, 1992). A legislator is “perfectly informed” when he/she is lobbied by both sides of an issue (Austen-Smith and Wright, 1992, p. 245). Gathering information about the strength of constituent opinions on a certain issue is an expensive activity for a legislator, so they would prefer to receive this information at no cost from
interest group lobbying rather than collect the info themselves (Austen-Smith & Wright, 1994). Austen-Smith & Wright (1992) argue that legislators are better informed and make better voting decisions when lobbying is present and prefer not to limit lobbying activity in spite of negative public opinion about lobbying. This study used a sequential game.

Yet, depending on interest groups for this information can be risky since a group could exaggerate their claims or misrepresent constituent opinion to strengthen their arguments (Austen-Smith and Wright, 1994). To assist in ensuring accurate information from interest groups, legislators need to periodically verify information provided by interest groups and impose some sort of punishment, perhaps cutting off access, on any groups that provide false information (Austen-Smith and Wright, 1994). The threat of punishment discourages groups from providing false information and encourages them to build credibility with legislators (Austen-Smith and Wright, 1994). Austen-Smith and Wright (1994) also argued that legislators are less likely to be misled when counteractive lobbying is present because if two groups are providing conflicting information, the legislator knows that one is not accurate and can attempt to verify which information is most accurate. Because of the value of accurate information and the threat of punishment for inaccurate information, interest groups must build credibility with the legislator over repeated interactions (Austen-Smith and Wright, 1994).

Ainsworth (1993) built on Austen-Smith and Wright’s (1992) study by looking at preventing false claims from lobbyists. He argued that, “examples of misrepresentation are abundant” (Ainsworth, 1993, p. 46). Unlike Austen-Smith and Wright, Ainsworth’s (1993) study assumes incomplete information, so the legislator does not have all of the
information from each side. He focused on how the costliness of lobbyists’ signals prevents them from making false claims and having disproportionate influence. He argued that, “costly signals allow the legislator to assess the credibility of a lobbyist’s claim” (Ainsworth, 1993, p. 51). Ainsworth (1993) used two types of equilibriums to study lobbyist influence. In a separating equilibrium each lobbyist sends a unique signal so that the legislator can decipher the types of information being shared by each lobbyist (Ainsworth, 1993). In a pooling equilibrium each lobbyist sends the same signal so that the legislator cannot decipher between lobbyists’ claims; and therefore no new information is provided to the legislator in this equilibrium (Ainsworth, 1993).

Ainsworth suggested that legislators develop an institutional structure that encourages a separating equilibrium to allow them to receive accurate information (Ainsworth, 1993). Legislators can control the environment in which lobbying occurs, which can effect the costs incurred by lobbyists (Ainsworth, 1993). For example, a legislator can use the access he/she gives lobbyists as a way to control its costliness (Ainsworth, 1993). Ainsworth (1993) also argued that relying on the costliness of lobbyists sending signals may be more effective in limiting lobbyist influence than increased lobbying regulations.

Ainsworth and Sened (1993) used the concept of signaling to describe the “linkage function” of interests groups (p. 834). Interest groups provide a link between constituents and governmental officials and must communicate to both groups (Ainsworth & Sened, 1993). Their lobbying success often depends on their ability to provide this link (Ainsworth & Sened, 1993). Their model shows that interest group lobbying make the policymaking process more efficient (Ainsworth & Sened, 1993). This efficiency occurs because interest group lobbyists have information about legislative constituents and
provide that information to legislators at a cost to the group, not the legislator (Ainsworth & Sened, 1993). Legislators want to know this information and can interpret this information sharing as a signal from the interest group that this is an important issue (Ainsworth & Sened, 1993). The legislator could attain this information about his/her constituents at a significant cost to him/her, so oftentimes he/she will rely on interpreting the signals from lobbyists instead (Ainsworth & Sened, 1993).

Caldeira and Wright (1998) used senators’ votes on three Supreme Court nominees to test signaling theory and looked at grassroots lobbying efforts of interest groups. Interest groups first try to influence constituent opinion by disseminating information about an issue directly to their members and through the media and then mobilize constituents to contact their legislators (Caldeira & Wright, 1998). The groups then use the mobilization of constituents to illustrate the salience of an issue to a legislator through meetings with the legislator or their staff or testifying in front of a committee (Caldeira & Wright, 1998). They concluded that grassroots lobbying is effective because it “provided important information to senators above and beyond what they might have gleaned from public opinion polls and constituency demographics” (Caldeira & Wright, 1998, p. 521). This not only provides information, but signals legislators that a group can mobilize constituents around the current issue and may be able to do so in the future (Caldeira & Wright, 1998). According to Caldeira and Wright, 1998, “interest group lobbying based on costly grassroots displays of support and opposition is a far more credible indicator of what representatives might expect at election time” (p. 521).

According to Goldstein (1999) legislators tend to pay attention to information generated by group grassroots outreach because participation rates are so low in
elections, so if a constituent is willing to take the time to contact a legislator about an issue, they are also likely to vote in the next election. Goldstein (1999) stated that, “grassroots lobbying can signal legislators on the electoral consequences of their actions and provide information to constituents that may reframe an issue and possible change mass opinion” (p. 4). He argued that constituent participation (individual participation) in grassroots outreach campaigns and the power of the group who organized the campaign (group influence) must be studied together (Goldstein, 1999).

Kollman’s (1998) study built on previous applications of signaling theory to look at outside lobbying techniques. Kollman (1998) asserted that an interest group has information that legislators want to know and provides this information as a signal to a legislator. In his model, the interest group serves as the “sender” and the legislator is the “receiver” (Kollman, 1998). Each interest group or “sender” has a type that represents the interest group’s information about constituents that the legislator seeks (Kollman, 1998). A group is a high type if the constituents the group represents feel strongly enough about the issue to cause electoral repercussions for the lawmaker in the next election, while a low type of group represents constituents who do not care about an issue enough to cause electoral repercussions (Kollman, 1998). Through outside lobbying, the salience of a particular issue is signaled to the legislator (Kollman, 1998). By showing that constituents are interested in a particular issue the group sends a signal to legislators that their constituents are paying attention, which could impact re-election in the future (Kollman, 1998). It is assumed that the policymaker does not know the salience of an issue, and therefore, cannot be sure of a group’s type (Kollman, 1998).

The signaling process can be described in four steps (Kollman, 1998). Initially, the
policymaker is not interested in helping the group on its issue of concern (Kollman, 1998). Yet, while the legislator can make predictions about group type, he/she does not know for certain the group’s type (Kollman, 1998). Outside lobbying campaigns are expensive for interest groups to organize, and therefore are used selectively (Kollman, 1998). When they are utilized, legislators receive a signal that the issue must be of particular importance to constituents or else the interest group would not have wasted resources on mobilizing them (Kollman, 1998). Of course, the amount of resources used on outside lobbying may not be an accurate representation of issue salience, but it is up to the legislator to sort through the information and make that judgment (Kollman, 1998). Finally, the policymaker uses the signals sent by an interest group, or lack thereof, to make a decision about the issue (Kollman, 1998).

While relationships and credibility are important in lobbying, Kollman (1998) argued that, “there is always some uncertainty on the part of policymakers whether in this particular instance the interest group is misrepresenting its mandate” (p. 67). Because of this view, Kollman (1998) used a one-shot game model to describe outside lobbying. Each interaction between lobbyists and legislators is new and under different contexts (Kollman, 1998). He acknowledged that using a one-shot game was not realistic, but was still explanatory and easier to analyze (Kollman, 1998).

Based on previous uses of signaling theory in the study of lobbying, it appears that it can be used to predict both the choice of tactic that will be used and the effectiveness of the tactic. Using signaling theory, Wright (1990) found that the number of lobbying contacts had more impact on legislative decisions than campaign contributions. Campaign contributions can help lobbyists get access, so they may use past contributions
to determine which tactics to use on a particular legislator to get the maximum amount of contacts (Wright, 1990). Lobbyists’ past lobbying activities may help predict their future tactics.

Kollman (1998) and Austen-Smith and Wright’s (1994) models are based on legislators relying on the costliness of signals sent by lobbyists to determine their votes. Membership mobilization is a costly activity, and therefore may send a stronger signal than other tactics. If an organization decides to use membership mobilization it signals to legislators that the issue is of particular importance. This can be effective because not only are constituents expressing their opinion on the issue, but the organization is also willing to spend limited resources to mobilize members around the issue.

Ainsworth and Sened (1993) and Caldeira and Wright (1998) focused on the informational role lobbyists can play in providing information about a legislator’s constituents. Legislators seek this information and lobbyists know this information is valuable, so lobbyists can use membership mobilization to provide information about constituent preferences. Legislators do not have the time and financial resources to seek constituent opinion on every issue, so when an organization mobilizes constituents, legislators receive useful information about their constituents at no cost. It is then up to the legislators to determine if the information provided is accurate.

Miler’s (2010) study on legislator perceptions of his/her district illustrated the importance of interest group signaling. She found that legislators often have unrealistic views of their districts (Miler, 2010). Miler’s research built on Fenno’s (1978) work focusing on legislators in their districts and found that legislators view their constituents in a series of concentric circles (p. 1).
Figure 1. Fenno’s constituency levels

The geographic constituency is the legal constituency defined by the boundaries drawn by the state legislature or by court decisions (Fenno, 1978). The re-election constituency is the portion of the district the legislator believes will vote for him or her (Fenno, 1978). The primary constituency is made up of the legislator’s strongest supporters who will not only vote for the legislator, but would also help with his/her campaign (Fenno, 1978). The personal constituency is very small and is made up of people who have a personal relationship with the legislator (Fenno, 1978).

Miler (2010) further delineated the constituency and found that legislators do not see their constituency in its entirety. Legislators’ perceptions of their district are biased and do not include all of the sub constituencies that exist (Miler, 2010). The subset of
constituents that legislators and their staff see when they look at the district is not a representative sample of the collection of relevant sub constituencies, but instead systematically favors some constituents over others (Miler, 2010, p. 153). The legislators’ perception of their district is often dominated by familiar constituents who make campaign contributions or are in frequent contact with the legislator (Miler, 2010). When a legislator is considering a policy issue he/she will look to what he/she considers are the relevant sub-constituencies in his/her district for guidance, but this will not include all possible constituencies (Miler, 2010). Miler’s work illustrates the importance of interest group signaling to ensure that the legislator views the group’s constituency as a relevant sub-constituency in his/her district.

Edelman (1964) also discussed the power of a few in the political system, saying that many activities of mass political participation are largely symbolic. He also argued that while many governmental actions are seen as benefitting the general public, they often only benefit limited groups. Edelman (1964) said,

If such forms as voting and legislation, those we herald as bastions of democracy, bring largely ritual, vicarious, and ephemeral mass participation, there remains in America the possibility of real influence for anyone through involvement in the groups that get benefits through playing the administration and bargaining game (p. 16).

Using this logic, constituent concerns may best be expressed through the efforts of groups that play the political game. Because of this, Edelman (1964) argued that,

Political analysis must, then, proceed on two levels simultaneously. It must examine how political actions get some groups the tangible things they want from government and at the same time it must explore what these same actions mean to the mass public and how it is placated or aroused by them (p. 12).

The current study follows this recommendation by looking at how higher education associations lobby on issues that benefit their member institutions, while also looking at
the role constituents play in this process.

This concept of some people having more influence than others raises issues of power. Two major sources of power are position and reputation (Pfeffer, 1992). These sources of power are important for the current study since college and university presidents have both. As leaders of higher education institutions, college and university presidents represent some of the largest employers in legislative districts and tend to be highly respected leaders in the community. McMillen (2010) found that politicians tend to be intimidated by university presidents and that it is often easier for institutional lobbyists to schedule meetings with legislators if they can say the president will be in attendance. This high level of access allows college and university presidents to develop personal relationships with legislators and for their opinions and preferences to be heard. These relationships can be quite influential. According to Parsons (1997), “a strong personal relationship can be more valuable in the consideration of policy proposals than reams of data” (p. 161).

Thus far, signaling theory has been used primarily in quantitative studies of lobbying. It has been used in qualitative studies in marketing, anthropology, and management of information systems research, but not often in studies of lobbying (Sharma et al, 1999; Bird & Smith, 2005; Durcikova & Gray, 2009). Instead, these studies of lobbying have used complex equations and signaling games to reach their conclusions. Previous research showed that providing information about constituents to legislators acts as a signal that the issue is important to constituents and can be effective in legislator decision-making. I believe previous research has shown that signaling theory is applicable to lobbying and has the potential to illuminate new perspectives
using qualitative methods of research.

Goldstein (1999) argued “it is not possible to understand elite efforts to stimulate mass participation and communications to Congress without also understanding the politics and political context in which grassroots lobbying and communications to Congress take place” (p. 5). Quantitative studies are not able to look at contexts in depth. Previous quantitative studies cannot tell us if legislators and lobbyists see this process as a signaling game. They cannot tell us if lobbyists and legislators see this signaling method as being effective, and if so, why? To further study signaling theory in lobbying, I believe a more in-depth, qualitative study is necessary to bring a new perspective and fill in some of the gaps left by previous quantitative studies. Instead of providing another model to show the relationship between signaling and lobbying, I attempted to add richness to previous work by looking at how signaling theory is used and its effectiveness based on the opinions of the senders and receivers of signals.

The figure below illustrates the process explored in this study. The associations (senders) choose to use membership mobilization when they want to signal strong constituent support or opposition for a policy. Legislators (receivers) use this information to guide their actions on a policy. According to signaling theory, if a legislator believes the information about constituents to be accurate, the signal may increase legislator awareness and salience of an issue and/or alter the legislator’s activity or decision on an issue. If the legislator does not believe the signal sent about constituent opinion to be accurate he/she may not change his/her behavior on the bill.
Summary

This chapter described the volatile history of higher education lobbying and continued challenges the community faces. It outlined previous research on lobbying tactics that will serve as a guide to examine the tactics used by higher education associations in this study. This chapter also detailed the increase of lobbying by the for-profit higher education sector, which has grown dramatically in last two decades and is changing the higher education landscape in Washington.

A signaling model is used to interpret higher education lobbying in this study. This model is based on a legislator’s desire to be re-elected, so when an organization mobilizes their membership on an issue, the legislator needs to pay attention because the...
group could mobilize during the next election. Constituents are not all viewed equally according to Fenno (1978) and therefore, signals from a legislator’s inner constituency circles may be more influential than those from other circles. The next chapter will look at the research methods employed in this study.
CHAPTER 3

METHODS

This chapter looks at the research methods used in this study. The research questions are introduced and the use of qualitative methods, specifically a multiple case study approach, is explained. A summary of how the study was conducted is provided including information about sampling, data collection, data analysis, and quality measures. Ethical considerations, researcher bias, and limitations are also discussed.

This study is based on several research questions:

1. What lobbying tactics are most frequently used by higher education associations?
2. How can signaling theory be used to interpret or predict the impact of a higher education association’s decision on the tactics to be used?
3. How do higher education associations use grassroots outreach in their lobbying efforts?
   a. How well does grassroots outreach work as a signal to policymakers of constituent support according to these associations?
4. How well does grassroots outreach work as a signal to policy makers of constituent support or opposition for an issue according to Congressional staffers?

Research design

Qualitative research comes from a unique perspective. Quantitative researchers view reality as objective, while qualitative researchers see reality as being constructed by individuals (Krathwohl, 1998; Merriam, 1998). Because reality differs by person, resulting in ‘multiple realities,’ qualitative research tries to understand individuals’ perceptions to gain a “holistic view of a phenomenon” (Krathwohl, 1998, p. 229).
According to Creswell (1998), “qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting” (p. 15). Characteristics of strong qualitative research include: an evolving design, presenting multiple realties, using the researcher as an instrument of data collection, and a focus on participants views (Creswell, 1998, p. 21). Gathering data in the participant’s natural setting, and talking directly with participants and being able to watch them interact are major parts of qualitative research (Creswell, 2009).

One of the major differences between qualitative and quantitative research is the concept of the researcher as an instrument of data collection (Merriam, 1998; Creswell, 2009). Instead of running data through statistical software, the data go through the researcher for analysis (Merriam, 1998). The qualitative researcher gathers all of the data from multiple sources and uses multiple methods like interviews, data analysis, and observation (Creswell, 2009). Because the researcher plays such a central role in the data collection and analysis, reflexivity, or self-awareness is another important part of qualitative research (Creswell, 1998; Creswell, 2009). While the depth and multiple perspectives are quite valuable, qualitative research is resource intensive, both in time and money (Merriam, 1998).

I used a qualitative approach for this study because it is useful for studying a phenomenon where prior research is limited, research has subsided, or when looking at a phenomenon from a different perspective (Krathwohl, 1998). The goals of this study coincided with each of these characteristics. Prior research is limited and the most in-
depth study of higher education lobbying is now more than 10 years old. In terms of signaling theory, much of the work in political science took place in the 1990s, but has been limited since. Additionally, most of the work on signaling theory has used quantitative methods, so by using qualitative methods this study brings a unique perspective.

**Multiple case study**

According to Stake (2005) “the multiple case study is a special effort to examine something having lots of cases, parts, or members” (p. vi). Several concerns have been raised about the use of the case study as a research method. Some have been concerned about a lack of rigor, while others have been concerned about a lack of scientific generalization (Yin, 2003). These concerns are addressed in my research design. By using multiple cases and multiple forms of data, the procedure was rigorous and findings from the individual cases were able to be compared and contrasted to make conclusions. Using Stake’s (2005) multiple case study protocol as a guide provided structure and rules that also assisted with the strength of the study.

This study was an explanatory, multiple case study (Yin, 2003). Explanatory case studies are used to find explanations and generalizations and work well for “how” and “why” questions (Yin, 2003). There are numerous definitions for a case study, but a common theme is the idea of a bounded system (Creswell, 1998, p. 37; Yin, 2003; Stake, 1995). For this study, the place boundaries were limited to only seven higher education associations’ lobbying efforts towards members of the U.S. Congress. The initial time boundaries limited study to activities that took place during the 111th Congressional session, January 2009- January 2011. However, the discussion that came out of the
interviews was not limited to the 111th Congress, so I extended the date to June 30th, 2011.

Case studies are useful when contextual conditions play an important role in the issue being studied (Yin, 2003). This need to understand the context surrounding higher education lobbying efforts make the case study a useful method for this research. For this study, organizational, political, and economic contexts are all important. As discussed earlier, President Obama’s American Graduation Initiative called for dramatic increases in both college completion and federal funding of higher education, but faced opposition due to the country’s large deficit and lingering recession.

In using the multiple case study method, the researcher looks at single cases that are “categorically bound together” (Stake, 2005, p. 6). In this study, each case was a higher education association bound together by common policy issues and the same time period. Looking at the similarities and differences among the cases allows the researcher to understand the issues involved (Stake, 2005). Yin (2003) argues that multiple case studies are preferable over single case studies because with a single case study you have put “all your eggs are in one basket” (p. 53). By employing a multiple case study design and using signaling theory, analytic generalization is more likely because it provides the opportunity to show multiple examples to support a theory and leads to replication (Yin, 2003).

Sample. This study was made up of two samples: representatives from higher education associations and Congressional staffers who worked on higher education issues during the 111th Congress. While random sampling can be used in qualitative research, purposeful sampling is often more common and more applicable (Creswell, 1998).
Purposeful sampling allows the researcher to choose sites based on which ones will be most useful in understanding the issue to be studied (Creswell, 2009). A multiple case study should be made up of at least four individual case studies (Yin, 2003; Stake, 2005). This study included seven cases as detailed in Chapter 4.

According to Stake (2005) there are three main criteria for choosing cases: case relevance, case diversity, and opportunity to learn about complexity and contexts (p. 23). Each association in this study was relevant because they were each a major higher education association. Diversity in the cases was met by choosing associations that represented different sectors of higher education. Because these associations are the major players and represent different sectors they provided complexity and a variety of perspectives.

The first part of the sample used the six major higher education associations, the Big Six, traditionally known as the power players in higher education lobbying (King, 1975; Cook, 1998). These associations include ACE, APLU, AASCU, AACC, AAU, and NAICU. The sample also included APSCU, the association representing the for-profit sector, that has become increasingly involved in higher education lobbying in the past decade as described in Chapter 2. The sample was made up of governmental relations representatives from each association. They are the senders in signaling theory. To ensure diversity of the sample, I used the maximum variation strategy of purposeful sampling to choose these associations (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This strategy allowed me to “fully display multiple perspectives about the cases” (Creswell, 1998, p. 120). Each association was chosen because they were each the main representative for different institutional types: land grant universities, community colleges, state colleges and
universities, private colleges and universities, major research universities, and for profit colleges and universities. I interviewed one representative from each of the Big Six associations and two representatives from APSCU.

The second part of the sample consisted of nine Congressional staffers who worked on higher education issues during the 111th Congress. They are the receivers in signaling theory. These staffers provided information about each association’s lobbying activities, provided a measure of the effectiveness of these activities, and helped to check the validity of association responses. I used a combination of purposive and snowball sampling to find participants for this part of the sample (Krathwohl, 1998). Purposive sampling is designed to produce a sample of people who have “information, perspective, or contacts” about the issues being studied (Krathwohl, 1998, p. 172). Slightly less than half of this sample was selected by purposive sampling, using the Spring 2010 version of the *Congressional Quarterly’s Congressional Staff Directory* to choose potential participants based on their positions. I chose staffers who I thought would be involved in higher education policymaking based on my previous professional experiences and based on the issues and committee the legislator focused on. I contacted 18 potential staffers that represented both political parties, both chambers, and both personal office staff and committee staff. Personal offices are the individual offices of each member of Congress located on Capitol Hill. These offices handle constituent concerns in conjunction with the district offices back home. Three agreed to participate and were interviewed from this group. This was a low participation rate, but was supplemented by those gathered through snowball sampling.

Snowball sampling is used to find “members of a group not otherwise visibly
identified” (Krathwohl, 1998, p. 173). The snowball method was appropriate for this group because of the large amount of change that has occurred since the mid-term elections in November of 2010 (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The legislative roster changed a great deal in that election, particularly in the House, so looking at staff lists before or after the mid-term election may not have given an accurate picture of the most active staffers. Instead, this group of staffers was chosen based on recommendations from the governmental relations staff at the associations. I asked the association representatives to provide the names of the staffers that they worked with most frequently. I reached out to nine staffers based on recommendations (several staffers were recommended multiple times) and interviewed the six staffers who agreed to participate from this group.

I believe this dual sampling method for the Congressional staff portion of the sample was important. Strictly using purposive sampling based on my own information may not have produced the most knowledgeable sample, while relying only on the recommendations of the association governmental relations representatives may have led to a biased sample of staffers who tend to be supportive of the associations. There was the potential for association representatives to only suggest supportive staffers that would only say positive things about the associations. I did not find this to be the case and believe this dual sampling method helped provide a balanced sample. The sample included staffers from both political parties, both chambers, and from both committees and personal offices. Still, because the participation rate was so much lower for the purposive sampling group, there is still the chance that the sample was biased since the majority of the staffers were recommended by the association representatives.
In total, I interviewed nine Congressional staffers. The sample was made up of three Republicans, six Democrats, six senate staffers, three house staffers, five committee staffers, and four personal office staffers. While the sample was not perfectly balanced between the categories, it provided a nice variety of perspectives.

Table 5

*Characteristics of Sample*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Republicans</th>
<th>Democrats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senate</td>
<td>House</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee</td>
<td>Personal office</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I interviewed Congressional staffers instead of the legislators based on prior literature, my professional experiences, and accessibility. While working in the U.S. Senate and for a federal lobbying firm, I often observed Congressional staffers serving as gatekeepers to their legislator. This view is supported in the literature. Schlozman, and Tierney (1986) confirmed the importance and power of congressional staff. Heinz et al, (1993) stated that Congressional staffers often serve as “surrogates” for their legislator and that it is widely known in legislative circles that a staffer “authoritatively speaks and acts for the principal” (p. 235). Romzek (2000) stated that, “congressional staff have substantial autonomy and opportunity to influence policy” (p. 413). Congressional staffers are often asked to evaluate the importance of an issue to constituents in the home district based on the information the office has received (Miler, 2010). It is often the
staffers who gauge the pulse of the district and share that with the legislator, which can have an impact on his/her decisions.

**The pilot study.** Both Yin (2003) and Stake (1995) stressed the importance of completing a pilot study before conducting data collection for the full study. The pilot study allows the researcher to test the data collection plans and make any necessary changes (Yin, 2003). The pilot study can be particularly useful in testing the questions to be asked of participants (Yin, 2003; Stake, 1995). After testing interview questions, one may realize that they are not eliciting the information sought, or that some important concepts are missing in the questions.

Because pilot studies are typically chosen based on convenience and access (Yin, 2003; Stake, 1995), I conducted my pilot study locally in mid-July of 2011. The interviews I selected for my pilot study were representative of the two general categories I wanted to examine as a part of my study: the association perspective and the legislative perspective. I interviewed a representative from a university alumni association who manages legislative advocacy to get the association perspective and a state senator to get the legislative perspective. Since I did not use these interviews for data collection, but rather as a test for my questions, I was more interested in the interviewees perspective and not as concerned with them being exact replicas of my samples. I conducted the interviews just as I planned to conduct them in the full study and asked for additional feedback at the conclusion of the interview. Additionally, I conducted one of these interviews in person and one via telephone to test the effectiveness of the questions in a variety of situations. These interviews led to a few minor wording changes in the interview questions, but overall the pilot study showed that my questions elicited the type
of information I was seeking.

**Data sources.** Using multiple forms of data is an important tenet of case study research (Creswell, 1998; Yin, 2003; Stake, 1995; Creswell, 2009). Multiple sources of data provide increased credibility to findings in qualitative research and allows for triangulation of the data to occur (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003; Stake, 2005; Creswell, 2009). For this study I used interviews along with reviews of association websites, association communications, association social media accounts, and newspaper coverage.

**Interviews.** Interviewing was the main source of data collection for this study. Interviews are a flexible tool for data gathering that allow participants to share their interpretations and point of view, while also allowing the researcher to observe non-verbal cues (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). An interview can be organized, but also allows for spontaneity and space for additional issues to arise (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). Even though an interview does allow for some spontaneity, it is still constructed and not natural (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). As with any type of qualitative research the observer effect, where participants will alter their behavior or answers because the researcher is present, is possible (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). To minimize this, I interviewed participants in their natural environment, either in their office or another location of their choosing. Additionally, interviews only provide, “indirect information filtered through the views of interviewees” (Creswell, 2009, p. 179). I mitigated this by using extensive document review and interviewing both the “senders” and “receivers” to help triangulate interview responses.

For this study I use a semi-structured interview structure, where I had prepared questions, but strayed occasionally if a unique idea or concept was raised during the
interview (Hitchcock, & Hughes, 1989). A structured interview is closest to a quantitative questionnaire and tends to be more easily analyzed, yet, it lacks a lot of the flexibility that is one of the significant benefits of interviewing (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1989). The semi-structured interview allows for depth and allows the interviewer to “probe and expand the interviewee’s response” (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1989, p. 83). Using a semi-structured approach allowed for collection of similar data from each participant, but also allowed for additional lines of inquiry to develop based on the participant’s responses.

Qualitative researchers stress the need to develop a rapport and trusting, meaningful relationships with participants (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1989; Bresler, 1997). I was able to meet several of the association representatives at a governmental relations conference in the fall of 2010, which allowed me to start developing a rapport with part of the sample. Before starting each interview, I talked to participants about my legislative background. In a previous study I conducted where I interviewed lobbyists, this disclosure seemed to help put the participants at ease because I was “one of them” and not just a random academic. I recorded each interview to be able to have the most complete record of the discussion. I realize that this may have made the interview seem more formal and intimidating for the participant (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1989), but I tried to mitigate this by keeping the recorder off to the side and not taking notes during the interview to allow the interview to seem more conversational. In one interview, the participants did not want to be recorded, so I did take notes instead.

**Document review.** In addition to interviews, I also completed a thorough document review. Document review is useful because it allows the researcher to obtain materials
that the participants created and uses their language and wording (Creswell, 2009). It is also convenient for the researcher and unobtrusive to the participants (Creswell, 2009). I reviewed each association’s website, focusing on its organization and structure as well as materials like press releases and action alerts posted during the study period. I also reviewed the associations’ Facebook and Twitter accounts from the same time period and gathered information on the number of followers, the number each association was following, the number of tweets or likes, and dates the accounts were opened.

I also conducted a media analysis of several print media resources. For the higher education perspective I reviewed the Chronicle of Higher Education and Inside Higher Ed. I looked only at articles that dealt specifically with higher education lobbying by using variations of the search terms “lobbying” and “advocacy”. This search provided 58 articles in the Chronicle of Higher Education and 66 articles in Inside Higher Ed to review. Within these articles I tracked the number of times the associations in my sample were mentioned or quoted, the number of times other organizations, individual higher education institutions, and specific lobbying tactics were mentioned, as well as the topics included in the articles.

**Data collection.** I began outreach to schedule interviews in late June of 2011 once I received IRB approval for revised materials. All initial outreach was conducted via e-mail and I created a unique e-mail address just for the purposes of setting up these interviews and any additional follow up to ensure privacy. I provided all participants with the consent form via e-mail ahead of the interview to give them a chance to read through it and ask any questions. A copy of these consent forms can be found in Appendix A. The majority of the interviews took place in Washington, D.C between July
22nd and the 28th in the participants’ offices or place of choice. During this time I conducted seven interviews with Congressional staffers and four interviews with association representatives. These interviews ranged from 20 minutes to more than an hour, with an average of approximately 45 minutes. For the participants I was not able to interview in person, I conducted phone interviews. These interviews were conducted in the weeks following my trip to D.C. between August 1st and August 23rd, and included two Congressional staffers and three association representatives. These interviews were shorter, averaging 25 minutes. All participants signed consent forms before the interviews were conducted.

**Data analysis.** I used Stake’s (2005) cross-case analysis method as a guide for analyzing the data collected in this study. The goal of cross-case analysis is to use evidence from each case to show similarities and differences in order to gain an understanding of the issues. This is an interpretive and “highly reductive process,” where the researcher must balance losing some of the details of each case while still keeping “the most important experiential knowledge” (Stake, 2005, p. 44). I did not use computer software for data analysis.

**Coding.** Upon completion of the interviews, I transcribed and produced summaries of each interview. I shared these summaries with each participant for member checking. Of the 17 people interviewed, two were not able to be reached and one person did not respond (I attempted contact three times), leaving 14 participants who approved, some with a few edits, the interview summaries. Once I received feedback from the participants I began the process of coding. I utilized a combined method of coding using both predetermined and emerging codes (Creswell, 2009). The predetermined codes
were developed prior to the interviews and were based on themes in the literature. These codes included: decision on tactic, lobbying tactics, general grassroots outreach, higher education grassroots outreach, Big Six consensus, campaign donations, signaling, timing of lobbying, and use of social media. I went through all of the interview summaries and color-coded them based on these themes. After going through all of the summaries, there was some data that did not fit into the pre-determined categories and required the creation of the following emergent codes: college and university presidents, students, the for-profit sector, role of association governmental relations staff, crowded lobby, partisanship, and improving higher education lobbying. Upon further analysis, some of these codes were able to be combined with other codes to form seven overarching themes for analysis: decision on tactic, lobbying tactics, signaling, role of association representatives, for-profit sector, crowded lobby, and partisanship. I used Creswell’s (2009) method for presenting the analysis in the narrative (Chapter 5) by providing a detailed discussion of the themes supported by “subthemes, specific illustrations, multiple perspectives from individuals, and quotations” (p. 189).

Quality measures

Unlike quantitative research, there are not universally agreed upon quality measures for qualitative research. Creswell (2009) provided three categories for increasing the quality of a qualitative study that seemed to cover most of what is discussed in the qualitative literature: reliability, validity, and generalizability.

Reliability. Reliability is concerned with the consistency of method across researchers and the ability of the study to be repeated by another researcher and reach the same findings (Creswell, 2009; Yin, 2003). The goal is to “minimize errors and biases in
a study” (Yin, 2003, p. 37). In addition to using Stake’s (2005) multiple case study procedure as a guide, I also created a case protocol in accordance to Yin’s (2003) recommendations. This protocol contains all of the procedures I used in the study including an overview of the case study, field procedures, interview questions and coding information and can be found in Appendix B (Yin, 2003).

**Validity.** Validity is concerned with the accuracy of the data. Triangulation is used to improve validity in qualitative studies. According to Stake (2005), triangulation is “a process of repetitious data gathering and critical review of what is being said” (p. 34). Each finding needs at least three sources of confirmation and is achieved through triangulation (Stake, 2005). In this study, I used interviews with both “senders” and “receivers,” reviews of association websites and communications, media analysis, and prior literature.

Member checking, which involves sending part of the findings portion of the report to the participants to review for accuracy, also improves validity (Stake, 1995; Creswell, 2009). As detailed above, I used this technique with my interviews. Creswell (2009) also recommended clarifying the researcher bias, presenting discrepant findings, and using peer debriefing to increase study validity. I clarify my potential bias below and present discrepant findings throughout Chapter 5. I used peer debriefing by sharing several drafts of my findings with two members of my committee and utilized their feedback to improve my analysis and presentation of findings.

**Generalizability.** There is disagreement among researchers about generalizability in qualitative methods. Stake (2005) argues that case studies are not designed for generalization or to be representative. Instead, they are designed to explain a
phenomenon. According to Yin (2003), while quantitative research focuses on statistical
generalization, case studies focus on analytical generalization (p. 37). He explained
analytical generalization as, “the investigator is striving to generalize a particular set of
results to some broader theory” (Yin, 2003, p. 37).

While I do not believe my study is generalizable, I did take measures to work in
that direction. According to Stake (2005), merging case findings for the analysis helps to
move towards generalization. According to Yin (2003), analytical generalization is based
on using a replication logic where a theory is tested by replicating a study in multiple
cases. If findings are similar across cases then analytical generalization can be claimed
(Yin, 2003). Using seven individual cases to study the same theoretical propositions
provided the replication logic for analytical generalization in this study. I also used
theory to develop the codes and themes for the data analysis, which allowed me to apply
my findings to existing theory.

**Ethical considerations**

Ethical considerations are particularly important in qualitative research since it
typically includes direct contact with people (Creswell, 2009). According to Bogdan and
Bilken (2003), there are two main traditional guidelines for ethics in research: that
participants understand the study and participate voluntarily without pressure and that
participants understand the risks involved in their participation. According to Sieber
(1992), there are three main ethical principles that guide research involving human
subjects. Beneficence seeks to prevent risk to the human subject, while maximizing the
benefits to the participants as well as the larger community (Sieber, 1992). Justice seeks
to distribute benefits and risks fairly across all groups of people (Sieber, 1992). Respect
is another important principle of research (Sieber, 1992). Respect is particularly important in qualitative research involving human participants.

There are several potential benefits from this research to the participants and to the higher education community as a whole. Since research about higher education lobbying is extremely limited, it is important to gain a greater understanding of the topic. All colleges and universities are impacted by federal government regulations, many are impacted by federal research dollars, and nearly all are impacted by federal financial aid. As the federal deficit increases and federal funding decreases, the fight for federal dollars will be increasingly competitive. Additionally, spending on lobbying activities by the higher education community has increased drastically in the past 10 years. It is important to understand how the higher education community is spending its money in terms of lobbying activities and how they fare in a competitive funding atmosphere.

I did not foresee any physical risks to participating in this research. My biggest concern was for participant confidentiality. While I originally planned to provide additional identifying information of the Congressional staffers like political party, chamber represented, or type of office represented, and had permission to use this information based on the consent signed by participants and my IRB approval, I decided not to use this information in my narrative of the findings. While the staffers signed the consent form, it was clear that many were concerned about confidentiality. Since participants were so generous with their time and participation, I did not want to do anything that would make them feel uncomfortable. Participants' identities were kept confidential in the data collection and in publication. They were only referred to as “representative from Association X” and “Congressional staffer”. Since there are several
governmental relations staff members at each association, and many Congressional staffers who work on higher education issues in some capacity, participants are not easily identifiable.

Another potential risk would be to the association’s competitive advantage. Many lobbyists do not want to share their strategies because it could give a competitor an upper hand. Since this study looked at past strategies, risks to competitive advantage are less of an issue for this study. A great deal of this information was already publicly known.

The confidentiality risk identified above is important, but the benefits provided to the larger higher education community as a result of this research have wide implications. The knowledge gained from this study will be valuable for informing the field and future work. Since participating in this research had no more risk than what is encountered in daily life, the potential insights gained from this research outweighed the risks. A copy of my IRB approval can be found in Appendix C.

**Researcher bias**

Since the researcher plays a subjective role in qualitative research, it is important for the researcher to be aware of any biases that could impact the interpretation of the data (Stake, 1995; Creswell, 1998; Yin, 2003; Creswell, 2009). This reflexivity is important and the researcher should provide an honest narrative that highlights the potential biases the he/she may bring to the research (Creswell, 2009). These biases could come from factors such as the researcher’s background, gender, culture, and history (Creswell, 2009).

Because I have a professional background in legislative affairs and lobbying, I may have preconceived notions about specific strategies and tactics. I interned with a non-
profit advocacy group, a United States Senator, and a private lobbying firm while in college. I then spent three years working for a public affairs firm focusing primarily on grassroots campaigns. I also spent a year managing a public awareness campaign for a non-profit institution. Many of my professional experiences involved grassroots outreach and I generally had a positive experience with these efforts. It was through these professional experiences that I developed an interest in higher education lobbying. I hoped to combine my practical experiences with existing theory and literature to provide a new perspective on higher education lobbying with this study. I believe my practical experience was an asset to this study because I have worked in the lobbying arena and have used or witnessed many of the tactics described in the literature.

My educational background could be another source of potential bias. I am a fourth generation graduate from a land-grant university, my father has worked for land-grant universities all of my life, and I am currently attending a land-grant university for my doctoral education. Because of this, I am most familiar with these institutions. However, I did attend a private university for my master’s degree and am currently working for a community college research center. I have done a great deal of independent research on for-profit universities and attended several sessions about for-profit higher education at the 2010 Association for the Study of Higher Education Association’s annual meeting and spoke with several scholars whose research focused on that sector.

By triangulating my data, which is detailed above, I worked to mediate my own biases. I also maintained a journal throughout the process to reflect on my research and thoughts about the data as I collected and analyzed it (Creswell, 1998). Looking back through this journal did not show any major biases. The journal entries were focused on
the data and potential findings based on theory.

**Limitations**

In addition to the limitations discussed throughout this chapter, several other factors need to be considered. As mentioned earlier, because this study does not use statistics and is open to the researcher’s interpretation, qualitative research is not generalizable beyond the specific study. Yet, using qualitative methods allowed for a more in-depth study of issues and activities and addressed questions of ‘how’ and ‘why’? In terms of reliability, I do not believe that reliability can be 100% guaranteed in a qualitative study, but I took steps to get close. The case protocol will allow another researcher to go through the same process I followed, ask the same questions, examine the same documents, and interview the same types of people, but they may interpret the findings differently. For this reason, it was important for me to be thorough in the explanation of my findings and my reasoning for coming to those conclusions.

This study was based on interviews with 17 people, eight with association representatives and nine with Congressional staff. While this number provided a variety of perspectives it was still limited considering there are hundreds of Congressional staffers and associations. Four of these interviews were conducted via phone and did not provide the richness of data that the in-person interviews provided. Additionally, efforts to protect the confidentiality of Congressional staffers may have weakened the findings for the reader. While it would have been ideal to provide more details (ie, Democrat/Republican, House/Senate, Committee/Personal office) about the staffer quotes in the findings and analysis, that would have risked the confidentiality of the respondents.
I tried to mitigate this by analyzing the data by these categories and did not find major differences in responses.

This study only looked at seven major associations, which covered a variety of types of higher education, yet many perspectives were not represented. One major voice that was missing from this study was that of minority-serving institutions. One staffer talked about working most with the associations that represent those institutions. Specialty associations are also not represented in this study. Another staffer commented that these specialty associations tended to be more aggressive than the Big Six. While it would have been ideal to expand this study to include more perspectives, boundaries had to be placed to make this study feasible. Using Cook’s (1998) Big Six categorization and adding APSCU for the for-profit sector made the most sense for this study.

This study focused on Congressional lobbying, but higher education lobbying also takes place in the Executive and Judicial branches. I chose to focus only on Congress because that is where much of the theory focuses. The time period covered in this study was particularly active for lobbying in the Executive branch, specifically the Department of Education with the gainful employment proposals. Valuable data and perspectives may have been lost by not talking with Department of Education officials as well. However, this issue spilled into Congress and most of the Congressional staffers discussed it, so this issue was not ignored in the study. Additionally, by only focusing on the federal level this study does not cover the lobbying activities of many associations at the state level.

This study covers a limited time period of 2.5 years. While this was an active time period for higher education lobbying, the data only applies to this time period. I
tried to mitigate this by completing a thorough literature review looking at the history of
higher education lobbying. My interviews took place in July and August of 2011 and it is
likely that responses were impacted by the issues and the contexts of that specific time
period. While other issues may have been important during the earlier part of the time
period of this study, respondents likely reflected most on more recent events. However,
by focusing on a recent time period, the activities were fresh in the respondents’ minds
which provided a richness in data that would have been lost had I looked at wider, further
removed time period.

Finally, the confusion over the definition of “grassroots outreach” may have
impacted the data. When defining “grassroots outreach” I talked about mobilizing
membership and most responses seemed to be in reference to membership. The term
“grassroots outreach” seemed to be used most in the literature, but several interview
respondents were focused on the legal definition of “grassroots outreach” which is
activating people outside of a group’s membership. Unfortunately, the concern about the
definition of the term “grassroots” was not raised until one of my last interviews.
However, one respondent was very clear about the legal definition and did not want to
answer questions using a different definition. I kept detailed notes in these cases and
used the term “membership mobilization” instead of “grassroots outreach” in the findings
and analysis of the data to better reflect the practical use of the terms.
CHAPTER 4

DESCRIPTION OF THE CASES

In this chapter I describe each of the seven associations explored in this study. Each association is described in terms of its history, membership, governmental relations staff, the issues each association covers, publications, and leadership. This chapter simply describes the cases, while Chapter 5 focuses on analysis of the cases.

Context

It is important to remember the context in which these cases were developed. The time period for this study was a volatile time in Congress. As detailed in Chapter 1, it started with President Obama’s inauguration and a Democratically-controlled House and Senate for the first time in more than a decade. The political climate in Washington, and throughout the country, became extremely contentious almost immediately. President Obama and Congress were able to pass the controversial health care bill, which included student loan reform and additional funding for higher education, but many concessions were made. The midterm elections brought along a backlash against Democratic initiatives causing the Democrats to lose the majority in the House and the Republicans to gain a majority partly through the Tea Party. This Tea Party movement called for significant cuts in the federal budget across the board. In the summer of 2011, when this study was conducted, the major issue on the Hill was President Obama’s proposal to increase the debt ceiling, while Republicans were pushing for budget cuts. Numerous cuts to higher education were proposed, but proposed cuts to the Pell Grant program were the most concerning for higher education (Field, March 20, 2011). The for-profit sector was also a major focus in the higher education arena. The Department of Education’s
gainful employment proposals led to an unprecedented lobbying effort both at the
Department and Congress.

**Associations**

The description of the associations begins with a table comparing several
characteristics of the associations including year of founding, membership, location,
issues handled, and governmental relations staff numbers. In order to directly compare
associations, all of the information in the table was gathered from the associations’
websites. The table is followed by detailed descriptions of each association. These
descriptions look deeper into the categories used in the table. It is important to note that
this information was gathered from the association’s websites, previous literature, and
media accounts. The descriptions are based on my interpretation of available information
and may not provide a comprehensive look at each association.

A map showing the locations of each association is provided at the end of the
chapter. Location is an interesting component of studying higher education associations
because at one point five of the Big Six Associations were all located in the One Dupont
building. The associations not located in One Dupont are now all located closer to the
“K” Street lobbying corridor and closer to Capitol Hill. Additionally, three of the Big Six
associations have moved within one block of one another, with two in the same building.
Prior literature has shown that these three associations tend to work with one another
frequently. One could argue that by locating near “K” Street and Capitol Hill, these
associations may be more interested in lobbying activities than the associations located at
One Dupont. Additionally, proximity to other associations may signify a greater
likelihood of working together.
### Table 6

**Association Information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AASCU</th>
<th>APLU</th>
<th>AACC</th>
<th>AAU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>History</strong></td>
<td>Founded in 1961</td>
<td>Founded in 1887</td>
<td>Founded in 1920</td>
<td>Founded in 1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Members</strong></td>
<td>420 public colleges and universities</td>
<td>217 public research universities, land-grant institutions, and state university systems</td>
<td>1200 two-year, associate degree-granting institutions</td>
<td>61 public and private research universities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location</strong></td>
<td>1307 New York Avenue, N.W.</td>
<td>1307 New York Avenue, N.W.</td>
<td>One Dupont Circle</td>
<td>1200 New York Avenue, NW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Issues</strong></td>
<td>Academic quality, access and inclusion, economic progress, educational innovation</td>
<td>Access, student aid, research funding, science policy, agriculture</td>
<td>Access, and affordability, economic and workforce development</td>
<td>Funding for research, research and education policy, and graduate and undergraduate education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gov. rel. Staff</strong></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Member to staff ratio</strong></td>
<td>47</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NAICU</th>
<th>ACE</th>
<th>APSCU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>History</strong></td>
<td>Founded in 1976</td>
<td>Founded in 1918</td>
<td>Founded in 1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Members</strong></td>
<td>1000+ private, nonprofit higher education institutions</td>
<td>1800+ college and university presidents and leaders of higher education associations</td>
<td>1900+ for-profit schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location</strong></td>
<td>1025 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.</td>
<td>One Dupont Circle</td>
<td>1101 Connecticut Avenue, NW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Issues</strong></td>
<td>Student aid, tax policy, and regulation</td>
<td>Key higher education issues</td>
<td>Access to career education, importance of workforce development, regulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gov. rel. Staff</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Member to staff ratio</strong></td>
<td>143</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Information gathered from association websites
American Association of State Colleges and Universities. The American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) was formed in 1961 to represent the institutions that were not represented by APLU and AACC (Cook, 1998). Their membership of 420 institutions consists of comprehensive state universities, state multi-campus systems, technological institutes, former teachers colleges, and former junior colleges that are now four-year colleges (Cook, 1998; www.aascu.org). The association is governed by a board of directors that is made up of 16 member presidents (www.aascu.org). AASCU moved out of One Dupont in the 1990s and is now located approximately two miles from the Capitol and two blocks from the K Street lobbying corridor. According to their website, AASCU has five main purposes: to promote the contributions of their member institutions, support the missions of their member institutions, advocate for member institutions at the federal level, provide leadership for effective policy and program development, and provide professional development for members (www.aascu.org). AASCU focuses on issues related to financial aid and access as well as states’ application of federal polices (Cook, 1998).

The association provides members with numerous professional development and advancement opportunities including a Grants Resource Center and the Millennium Leadership Initiative, a leadership development program for traditionally underrepresented groups in university leadership positions (www.aascu.org). AASCU has developed an area on its website where member institutions can share innovations and best practices with one another called the Innovation’s Exchange (www.aascu.org). AASCU also has a multimedia project on its website called First Generation Voices, where students and alumni can upload written, audio, or video narratives about their
experience as a first generation student. AASCU produces numerous publications including a quarterly magazine called *Public Purpose*, regular Washington updates, and weekly state policy headlines called *EdLines* (www.aascu.org). The association also produces papers and reports that look at various issues in more depth. Some of the recent reports looked at higher education financing, access, and affordability (www.aascu.org).

The association’s 2012 federal policy agenda focused on four areas: affordability, access and completion, accountability and competitiveness (www.aascu.org). According to their website, AASCU has nine governmental relations staff members (www.aascu.org). The AASCU website has a Pell Action and Resource Center that provides members with opportunities to contact legislators, write op-eds, and engage in social media related to Pell issues (www.aascu.org). AASCU has also been working with APLU on the Voluntary System of Accountability, producing a report called *The College Portrait* that provides comparable information about the college experiences of students (www.aascu.org).

The current president of AASCU is Dr. Muriel Howard who joined the association in August of 2009. She had formerly served as the president of State University of New York Buffalo and was the first black female and first member of a racial minority group to lead one of the Big Six associations (Lederman, April 1, 2009). When she took office her goal as president was to keep higher education on top of the federal agenda and said, "we're the organizations and engines that make it possible for those problems to be solved" (Lederman, April 1, 2009). Dr. Howard felt confident in AASCU’s influence in Washington saying,

I certainly don’t see us losing influence. The institutions that are part of AASCU are more nimble and can respond quickly to issues. That creates an opportunity for
us to be more influential. AASCU has done a wonderful job over the past decade in terms of working on the right policies, ... We tend to be more student-centered in our efforts (Hebel, April 3, 2009).

**Association of Public and Land Grant Universities.** The Association of Public and Land Grant Universities (APLU) is the oldest higher education association and was officially formed in 1887, but the unofficial group, the “friends of agricultural education,” a group of presidents of land-grant universities, started meeting in 1871 (Cook, 1998). The association’s name has changed multiple times since its founding with the most recent name change taking place in 2008, changing from the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (Cook, 1998; King, 1975; McMillen, 2010). APLU’s president said of the name change, “We believe this new name will help those outside of higher education, in Congress, federal departments and agencies, and foundations to more readily recognize the association” (Fain, November 10, 2008). The association now has 217 members and is primarily made up of land-grant universities and state flagship universities (Cook, 1998). These members include 74 land-grant universities, 18 of which are historically black institutions, and 33 American Indian land-grant colleges located in all 50 states and territories (www.aplu.org). The association is governed by a board of directors made up of members, with other opportunities for member involvement through a variety of commissions and councils (www.aplu.org). APLU moved out of One Dupont in the 1990s and is now located 2.1 miles from the Capitol and two blocks from the K Street lobbying corridor.

According to their website, APLU is a research and advocacy organization with a mission to “support high-quality public higher education and its member institutions as they perform their teaching, research, and public service roles” (www.aplu.org). APLU
focuses on issues related to providing low-cost public education, graduate education, agriculture, economic development, and technology transfer (Cook, 1998; King, 1975). APLU initiatives focus on a numerous issues such as accountability (including a Voluntary System of Accountability), global competitiveness, internationalization of university campuses (including establishing a national study abroad program), reauthorization of the Farm Bill, and online learning (www.aplu.org). During the spring of 2010, APLU conducted regional meetings throughout the country with member presidents and other experts to discuss the future of public research universities, particularly in light of decreases in state funding (Lederman, April 1, 2010).

According to their website, APLU has five staff members in the Office of Congressional & Governmental Affairs (www.aplu.org). These staff members work with the Council on Government Affairs (CGA), made up of governmental relations representatives from member institutions, to develop the associations’ federal relations activities (www.aplu.org). APLU sends regular e-mails updating members on association activities as well as a quarterly newsletter called *A Public Voice* (www.aplu.org). APLU also produces more in-depth reports on issues ranging from accountability to cooperative extension (www.aplu.org). APLU has taken a lead on creating a Voluntary System of Accountability along with AASCU.

The president of APLU is Dr. Peter McPherson, who took office in January of 2006. Upon taking office, McPherson’s overall goal as president was to insure that students had continued access to quality public higher education and said, "we need to reaffirm that higher education is a public good" (Walters, August 19, 2005). Dr. McPherson served as president of Michigan State University prior to joining APLU
McPherson also has a background in banking, which led some observers to think he had connections that others in higher education did not (Jaschik, August 19, 2005). McPherson has led the way for the development of the Voluntary System of Accountability and has said,

We should consider a voluntary system, by type or mission of colleges and universities, based on outcomes. There should be a serious discussion on how to do this within the higher education community and not just in the public policy/political community (Lederman, April 10, 2006).

**American Association of Community College.** The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) was founded in 1920 as the American Association of Junior Colleges (AAJC) and represents more than 1200 community colleges, junior colleges, technical colleges, and private two-year colleges (Cook, 1998; www.aacc.nche.edu). The association is located in the One Dupont circle building (Cook, 1998). According to its website, “AACC promotes community colleges through five strategic action areas: recognition and advocacy for community colleges; student access, learning, and success; community college leadership development; economic and workforce development; and global and intercultural education” (www.aacc.nche.edu). The association also offers a variety of professional development opportunities for its members including the Future Leaders Institute, Future Presidents Institute, and New CEO Institute (www.aacc.nche.edu).

AACC, along with five other organizations, has created a College Completion Challenge, urging member colleges to increase their completion rates by 50 percent over the next 10 years (www.aacc.nche.edu). The association also works closely with the Lumina Foundation’s Achieving the Dream initiative that also focuses on college completion (www.aacc.nche.edu). AACC maintains a Center for Workforce and
Economic Development that brings together a variety of groups involved in economic
development and provides them with technical assistance and analysis
(www.aacc.nche.edu). The association is also focused on the role community colleges
play in STEM education and is involved in the National Science Foundation's Advanced
Technological Education (ATE) program and provides information on a variety of
STEM-related grants for community colleges (www.aacc.nche.edu).

AACC is primarily interested in access and affordability (Cook, 1998). They also
work on issues related to vocational and occupational education, including training for
nurses and other allied health professions (King, 1975). This focus on vocational and
occupational education separates them from the other Big Six associations (King, 1975).
AACC solidified its role in federal relations when it lobbied successfully for junior
colleges to be eligible for the benefits provided in the GI Bill in the 1940s (Cook, 1998).
AACC often has more difficulty engaging its members in federal activities because these
institutions rely heavily on state and local funding (Cook, 1998). On the other hand, they
benefit from having at least one community college in almost every Congressional
district (King, 1975). Additionally, President Obama has made community colleges a
cornerstone in his college completion agenda (Gonzalez, January 20, 2011).

The association has three staff members focused on governmental relations
activities. The AACC website contains an advocacy toolkit that provides fact sheets,
sample op-eds, and a social media guide (www.aacc.nche.edu). AACC also has a Pell
Grant Action Center on its website in concert with the Association of Community
College Trustees that provides opportunities to contact legislators, as well as sample
letters, op-eds, and board resolutions focused on protecting Pell grants.
The association also hosts an annual Washington Institute where community college officials learn about the policymaking process in Washington and how community colleges can influence policy (www.aacc.nche.edu). AACC produces a biweekly online newspaper called the Community College Times as well as advocacy news updates several times a week (www.aacc.nche.edu). The association also produces more in-depth research and policy briefs and recently released a report about preventing abuse in federal financial aid (www.aacc.nche.edu).

The president of AACC is Dr. Walter Bumphus who took office in January of 2011 and is the association’s first African American leader (Gonzalez, December 5, 2010a). Bumphus had led several two-year colleges and Louisiana’s two-year college system prior to joining AACC (Lederman, June 22, 2010). Higher education lobbyists predicted that Bumphus would be more assertive in lobbying efforts than his predecessors (Gonzalez, December 5, 2010a). He had been known for his ability to tell a story, with one former colleague saying, "all of a sudden board members and legislators understood that community colleges were not just a cost item in the state budget, but an investment in economic-development renewal" (Gonzalez, December 5, 2010a). Upon his arrival at ACCC, Bumphus felt the community college story needed to be told,

One of the challenges, even with that spotlight on community colleges, is that I still don't think we are truly understood by everyone. I don't think they truly understand the mission of community colleges, like the significant role we play in work-force training. In many states, we are really addressing students who come underprepared for college-ready work. We have been called the Ellis Islands of higher education, and really of America. Who is going to serve those students, if we don't? If not, us, then, whom? We truly represent the gateway to the middle class for many students, and to many of our citizens, a better way of life (Gonzalez, December 5, 2010b).
Association of American Universities. The Association of American Universities (AAU) is an “invitation only” association that was formed in 1900 and has been selective from the beginning (Cook, 1998). The association was created by the 14 universities that offered Ph.D. degrees at the time (Rosenzweig, 1998). It now has 61 members and focuses on “national and institutional issues that are important to research-intensive universities, including funding for research, research and education policy, and graduate and undergraduate education” (www.aau.edu). AAU moved out of One Dupont in the 1990s and is now located in the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) building, which is two miles from the Capitol and two blocks from the K Street lobbying corridor. The association is governed by a board of directors made up of the presidents and chancellors of their member institutions (www.aau.edu).

Membership is highly sought after, with many schools campaigning to get in (Savage, 1999). A university must be invited to apply for membership and be approved by three-fourths of the members (Savage, 1999). The review process looks at a variety of factors including the size of the university’s research base, the number of graduate-level students, library size, and amount received in federal grants for research (Savage, 1999). According to AAU member presidents, membership has become increasingly based on quantitative measures like competitive research funds, faculty membership in academies, and a ranking methodology developed by some AAU members and staff (Selingo & Stripling, May 2, 2011).

The selective nature of AAU has caused recent controversy. In April of 2011 AAU member presidents voted to expel the University of Nebraska-Lincoln from the association because it was felt that the university did not meet the association’s high
standards (Selingo & Stripling, May 2, 2011). Syracuse University was also being reviewed, but chose to withdraw from the association before it could vote (Selingo & Stripling, May 2, 2011). Stephen Trachtenberg questioned the relevance of the AAU and its exclusivity in a commentary piece (Trachtenberg, May 5, 2011). In its response, AAU stressed that it advocates for research funding for all of higher education, not just its members (Toiv, May 15, 2011).

AAU was developed around issues of quality and in 1914 took on the role of setting accreditation standards by publishing an “approved list”, called the AAU Accepted List, of institutions each year (Cook, 1998, www.aau.edu). AAU relinquished its accrediting activities in 1949 and began focusing more on federal issues, which is now a major focus of the association (www.aau.edu). According to their website, research universities deal with a variety of issues beyond traditional higher education issues including research conduct, visa and immigration issues, copyright law, and tax issues (www.aau.edu). AAU has six staff members that work in federal relations. Federal relations professionals from member institutions work together on the association’s Council of Federal Relations to develop the association’s federal agenda (www.aau.edu). AAU provides a *Weekly Wrap-up* that summarizes legislative activity and also produces more in-depth reports on a variety of issues (www.aau.edu). Some of these reports have included *Regulatory and Financial Reform of Federal Research Policy, University Research: The Role of Federal Funding*, and *Understanding Doctoral Education in the U.S.* (www.aau.edu).

The AAU president is Dr. Hunter Rawlings who assumed the position in June of 2011. Prior to joining AAU he served as president of the University of Iowa and Cornell University (Basken, March 23, 2011). The Chairman of the AAU board said that
Rawlings, "understands from experience the relationships between both public and private universities and their communities and government at the state and national level" (Lederman, March 22, 2011). Rawlings has expressed some concern about universities offering too many doctoral programs in an effort to gain prestige and said,

Institutions need to take a good, hard look at their graduate programs, particularly their Ph.D. programs, and ask themselves if they are recruiting strong students, if they are turning out top students who have good job opportunities. The key is quality—that's the real key—and if you don't have quality and you can't build it, then I think you should not be running a program (Basken, March 23, 2011).

Rawlings also discussed the need for higher education to better articulate its value,

We need to make very clear, not only to the Congress and the [Obama] administration, but to the public, that these are jewels, great jewels.... We have to get this message out in a very forceful way, and in a transparent way -- a way that everybody understands. We're not always best at that; we are capable of academia-speech (Lederman, March 22, 2011).

National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities. The National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU) was originally part of the Association of American Colleges (AAC) founded in 1915 (Cook, 1998). AAC had been the main representative of independent colleges and universities and pushed for equal access to federal programs in spite of religious affiliation (Cook, 1998; King, 1975). They also advocated for tax credits for individual college expenses, which created a divide between public and private higher education sectors (King, 1975). Many of AAC’s members worried about being associated with church affiliated schools because of issues of separation of church and state and formed NAICU in 1976 instead and serves as the “voice of private higher education” (Cook, 1998, p. 21; www.naicu.edu). In spite of these differences, AAC still exists and NAICU still has religiously-affiliated members. NAICU has more than 1000 members with a diverse membership made up of liberal arts
colleges, comprehensive universities, research universities, and private two-year colleges (Cook, 1998). NAICU is governed by a board of directors made up of 44 representatives from member institutions (www.naicu.edu). The association is located in an office building that is less than a block from the K Street lobbying corridor and approximately two and a half miles from the Capitol.

According to their website, NAICU’s main mission is focused on representing its members on federal policy issues (www.naicu.edu). NAICU focuses on issues related to tax policy, student aid, and regulatory issues (Cook, 1998). The association has also fought efforts to for increased federal access of student-level data (Lederman, May 25, 2011). The liberal arts colleges tend to be most dependent on NAICU’s federal relations efforts because they do not have another association working on those issues on their behalf (Cook, 1998). NAICU has seven staff members that work in governmental relations (www.naicu.edu). The association has four committees dealing with legislative issues that report to the board of directors: the Committee on Accountability, the Committee on Student Aid, the Committee on Policy Analysis and Public Relations, and the Committee on Tax Policy (www.naicu.edu). NAICU staff provides a Washington Update every few weeks, and has a subscription-based headline service and specialized list serves (www.naicu.edu). NAICU recently published a list of affordability measures being used by member institutions which included tuition freezes and cuts, shorter degree completion timelines, and additional scholarships (The Ticker, February 29, 2012).

In addition to its policy work, NAICU has led the way on several public initiatives including the Student Aid Alliance and the National Campus Voter Registration Project that helps its member institutions to educate and register students and employees to vote
NAICU also works closely with other organizations focused on independent colleges, the Foundation for Independent Higher Education and the Council of Independent Colleges, to increase coordination (www.naicu.edu).

The president of NAICU is Dr. David Warren, who joined the association in 1993. Prior to joining NAICU he had served as president of Ohio Wesleyan University (www.naicu.edu). Warren has repeatedly spoken strongly against an increased federal role in higher education saying that if Department of Education tries to regulate, "the issues that fundamentally determine our independence—our missions, our curriculum, the basis on which we admit and graduate students we will use every wise and effective political action to say, 'You cannot go there'" (Stratford, January 31, 2012).

**American Council on Education.** The American Council on Education (ACE) was formed in 1918 around concerns of losing male students to the war effort, but its founders decided to continue the association after the war ended (Cook, 1998). It is unique in that it has both association and institutional members which include 1600 colleges and universities and 200 higher education associations (www.acenet.org). It is a presidential association, with its membership made up of presidents from member institutions and associations. ACE is located in the One Dupont circle building. ACE has five strategic priorities that include advocating for key higher education issues, increasing the preparedness of adult students, ensuring strong leadership in higher education, position ACE as the central resource on higher education resources, and continually improve the effectiveness of ACE (www.acenet.org).

According to Cook (1998), ACE has long struggled with its dual role of facilitator and autonomous player since it has both higher education institutions and associations
representing a variety of sectors as members. They attempt to represent their member colleges and universities while also facilitating coordination of its member associations (Cook, 1998). ACE is focused on developing consensus positions to represent the higher education community (Cook, 1998). In its role as the umbrella association ACE organizes and hosts weekly meetings, facilitates information sharing, and coordinates advocacy efforts (Cook, 1998). According to survey data most college and university presidents felt that ACE was “the major voice for higher education in Washington” (Cook, 1998, p. 66).

ACE provides a wide variety of programming including professional and leadership development and research (www.acenet.org). The ACE fellows program seeks to provide preparation for senior leadership at colleges and universities (www.acenet.org). The association recently introduced the Institute for New Presidents, which will provide training on university management (Kiley, January, 4, 2012). ACE produces a variety of research publications and provides an expert list on their website (www.acenet.org). Their recent reports have focused on college costs and tuition and they also produce a magazine three times a year called The Presidency and a book series called the ACE Series on Higher Education that focuses on issues faced by college and university presidents (www.acenet.org). The association also administers the College Credit Recommendation Service (CREDIT) that provides course equivalency information for adults seeking academic credit and the General Education Development (GED) test (www.acenet.org). In 2011, ACE formed a partnership with Pearson to redevelop the GED and shift it from a non-profit program to a for-profit program (Sieben, March 15, 2011).
Because it was founded around concerns about the war, ACE has always been involved with the federal government (Cook, 1998). Because they are the umbrella group, they follow all issues related to higher education institutions. According to their website, ACE has 17 staff members in the Division of Government and Public Affairs. Each week the ACE president sends a weekly summary of legislative updates to member presidents called President to President (www.acenet.org).

The president of ACE is Molly Corbett Broad, who assumed the position in May of 2008 and was the first female president of ACE or any of the Big Six associations (Jaschik, January 16, 2008). Prior to joining the association, she was the president of the University of North Carolina system (Field, January 16, 2008). At the time of her hiring, Broad was described as a coalition-builder, which appeared to play a role in her selection (Field, January 16, 2008). The Chairman of the ACE board said, "She is someone that can truly represent the voice of higher education in a unifying way" (Field, January 16, 2008). Broad said,

The issues, the values, and the priorities that we have in common in American higher education so far exceed the issues that divide us that it seems to me imperative that we use our very best skills to build a working consensus (Field, January 16, 2008).

**Association of Private Sector Colleges and Universities.** The for-profit sector is represented by the Association of Private Sector Colleges and Universities (APSCU), which was formerly known as the Career College Association (CCA), was formed in 1991 (Cook, 1998; Parsons, 1997). The association changed its name in 2010 because, “the phrase ‘private sector’ is synonymous with innovation in virtually every walk of life, and the public’s faith in private-sector solutions to solve most of society’s biggest challenges will carry over into the realm of higher education too,” according to the
association’s president at the time (The Ticker, June, 9, 2010). APSCU has 1900 members ranging from small, local colleges to large, publicly traded companies like Kaplan Higher Education Corporation, ITT Technical Institute, and Devry Inc. (www.career.org). While most for-profit institutions are members of APSCU, one notable exception—the largest for-profit company, the Apollo Group, which owns the University of Phoenix, is not a member (www.career.org). APSCU is located one block from the K Street lobbying corridor and two and a half miles from the Capitol. The association’s mission is to be “the premier source of crucial information and public policy recommendations that promote access to career education and the importance of workforce development” (www.career.org).

APSCU produces a number of publications including an annual report, research reports, weekly newsletters, frequent webinars, and online student spotlights of successful students (www.career.org). One of their recent research reports looked at the role of the for-profit sector in developing a competitive workforce (www.career.org). The association is also connected with the Imagine American Foundation, a non-profit organization that provides scholarships to students at for-profit institutions as well as research and training for the sector (www.career.org). This foundation produces its own publications based on research including a fact book and economic impacts of the for-profit sector (www.career.org).

APSCU positions tend to differ from those of the Big Six associations. For example, APSCU has been supportive of some federal accountability measures as long as the measures are not focused only the for-profit sector and apply to all higher education institutions (Cook, 1998). Since for-profits are designed to make a profit, they often
focus on tax laws, regulatory oversight, and policies that impact shareholder interests (Pusser & Wolcott, 2006). According to their website, APSCU has seven staff members focused on governmental relations (www.career.org). Their members can participate in a number of committees focused on governmental relations including a federal legislative committee, federal regulatory affairs committee, grass roots committee, and public relations committee (www.career.org). APSCU has a separate website just for grassroots activities that provides links to legislative offices and information about issues (www.apscugrassroots.org). APSCU’s political action committee is called APSCUPAC and participation in the PAC is voluntary for members (www.career.org).

While they were members of ACE for many years, APSCU has not been welcome in the traditional higher education community (Cook, 1998). Many higher education associations tried to distance themselves from the APSCU and felt that the for-profit sector created a lot of issues and problems that the community would not have had to deal with without them (Cook, 1998). The Big Six associations actively fought against allowing federal student aid money to be used at for-profit institutions and ACE disininvited APSCU from a student aid coalition in the 1990s (Cook, 1998). In 2002, APSCU left ACE due to the lack of agreement on key issues (Borrego, October 18, 2002). APSCU’s general counsel said they were “tired of being treated like second-class citizens” and that their membership in ACE "was more of a liability than an asset” (Borrego, October 18, 2002).

The president of APSCU is Steve Gunderson who joined the association in February of 2012. Many higher education observers felt Gunderson was a good choice to head APSCU because he is a former Congressman and a friend of Senator Harkin, a long-
time critic of the for-profit sector (Fain, March 2, 2012). Upon his arrival at APSCU, Gunderson said he wanted to avoid negativity and hoped to work with traditional higher education groups (Fain, March 2, 2012). He said,

You will never hear me or other APSCU officials criticize any of my colleagues in higher education…I'm going to change this culture. We've got to be seen as partners and allies (Blumenstyk, March 1, 2012).

Gunderson also hoped to make the association more proactive, in part by creating voluntary standards saying, “self-regulation can prevent government regulation” (Fain, March 2, 2012).

**Summary**

Overall, each association has its own strengths. ACE has a large membership made up of both associations and individual institutions and is a respected voice for higher education. AACC has member schools in nearly every Congressional district and has found a powerful champion in President Obama. AASCU also has members in most Congressional districts and their member institutions are often major players in the local economy. APLU’s member institutions are often the flagship universities in their state and play a valuable community engagement role in their communities. AAU’s members are elite, “brand name” institutions that are often universally known and respected. NAICU’s membership is large, diverse, active, and unified. APSCU has ample resources, active members, and fewer limits on the lobbying activities they can use.
Figure 3. Location of associations in Washington D.C.
CHAPTER 5
CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

The focus of this chapter is a cross-case analysis of the seven cases divided into themes. The data for this analysis was informed by interviews with Congressional staffers and association representatives, a review of news media, and reviews of association websites and social media accounts. The analysis is based on two sets of themes. The first set of themes is based on the theoretical framework of this study and includes the decision on lobbying tactics, the lobbying tactics used, and signaling theory. The second set of themes is made up of additional concepts that emerged from the data.

Themes based on theoretical framework

Numerous findings from the data related back to previous literature on lobbying. I first look at the decision of which lobbying tactics are used based on the work of Schlozman & Tierney (1986) and Hillman & Hitt (1999). Next I look at the tactics used based on the categories provided by Kollman (1998) and Hillman & Hitt (1999). Finally, I look at the use of signaling theory in higher education lobbying.

Decision on tactic. According to Schlozman and Tierney (1986), three factors determine the types of lobbying tactics an organization will use: the amount of resources the organization has, the size and location of a group’s membership, and the type of issue. Of these, they found that resources were the most important determining factor. Resources include money, supporters, and information (Schlozman & Tierney, 1986).

All of the associations said their lobbying tactics depended on the issue at hand. They used terms like “context”, “environment”, and “opportunistic” to describe how decisions on lobbying tactics were made based on the issue. Some technical issues may
be best handled by meeting directly with staffers, while more public issues like student aid are better suited for utilizing members. None of the associations said that the size of their association played a role in deciding on lobbying tactics, but location of members did. If particular members of Congress needed to be influenced, and the association had members in that legislator’s district, the association may be more apt to utilize their members in that case.

Resources, or lack thereof, were a common theme among the associations. Several Big Six associations talked about how their associations did much more than just lobbying, so resources were divided among many different activities. All of the Big Six associations talked about working with limited financial resources. Several representatives felt they would be able to get involved in more issues and provide more advocacy for their members if they had more resources. This was particularly true in comparison to the for-profits. One Big Six representative said, “they [the for-profits] have so much more money than we do and all the ways the money can influence or help a political advocacy effort.”

According to interviews with the Big Six and media coverage, it would appear that APSCU has almost unlimited resources, which in theory would give them more options of tactics. While APSCU did not mention resources as a limitation, they did talk about ACE having a lot of members and a large budget. One APSCU representative looked beyond financial resources and talked about the strong reputations and long-standing relationships the Big Six have on the Hill. This representative said that because most of the governmental relations staff at the Big Six have been in their positions for many years, they are known commodities on the Hill. This representative also felt the Big Six
are more effective because of these longstanding relationships and that they have a very strong lobbying presence. The Big Six also has a lot of allies because of generations of alumni networks. The APSCU representatives thought the Big Six get a lot based on their good will and they can dip into their deep roots. APSCU does not have that same history and saw it as a major advantage for the Big Six associations. While APSCU does appear to have a clear advantage in terms of financial resources, the Big Six, with their extensive memberships in every Congressional district and relations on the Hill and in their districts, also have advantages.

**Approach.** Hillman and Hitt (1999) developed a sequential decision tree model to examine the process a firm uses to determine the general approach to lobbying, the level of participation, and the specific strategies that will be used. The organization first decides between a transactional or relational approach for their general course. The transactional approach is reactionary, where the organization acts based on specific issues that arise. The relational approach is ongoing where an organization is focused on building a long-term strategy. While the associations attempt to use the relational approach, they most often use the transactional approach out of necessity. Because of this, the associations tend to be reactive instead of setting the agenda. They all would like to play a larger role in setting the agenda, and often try at the beginning of a legislative session, but once the session gets going they have to keep up with everything going on. The APLU representative explained,

We start off the year with the best of intentions and plans for what we would like to see included in the funding for the coming year, but almost immediately that becomes a reaction to what’s included in the President’s bill and then what comes out of the appropriations committees.
APSCU runs into similar issues,

We have the short term and then the long term of development of issues, but given the criticism the sector has been under it really has been kind of day-to-day what's going on, what do we have to do.

Most of the association representatives commented that they were often responding to issues instead of being on the forefront and creating the agenda. One representative from the Big Six commented,

My perception is that at times we're getting together, but we're not setting an agenda that allows us to make significant progress on any of the issues we're working on. We're making progress, but more progress could have been made, potentially, had we spent more time thinking about our collective agenda before we met. This is often the case with many coalitions and organizations.

One association representative felt this impacted their effectiveness, “If we had the luxury to be more proactive, more strategic, I think it would yield better results than what we have now.” NAICU appeared to differ slightly from the other associations in that they try to focus their efforts at the bill writing stage, instead of once the bill has been proposed. Their goal is to help draft workable bills so that they do not have to fight bills once they are proposed. According to the NAICU representative,

Most of what we do is work with staff as they are assembling bills early in the process. You’ve really done your job when you don’t have to engage your members, because the bills are coming out in a way that doesn’t do any harm and actually does good.

Congressional staffers were in agreement about the associations’ tendency to be reactive, particularly the Big Six. One staffer said,

Like a lot of big organizations they have trouble coming up with a vision of where they want to go as far as lobbying and their work on the Hill…I think when you need an expert on something or you need their assistance, they're very good and very responsive, but I think they're just too reactive and not so proactive.
This staffer used recent issues involving the for-profit sector as an example. He/she said many of the associations stood on the sidelines during the action, but are now complaining about it. This staffer said, “We are getting a lot of folks who are upset about it now, but they were not up here involved in the process until almost after the fact.”

Consensus. Deciding whether to work individually or collectively with other groups is the next lobbying decision an organization has to make according to Hillman and Hitt (1999). Based on the literature (Cook, 1998), the higher education community is known for working together and producing consensus opinions. This was confirmed in the interviews with Congressional Staff and the associations. The Big Six representatives agreed on the importance of developing consensus opinions. The NAICU representative described the process,

The Big Six get together every week or two when things are going on to discuss our common interests which we generally have more in common than in opposition. Then everybody goes back and to the degree appropriate works their members.

One of the representatives from a Big Six association said, “ACE does a very good job of convening us and giving us opportunities to sort things out at the table.” According to the ACE representative, to reach consensus, the associations start broadly.

Have to distinguish between goals, strategies, and tactics. You sort of work in that order. If you can’t agree on the goals, if you don’t have common views about what you’re trying to accomplish your strategies and tactics are relatively irrelevant unless you are just trying to get something for your particular association. The thing we focus on initially is to see if we can come up with common positions that everyone can agree with and once we do that we try to agree on strategies and tactics about how to pursue it.

While their member institutions represent different student populations and the issues facing public and private institutions are often different, the Big Six still see it as valuable to try to develop a consensus even if it does not happen. The AAU representative
thought that the Big Six associations tend to agree on approximately 90 percent of issues and each association is often willing to help on an issue that does not impact them, but may impact another Big Six association. According to the ACE representative, this consensus position is “critically important,”

We’re dealing with very diverse organizations that have very different interests and so sometimes we don’t get there. Consensus is always our preferred position and we always go out of our way to achieve it, but it’s not something that we always arrive at…We’re much more influential when we share goals, strategies, and tactics and everybody in the other associations knows it. So they all have a built in incentive to try to find common ground.

Other Big Six representatives agreed with the value of consensus. The AAU representative said, “we want to be able to speak with a unified voice.” The AASCU representative concurred,

I think any one of us are willing to go and take on our friends and colleagues on the Hill about a notion that we disagree with, but we try to come to agreement because having a single voice with six associations representing 4000 institutions is much better than AASCU’s voice alone.

The AACC representative also concurred,

I think that we gain more than we lose by speaking with one voice. Inevitably there are all kinds of compromises and frustrations that are inherent in the process, but at the end of the day I think we’re better off working the way that we do.

The ACE representative believed this consensus building is appreciated on the Hill and that it makes things much easier for Congress in regards to issues related to higher education.

They may not do what we want, but if we can present them a common approach to dealing with challenges they face it gives them a pretty good starting point for their own deliberations. So, to the extent that we find consensus and common points of view it’s very much appreciated.

One of the ways these consensus opinions are shared is through official letters from ACE signed by additional associations. Of the 77 ACE letters that were sent to Congress
and reviewed for this study AACC did not sign 12 of the letters, AASCU did not sign 11, APLU did not sign 6, NAICU did not sign 21, AAU did not sign 2, and APSCU was not included on any of the letters.

![Bar chart](chart.png)

**Figure 4.** Number of ACE letters signed by the other associations.

It is important to note that several of these letters were about sector-specific issues that may not have been applicable to all of the associations, so not signing a letter does not necessarily mean the association was opposed to the issue. In the interviews, AAU was the only association that talked about assisting with issues that do not directly impact their member institutions, but do impact other institutional types. This attitude appears to be reflected in their participation in ACE letters. AAU only abstained from signing two of 77 letters. Since APSCU is not a member of ACE, they would not have been part of these discussions.
It is also important to note that associations work together outside of the full consensus opinions. The representatives from AAU, APLU, and AASCU each talked about working with each other on issues that are more specific for them. For example, AAU and APLU often work together on issues related to research funding, while AASCU and APLU work together on issues related to public colleges and universities. According to the AASCU representative, AASCU, APLU, and AACC are often able to come together to work on public commonalities. In fact, these associations, in addition to the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) host a governmental relations conference each year for their member institutions. This conference is more focused on state efforts, but includes federal efforts as well. APLU and AAU mentioned several other groups they work with including the Council on Governmental Relations on research oversight issues, the Association of American Medical Colleges on NIH issues, as well as the Science Coalition, the Task Force for American Innovation United for Medical Research, the Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research, the Energy Sciences Coalition, the Coalition for National Security Research, the Task Force on American Innovation, and Coalition for National Science Funding. Several of these groups also sign on to ACE letters on issues of relevance.

The Big Six representatives felt that their system of collaboration worked well and overall were satisfied with their efforts given their resources and political climate.

One representative said,

I think higher education associations, for a group that doesn’t play by modern political rules… Given our resources and given our sort of antiquated approach to advocacy I think we do remarkably well.
All of this collaboration leads to a lot of meetings and conference calls that can get tiring, but the representatives felt that was much better than the alternative of not having that infrastructure.

The Congressional staffers recognized this collective effort. One staffer referred to the Big Six as “the blob,” while another said that they were often seen as a collective group, “One Dupont”. For the most part, staffers felt the Big Six’s consensus opinions were useful. One staffer commented,

> The consensus-building among them often gets to a place where we have to struggle with the same push and pull here. We have members who are really concerned about their public schools versus their private schools so, having the school themselves talk that out and at least know where they came together is helpful. What is most helpful is often they do try to come to a consensus, but are willing to point out where they struggled with consensus. I find that equally informative.

Another staffer agreed, “I think it’s a good thing because if three of them felt one way and two felt another I think it would be really difficult for my boss.” Another staffer felt it helped with the associations’ effectiveness, “When they speak as a single voice for traditional higher education they are effective.” Two staffers said it depended on the issue, with one saying that, “It is helpful when we're on the same side and not helpful when we're not.” This may signify the power of the Big Six leading the staffers to prefer that the Big Six are on their side of the issue.

Time was seen as the biggest challenge and hindrance of the Big Six’s consensus opinions. Part of the problem, according to one association representative, is that the associations tend to work at a “rather deliberate and slow pace.” If the associations were able to move more quickly and address issues early they may be able to avoid always playing defense. This representative said, “if we can move swiftly, then we can head
things off in a member’s office or with a committee. And if you can end it sooner, without it gaining momentum, the problem is solved.” This representative thought this would be beneficial to their relationships with Congressional offices, because those offices would prefer hearing about problems with a piece of legislation before it is introduced and publicly criticized. This representative said, “We sometimes are slow as a group in that identification of the bad idea that is coming and our ability to work collectively to bring real analysis about why something is a bad idea and provide cogent arguments.” This often needs to be done in a day’s time, so waiting a week is a bad idea. These opinions take time to develop and the legislative process does not always afford that time. One association representative stated that, “it can handcuff us at times when Capitol Hill is looking for an answer or suggestions on a short time frame and we're not able to respond uniformly or with a consensus across all the issues they want us to.” However, another association representative noted that taking this time can sometimes work to their benefit because issues “wax and wane” and the associations will not have overreacted. One staffer said, “Often we will hear from other stakeholders well before we hear from them [the Big Six], which can sometimes be frustrating because you know that view is coming, but you can’t do anything.” Several staffers shared this frustration.

It should be noted that APSCU is not included in these consensus opinions and coalitions, raising an important question. Are ACE’s efforts truly a consensus when a major higher education player is not included? One of the Big Six representatives explained, “Historically they [APSCU] have not worked with traditional higher education sectors. That might be partly because they were never invited and there was never truly this confrontational, or this level of animosity that exists right now.” This representative
felt there were opportunities for the two sectors to work together, particularly on the issue of Pell grants, but doubted it would happen due to the controversy that surrounds the for-profit sector. On their website, APSCU mentions student aid as one of the issues they work on, but based on the data from this study, it is not what they spend the majority of their time on. Based on the quote in Chapter 4 from the new APSCU president, it appears they may begin seeking opportunities to work with traditional higher education associations. It remains to be seen how this will be received.

One APSCU representative talked about working with other groups, but nothing to the extent of the Big Six. One Congressional staffer commented that the traditional associations do a better job of coordination and the APSCU representatives seemed aware of this. In reference to the traditional higher education associations, one APSCU representative said, “they are very good at getting their members to have everybody singing from the same song sheet. I think that we have challenges with that sometimes.” Several Congressional staffers thought APSCU should work more with the other associations. One staffer said,

I think their strategy [of working alone] worked well with gainful employment, but for other issues I think they would have to build a bigger coalition… I think the for-profits could start to make alliances with other groups instead of being out there on their own.

This staffer felt that the for-profits reaped all of the benefits of federal aid, but left lobbying up to the non-profit groups. This appears to be an example of what Olson (1965) called free-riding in his collective action theory, where an organization receives the benefits of other organizations’ work without expending any resources to get those benefits.
Overall, both Schlozman and Tierney’s (1986) and Hillman and Hitt’s (1999) concepts on an organization’s decision of lobbying tactics offered explanatory value for the associations in this study. Schlozman and Tierney’s (1986) focus on the type of issue and the size and location of the association’s membership played a role in all of the associations’ decision on lobbying tactics. The type and context of the issue was the most important factor in determining lobbying tactics for all of the associations.

Schlozman and Tierney’s (1986) focus on the availability of resources in determining the lobbying tactics used appears to be more accurate than Hillman & Hitt’s (1999) decision tree for the Big Six. Resources, particularly financial resources, appear to play an important role in which lobbying tactics are used. The Big Six all talked about the challenges of having limited resources, while APSCU did not. As will be detailed below, APSCU is more aggressive and utilizes more lobbying tactics than the Big Six. It appears that the availability of resources plays a major role in this difference of lobbying activities between the sectors.

While it appears that the Big Six associations try to make a decision between using a Hillman and Hitt’s (1999) transactional or relation approach to lobbying before each Congressional session, it does not seem to be long lasting. The associations talked about strategizing to use a proactive, relational approach at the beginning of a session, but quickly having to abandon that strategy to react to the various issues that arise. The Big Six associations may be unique compared to other interest groups in the way they make their decisions on lobbying tactics. Hillman and Hitt’s (1999) decision tree asserts that organizations make a decision on each issue about whether or not they will work with other groups on that issue. Because the Big Six have a history of developing consensus
opinions and meet regularly, it would appear that determining whether or not to work with others on an issue is not a major part of these associations’ decision making process. It is part of their culture. They automatically get together to discuss issues and try to determine a consensus opinion. An association may decide not to join the consensus on a particular issue, but it appears to be more about the specific issue and resources available and not based on whether or not they want to work with others.

Hillman and Hitt’s (1999) decision tree appears to more accurately describe APSCU’s decision on lobbying tactics. They tend to choose the more proactive, relational approach to lobbying for most issues. While the APSCU representatives did talk about having to react and play defense a lot, they seemed to stick with their original lobbying strategies more than the Big Six. Their reactionary activities seemed to be in addition to their predetermined strategy. APSCU does not have a natural coalition like the Big Six, so they have to make the decision to work with others groups on each issue. They often do work with others, but the groups vary based on the issue. Schlozman and Tierney’s (1986) focus on the availability of resources also applies to APSCU. They have more resources and use more tactics.

**Tactics used.** Once the first two decisions have been made, firms move to the final stage of the decision tree and decide which specific strategies to employ. All of the associations in this study use a wide variety of lobbying tactics. According to the ACE representative, “our central mission is to try and influence public policy in a way that will benefit universities and their students and just about anything that is legal and ethical is part of our playbook.”
Kollman (1998) divided tactics into three categories: inside lobbying, outside lobbying, and organizational maintenance. Hillman and Hitt (1999) also organized potential lobbying tactics into three categories: information strategy, financial incentive strategy, and constituency building. Kollman’s (1998) inside lobbying category is similar to Hillman and Hitt’s (1999) informational strategy and the outside lobbying category is similar to the constituency building strategy. Kollman (1998) includes contributing to campaigns in the inside lobbying category, while Hillman and Hitt (1999) have a separate category for contributions. To recognize these different perspectives I used Kollman’s (1998) three strategies of inside lobbying, outside lobbying, and organizational maintenance as well as Hillman and Hitt’s (1999) financial incentive category to analyze the data. While these categories may not include every possible lobbying tactic, they provide a comprehensive look at a wide variety of tactics available to lobbyists.

**Inside lobbying.** Tactics that fall into the inside lobbying/information strategy category include meetings with elected officials and their staffs, testifying as expert witnesses in committee hearings, and supplying reports and position papers (Kollman, 1998; Hillman & Hitt, 1999). All of the association representatives said they used inside lobbying tactics extensively. For example, AASCU and NAICU spend the majority of their time reading and analyzing legislation and developing strategy. Researching issues and preparing materials to share with Hill staffers was how many of the association representatives spent the majority of their time. According to the association websites, they all produce and disseminate reports about issues of importance to the association. This informational role of the associations was recognized by the Congressional staffers. One staffer said, “in the non-profit world, the Big Six in particular, those governmental
relations folks know the issues inside and out.” While all of the associations meet with legislators and Hill staffers directly, one APSCU representative said this was their most frequent lobbying activity. Meetings with Congressional staffers is one of the most common ways the associations share information. Most association representatives talked about testifying at committee hearings, which generally included finding witnesses from their member schools and preparing them to testify.

Relationships were important to all association representatives and Congressional staffers interviewed. The staffers had varying interactions with the associations and drew a clear distinction between the Big Six and APSCU, with one staffer saying, “it’s a totally different animal,” and another saying, “that's a whole other world.” Overall, they had a lot more interaction with the Big Six than APSCU. The staffers were less familiar with APSCU. For the most part they would refer to the for-profit sector in general instead of the association. This did not appear to be based on a bias against APSCU, but rather a result of receiving more communications from individual institutions. One staffer said he/she does not work with APSCU as much because they do not have as many requests. Another staffer said that he/she does not have the same kind of relationship with APSCU that he/she does with the Big Six, while another said, “I’ve just never had a need for the association.” While one staffer did not have much interaction with APSCU, his/her boss will speak at their events and their office will still take meetings with them. One APSCU representative said that these relationships determine how he/she approaches a meeting on the Hill,

In some offices I'm really close to the staff and even if their boss is not on board I know what I can and cannot say to them and I know that I can perhaps be more candid with them than with someone else.
Several association representatives and Congressional staffers talked about having two-way relationships with one another, with each providing information and opinions to the other. Several Congressional staffers talked about how their views of associations tended to depend on the governmental relations representatives at specific associations. Their views were more based on the personalities of governmental relations representatives than they did with the association itself. Most staffers had fairly regular contact with the associations, but several did not have any. One of the staffers who had frequent contact with the Big Six associations thought they were effective in Hill meetings and said, “they’re not just here to move a meeting along and bring somebody in, they can talk through the issue.”

In regards to meetings on the Hill, again a distinction was made between the Big Six, APSCU, and individual institutions. One staffer said specifically that compared to traditional higher education, the for-profits are extremely aggressive. This staffer had more requests for meetings in a month with for-profit schools that had no in-state presence about gainful employment than he/she had in several years with the Big Six. In fact, this staffer said a colleague who had worked on the Hill for many years had commented that this was one of the biggest lobbying efforts he/she had ever seen and it was not even a legislative issue. Another staffer met with APSCU frequently and commented that they use both in-house lobbyists and hired lobbyists from outside of the association. The widespread use of hired lobbyists appeared to be limited to the for-profit sector. While AAU talked about using this tactic occasionally, it was extremely rare, often used in concert with other associations, and only used on particularly partisan issues.
Overall, all of the associations used numerous inside lobbying tactics. The tactics used by the associations fit into Kollman’s (1998) inside lobbying and Hillman and Hitt’s (1999) informational strategy categories. They all provide information to and have meetings with legislators and their staffs, provide testimony, produce reports and briefs, and review policy proposals. The Big Six appear to use tactics in this category most often and are known for their informational role. Relationships between association representatives and Congressional staffers are important in this information sharing function. APSCU appears to use these tactics with greater intensity compared to the Big Six.

**Outside lobbying.** Outside lobbying includes tactics like mobilization of members and other stakeholders, public relations efforts, and advocacy advertising (Hillman & Hitt, 1999, Kollman, 1998). All of the associations utilize outside lobbying techniques. With the representatives from AAU, AACC, APSCU, and ACE putting a particular focus on these tactics when talking in general about their activities. The AACC representative said,

> The way I look at it there are two dimensions of what we do, maybe three if you throw in PR. Basically we do inside the beltway lobbying ourselves, which is generally staff to staff. With our members of course, they have better access to their members of Congress than we do, so we rely on them as well either through in-person contacts, phone calls, or e-mails to influence their legislators. Then there are more generic sorts of PR to advance our message more broadly.

Mobilization of members, refers to asking a group’s members to contact legislators on a particular issue. This was the most utilized tactic within this category. According to signaling theory, membership mobilization sends a signal to legislators that the issue is important to constituents and that a group was able to organize them (Austen-Smith & Wright, 1992 & 1994; Ainsworth, 1993; Caldeira & Wright, 1998; Kollman,
1998). It is important to remember that my original research questions used the term ‘grassroots’, and therefore, this term was used in my interviews as well. Membership mobilization and grassroots outreach are essentially the same thing, except that a few association representatives associated grassroots with reaching outside of their membership. Unless otherwise noted, quotes that used the term grassroots were in the context of mobilizing membership.

**Mobilizing membership.** All of the associations use their members in advocacy to varying degrees and felt it was an effective tactic. Overall, one association representative stated, “members of Congress are much more interested and likely to listen to comments, criticisms and suggestions that come from constituents than they are from Washington lobbyists.” Another representative stated, “the idea that constituents contact Congress is extraordinarily powerful and is misunderstood and underused by the public. Individual constituents have an incredibly powerful voice, much more so than campaign funders or things like that.” The AASCU representative believed that using their members in outreach was important, particularly in sharing the direct impact programs like Pell have on individual campuses.

I'm only as strong and effective as my members, so if my members don't show any interest or engagement then when I go to the Hill I'm really not that strong or effective. That’s not because I'm not an effective lobbyist and I'm not there with the best cause, but I need my membership. While the associations are working within the beltway, they need to be highlighting to the members of Congress that it's important to keep Pell and then maybe that might lessen the burden on our work, at the very least it will help people understand the importance of what's happening around the program.

The APLU representative felt the most effective way for them to reach members of Congress and their staffs was in conjunction with their membership.
[The president of APLU] is super political in that he recognizes the importance of engaging Congress. He recognizes the importance of reaching out to the presidents of his universities to engage their members of Congress.”

The AACC representative agreed that their members, who are located in almost every Congressional district, have a large impact in lobbying,

From the Washington point of view, who we represent, we’re an important constituency so people want to listen to us. We have to be listened to because of who we are at one level. We have colleges everywhere. What gives us an advantage is that we can get just about every member with a constituent.

One APSCU representative also felt that membership mobilization was an effective lobbying tool,

I think the most effective lobbying is often lobbying that is from the member's home district. It is one thing to have a lobbyist from DC come into to your office and say, ‘I want you to do this’, but its another thing for your constituent to come in and say, ‘this is going to hurt me, I'm very concerned about this, what are you going to do about it?’

The Congressional staffers interviewed agreed that membership mobilization was effective. Most commented that constituent opinion is taken very seriously and that the member receives regular updates on the constituent opinions coming into the office. Staffers found it helpful to be able to provide summaries of constituent communication when briefing the member and felt it did have an impact. One staffer said, “Effectiveness with regards to lobbying practices is all about impact so it’s hard to make a generic statement, but if done thoughtfully mobilizing membership can be extremely compelling.” Staffers felt that visits from college and university presidents tend to have a greater impact because they can speak directly to the issues in the district. According to one staffer,

I think that an association lobbyist could come in and say, ‘we want this’ and it’s easier to say no to them. It's a lot harder to say no to a room full of college presidents who are singing the same song. That is very effective.
All of the associations recognized that the way in which outreach is conducted makes a difference. Several were aware that this outreach can be an annoyance to Congressional offices if not done carefully. One association representative said,

It depends on the way that you do it too. There are ways that people might activate grassroots where it seems like a canned message. It depends if it’s genuine or not. If it’s genuine, if it isn’t just canned, it’s effective.

According to another association representative, a lot of it depends on the office,

I do think that some staff are really snotty and if you have an unseasoned person go in and try to do it then they perhaps may get a negative impression, but that’s why the grassroots training we do is so important.

Congressional staffers also felt that the effectiveness of membership mobilization efforts were highly dependent on how they were conducted. Personal communications were seen as the most effective. One staffer felt that phone calls and personal visits tend to stick in people’s minds more. However if letters start to pile up on a specific issue, that can also have an impact. Several preferred personal letters instead of the stimulated form letters. One staffer said,

The individual letters had a lot more impact than the ones where you could tell were just a fill-in-the-blank type of thing. They were a lot easier to respond to because they all said the same thing so you could send one response, but it was the ones that were more thoughtful or someone was motivated enough to actually write in instead of clicking a link and putting in their name and click send. The ones that actually took time to put it together were a lot more effective I think.

Several staffers commented that the use of membership mobilization seems to be increasing, particularly with technology advances. One staffer said,

Technology is great, but it is also making it really hard for me to figure out if an issue is really important or not. The canned grassroots stuff has become so overwhelming that it’s coming to the point where no one is paying attention anymore. The constituents who you first want to get back to are the ones who actually wrote on an individual issue or took the canned and personalized it.
Another staffer commented on mass campaigns being overwhelming at times and used the example of immigration reform when the phone system went down because it was so jammed with calls. In those cases it is difficult for Congressional offices to know where to begin. Several staffers commented on these canned efforts. One staffer has found that often people do not even realize they have sent something to Congress via a campaign e-mail or campaign website. Several staffers also complained about the lack of knowledge of those who do call or write in response to a campaign e-mail. When these staffers have questioned callers, they often find that the caller has not read the bill and really does not understand the issue. Because of this, several staffers say they call key constituents who have sent stimulated communications to make sure the sentiment is legitimate.

In regards to the associations specifically, several staffers felt that statements from the associations do not always accurately represent their membership. One staffer said, “I think the associations sometimes will ride the assumption that they are representing all of your schools.” This most often occurs when an association sends out a position statement or signs one of the ACE letters. One staffer had received calls from frantic presidents based on an alert from their association, but once the staffer explains the issue the president is ok. This staffer said,

A lot of it is demystifying the information, because I think through the associations it can come across as this takeover of higher education and that's not what the Department's doing. I want to make sure they [schools in the state] know it’s not as frightening as it sounds and that there’s a rhyme and a reason as to why these things are going on.

Another staffer said there had been instances when the associations had sent out a letter saying that they were in support of something and then all of the sudden the office phones started ringing from constituent colleges and universities saying something different.
This also occurs when the association mobilizes its membership. One staffer said,

When we have gotten letters that may or may not have been prompted by the associations, I have picked up the phone and called presidents directly or responded directly to them. I think it takes a little bit of extra effort from the staffer’s perspective to really dig down and see where people really are.

Still, another staffer felt that the associations’ providing assistance to constituents was useful,

I think that if people are given a little bit of information on how to talk, ‘there’s a bill or there’s amendment coming up and I urge the Senator to vote yes or no on it,’ that’s effective rather than more unwieldy phone calls.

Obviously this assistance needs to be enough that members clearly understand the issue and genuinely care about the issue. Members need to be able to go beyond the talking points and talk about how the issue will impact their institution directly.

This double-checking by Congressional staffers contradicts Kollman’s (1998) assumption that organizations have valuable information about their constituents that is too costly for legislators to attain. Under this assumption, legislators do not have the resources, or do not want to use their resources, to gather this information so they instead rely on lobbyists to provide it. Based on the signals they receive from the organization, the legislator must decide if the information is valid. This double-checking behavior does fit with Ainsworth’s (1993) recommendations for increasing the accuracy of the information provided by lobbyists. He argued that legislators must periodically check the information provided by lobbyists and punish those who provide inaccurate information. The threat of punishment encourages lobbyists to provide truthful information.

The Congressional staffers also stressed that the effectiveness of membership mobilization depends a lot on the office and the issue. Some offices put more emphasis on constituent concerns than others. Several staffers thought constituent communications
were more influential in personal offices than in committee offices. One staffer thought it would have more impact on a junior member and/or one from a smaller state who is more sensitive to re-election or more accountable to constituents. One staffer said, “When you think about how issue-specific the enterprise of lobbying or government relations is, it’s important to know what members care about.” According to this staffer, a former classroom teacher may be more compelled by a story by a young person where the reaction would be different for someone who does not have the same affinity for kids. Another staffer said, “it all depends on what the issue is, but I feel like it either can embolden the way you're going to go, or can make you think twice or double check, or really dig in. Some issues are such no brainers.” Another staffer felt that, “the less corporate the issue is I think the grassroots is a little bit more effective in terms of people individually contacting us.” Because of this view, this staffer felt that membership mobilization was more effective for the non-profit associations and institutions than for the for-profits.

Several staffers felt membership mobilization needed to be used selectively and should focus on members of Congress who could be influenced. One staffer said, “There are points where having conversation or flagging concerns or simply doing the job of making sure you know what’s going on is most appropriate.” Another staffer felt membership mobilization can be effective for those members of Congress who are not focused on a particular issue,

I think if it's not an issue that the member is very educated on it might affect them especially if they have a district spin on it. For example, on the for-profit college issue, some of the members might not have really paid attention to this issue at all but if you have a president of a for-profit coming to you from your district and the member has no opinion on this issue at all, and they spin it the right away and
say it effects the local economy and has a bunch of students from the school calling in, sure it's going to be effective.

One staffer felt that stimulated campaigns on issues where the member has a clear position that is not going to change can be annoying. Several staffers felt that for members of Congress that are consistently supportive of higher education, membership mobilization is not very effective. One staffer said, “I think for likeminded members, on a lot of issues if they see the association is there then that means their membership is there and they don’t need to hear from the membership directly.” Instead, a simple “thank you” may be most effective for supportive legislators. One staffer said it would be nice to hear,

‘You have been a champion, we just want to thank you for that.’ That's probably a more effective way of communicating with your champions on issues than aggressively being like ‘what are you going to do to save us.’

While this activity of counteractive lobbying of supportive legislators is supported in the literature, (Austen-Smith and Wright, 1994), the staffers found it ineffective and somewhat annoying. Instead, the staffers felt that thank yous or acknowledgement of the legislator’s continued support would be more effective. This activity would still keep the associations connected to supportive legislators to balance the efforts of opposition lobbying.

Because of the perceived value of membership mobilization, the Big Six associations are careful in their use of members in their outreach. Deciding when to utilize their members in advocacy efforts was mentioned as a challenge for most of the associations. According to the AAU representative, “I think the single biggest challenge is knowing when to pull the trigger because you can only make those asks so many times before they go ‘oh my gosh, this is too much’.” They know their member institutions
have a lot going on and it is important to respect that. AAU felt they must be able to substantiate that at that particular moment of time on that particular issue their voice is going to make a difference.

I think long term you have to get them there face-to-face, but when it's a really pressing issue, when there is an amendment on the floor or something you just need to reach out to them however you can.

The AASCU representative shared a similar sentiment,

I can't ask them each to go to make a call on this issue and then two weeks later call the house again on another issue. I need to be more strategic about that because they are busy individuals and they don't have the time to be engaging on this.

AASCU tries to engage members only when they believe that a positive outcome is likely. However, The AASCU representative said there are times when it is necessary to engage to prepare for the later.

In addition to the importance of the issue, the Big Six associations’ decision to use membership mobilization appears to be based on concern for their members’ willingness and time. Their members are the associations’ most valuable resource. This careful, limited use of the tactic fits with signaling theory. According to Kollman (1998), membership mobilization is effective because it is a costly signal, so it is used sparingly. Legislators know this tactic is resource-intensive, so when an organization uses it, the issue must be particularly salient because the organization is expending valuable resources.

APSCU did not seem to have as many concerns about the timing of using their members in advocacy. In fact, they use this tactic often enough that they have a full-time staff person focused on grassroots and membership mobilization activities. The
Congressional staffers noticed this. One staffer said that the for-profits typically do not come up as an association, but send members to the Hill instead. Another staffer said,

> The for-profits are much more inclined on pretty much every issue to go grassroots. The non-profits tend to be focused on their members [of Congress], so a state system will be more focused on that member, whereas, particularly with the online schools, their boundaries aren’t set, so they don’t feel that as much, so maybe that’s why I hear more from them.

The media analysis supported this view. Grassroots outreach/membership mobilization was one of the most mentioned lobbying tactics in the media analysis, but not in reference to the Big Six. It was most frequently used to describe the activities of the for-profit sector and the student loan industry.

On the surface, APSCU’s use of member mobilization does not appear to be explained by signaling theory. According to Congressional staffers, APSCU and the for-profit sector as a whole, use membership mobilization on every issue. According to Kollman (1998), this frequent use would dilute the strength of the signals being sent to legislators. Several of the staffers appeared to agree with this assessment. However, it may be that APSCU is only using the tactic on selective issues. Several staffers talked about the for-profit sector’s lack of involvement in general higher education issues like Pell Grant funding. Student aid is an important issue for the for-profit sector, yet at least in the time period of this study, they did not mobilize their members around this issue. Instead, they focused on issues that were specific to the for-profit sector, like gainful employment, and therefore, only used membership mobilization on those issues. Because APSCU has more financial resources than the Big Six associations, they can afford to use the tactic more often and more intensely, so it may appear that they use it on every issue.
APSCU also utilized a variation of membership mobilization, by encouraging legislators to visit their member colleges in the legislator’s district. One APSCU representative thought that getting legislators to visit APSCU schools was important in personalizing the schools and said, “I think a lot of times people see it as being this cold, corporate, money grubbing entity, when in reality it's still a school. I think that's the game changer right there.” The APSCU representatives had seen the impact of these visits first hand,

This one member of Congress, who was previously not a supporter of ours, visited one of our schools and said it was an eye opening experience, so getting members to schools to actually see this is the school, these are students, these are people who are learning is very important.

APSCU is working to enhance coordination with member visits to campuses, so that if a member goes to a campus the APSCU staff will follow-up afterwards or perhaps organize a fundraiser in the district during that time. This is all part of an effort to develop a more comprehensive strategy that ties outside lobbying and PAC activities with other lobbying efforts.

All of the association representatives had challenges in engaging their members in outreach. Several of the associations talked about difficulty in getting members interested in lobbying or understanding the importance of their involvement. Several also talked about members being busy and often also fighting in state and institutional battles. Most association representatives talked about the limited time and social capital of their members. The ACE representative said,

College and university presidents often want and need multiple things from their elected officials. As a result, they may be reluctant to ask for things that are primarily of interest to the broader higher education community – even if they totally understand and agree with the position, they may not want to use one of their “chits” on behalf of something that they hope other people will take care of.
Some colleges and universities are new to federal relations. Historically, the AASCU institutions have relied heavily on state governments for funding, so their interest in the federal level had been lukewarm. However, as state governments have cut funding, these schools have been looking more towards the federal level. According to the AASCU representative, it has been a transition for many AASCU institutions as they figure out how things work on the federal level. The AASCU representative thought there was a sense among some members of, “not wanting to get federally engaged because it seems to be such a huge morass to try to figure out.” The AACC representative talked about similar challenges, since their members tend to be focused at the state or local level as well.

Other associations faced challenges with competing federal interests. Many colleges and universities, particularly those with an interest in research, have been active in seeking earmarks for their institutions. The APLU representative thought some members may be more willing to participate in association lobbying now that earmarks are gone,

Our members don't have those pet projects to work on and they certainly want to maintain a relationship with their members of Congress and a great way to maintain a relationship with their member is to have something to be working with them on. In another very practical sense, when you don't have earmarks then it really does matter what’s in the competitive pots and so they’re working on those issues now, including some of the institutions that traditionally never worked those issues.

APSCU also had challenges in getting their membership to participate in association efforts, but the biggest challenge the APSCU has faced in terms of membership mobilization is coordination and getting their members to speak with the same message.
One representative said,

We do a lot to try to focus the message but every now and then schools go off of the message either because they don't agree with our message or they just decide they know more than we do.

The representative felt that when member schools take their own view on an issue that is divergent from an agreed upon overall position it can be really damaging.

It does not appear that any of the associations have a true tracking system to know which of their members are contacting their members of Congress. Some associations use computer programs that link their members with legislators and if the association members use that program, they can see that the communication occurred. However, many college and university presidents have personal relationships with their elected officials and would likely contact them directly. Most association representatives said that some members will follow up with the governmental relations staff regarding their communications, but that is limited and often the representatives will hear about it second hand. As one representative said, “is it this beautiful stream of we put something out and they respond immediately? No, there's not time for that. But we know the take rate is pretty good.”

The Congressional staffers had varying interactions with outreach organized by the associations. Most did not associate the Big Six associations with membership mobilization. The staffers felt that the for-profits used this tactic much more than the Big Six. One staffer said that the Big Six associations rarely bring constituents to meetings on the Hill and said,

I also work with associations outside of education. When they come up to lobby, occasionally someone from the national association will be there, but they always make a point of bringing in constituents with them.
One staffer felt member outreach was often done after the association has already done meetings with the staff. Another staffer knows it is going on, but it is difficult to tell.

You definitely see it and you hear it. It’s hard to know how much of it stems from the association. I think more of the contact one has with individual colleges and universities in their district is not as a result of their membership organizations telling them to do something.

Another staffer sees it more with other associations,

I see more of the grassroots kind of stuff going on in the much smaller higher education associations, the more specialty ones where they tend to hit more of the professoriate rather than the presidents, provosts, and the chancellors.

One staffer felt that the associations were sometimes sneaky when utilizing their member presidents in Hill meetings. In this particular office when meeting requests come in a decision is made whether the meeting will be with staff or with the legislator and college and university president generally meets with the legislator. This staffer felt that the associations had a clear understanding of the influence of their member presidents and have the college or university president make the meeting so they can meet with the legislator and then the association staff will come along to the meeting, which the staffer felt was a little disingenuous. The value of the college or university president was acknowledged by the association representatives. Even though ACE is the only association where the college and university presidents are the actual members instead of the institutions, it seemed to be member presidents that were generally asked to participate in advocacy by all of the associations.

The timing of membership mobilization was also seen as important. One staffer said,

DC is a town where we employ a lot of clichés and one of them is ‘the squeaky wheel gets the oil’. So much of this is about timing and so much of the timing has to do with scale and scope.
Most of the staffers felt this tactic was most effectively used when there was a bill up for a vote. This supports Kollman (1998) who stated that groups are more likely to use membership mobilization at later stages in the legislative process when groups are fighting for legislator votes. One staffer said,

> When the bill is coming to the floor and they are saying to support x amendment or we don’t like this in the bill, that is effective especially in the committee process where we can actually make more changes to the bill.

Another staffer concurred,

> Those kinds of issues that are amorphous where there is not a targeted action item are probably the least effective because I'm not sure what to do, there's not really anything as a staffer to do, unlike when a decision has to be made.

Yet, one staffer felt the timing did not really matter because it is so chaotic on the Hill.

> It's different than what they teach you in school up here. You realize what people are trying to do and the spin and everything else. When you come to Capitol Hill it just goes out the window, all those theories of agenda setting and all that stuff, it doesn't really even matter.

The type of membership mobilization also had an impact. One staffer said he/she differentiated between generated letters and calls and more personalized communications,

> “quality over quantity dictates that [impact]. It depends where they are coming from and what they are saying.” Another staffer concurred,

> It depends on the number and the type. A hundred form letters where people have just signed their names is one thing, but 50 individualized letters is another. Depending on who's reading, one might equate more value to one versus the other. That decision is going to be made through a lens where time, context, and political or practical realities and not so practical realities are all contemplated.

One staffer thought constituent communications can provide valuable back up for legislators and it can be very helpful for them to be able to say, “I've gotten 10,000 letters from students across my state saying don't cut Pell grants.” Some staffers thought the
House may be more sensitive to the signals sent by membership mobilization outreach because they are up for re-election every two years and others thought that personal offices would be more sensitive because they have more direct contact with constituents.

One staffer said,

I could imagine that a hundred people in a single district where a member in the House of Representatives is thinking about his election may not have a parallel effect of a 100,000 people sending letters to a senator who is not in cycle.

The association representatives all agreed that students can be effective advocates, but most felt limited in being able to reach out to them. The associations, except for APSCU, rarely use students in their advocacy because that would entail reach out beyond their membership and their non-profit status limits this. Additionally, the ACE representative felt that students were outside of their purview,

We represent college and university presidents, we don’t represent students. I have no purchase to speak for them. It’s the same sense that the student groups have no capacity to represent that they are speaking for college and university presidents.

Several representatives talked about working in conjunction with student groups like the United States Student Association (USSA) or the United States Public Interest Research Group (US PIRG) or coalitions like the Student Aid Alliance. In these cases it is the student groups that mobilize students, not the associations. APSCU, AASCU, and AACC do attempt to present the student voice on their websites with videos of students sharing their stories, and NAICU manages the website for the Student Aid Alliance.

The Big Six associations were split on whether or not they encouraged their members to engage their students in advocacy. While most representatives would like to see their members engage students, only a few actively encouraged it. Those that have encouraged their members to reach out to students on their campuses have had limited
success. Several association representatives said that relationships with college and university presidents and students vary by campus, so each institution, “has to determine what they can do within the confines of their institution and the situation.” Internal politics and the relationship with the member of Congress can impact the institutions ability to reach out to students. The ACE representative had a more positive view saying,

    I think a lot of college and university presidents, when an issue comes up that they think might be of interest to students, will try to call it to their attention as a way of helping them understand what the public policy and political processes are about and why it’s important to them.

AASCU has encouraged their member presidents to find student stories about Pell to use in their outreach because, “it's always good to have the personal stories so the members understand this is important back home and not just a national issue.”

    APSCU mentioned using students in their efforts more frequently than the Big Six associations. It seemed like the member colleges were the conduit to the students with APSCU providing information to their member schools to activate their students.

Several of the associations also talked about occasionally reaching out to other constituent groups like alumni, trustees and local businesses, but not on a regular, widespread basis. APSCU hoped to develop these types of networks in time. One representative said, “our hope is that over time, it will become more mainstream and there will be folks [on the Hill] that can advocate and say they had a good experience.”

    The media coverage talked about student involvement, but not in reference to the Big Six. Student lobbying was most frequently mentioned in reference to the for-profit sector and consumer groups like U.S. PIRG. APSCU was mentioned several times as working with students on advocacy and reportedly set up the website for Students for Academic Choice, a student group advocating for the for-profit higher education
industry. APSCU also included students in meetings and rallies on the Hill. Another example of cooperation between higher education and students is the Association of American Medical Colleges and the American Medical Student association who were mentioned together in several media accounts. A similar level of cooperation between the Big Six associations and student associations was not seen in media coverage.

The Congressional staffers agreed that the student voice was impactful. One staffer said, “a letter or a visit from a university president is probably the most effective, but as far as the best message and best visual from a press perspective it's having students here talking to their members.” According to another staffer, in regards to the issue of gainful employment, the student message was very important,

We probably had 50 letters over that period of time from students who had been impacted by some kind of abusive practices by these schools. Those 50 letters were all individually written and that was far more meaningful than the thousands of form letters or robo calls that we got on that issue.

Several staffers thought that student lobbying may be more effective at the personal office level rather than at the committee level. A member can say they heard from students and that is a good story for them to tell on the floor. One staffer said, “one of the first question my boss always asks, where are the students on this? So the student groups, the consumer advocate groups are certainly an equal force to the Big Six on many issues.” Another staffer could think of several examples where the student groups were influential and even said that, “the national student groups are also influential, probably more so than the [Big Six] associations.”

Several staffers mentioned that the associations did not talk about students enough and did not really engage with students. They felt that the associations needed to talk more about issues related to students and less about institutional issues. One staffer did
acknowledge that the associations are presidential organizations, so that would explain the lack of engagement of students to some degree. According to this staffer, most of the student involvement comes from student associations like the United States Student Association or U.S. P.I.R.G. and these groups tend to act separately from the higher education associations. Another staffer said that the higher education groups work together some, but the higher education associations do not coordinate with the student groups to bring students when a university is doing meetings on the Hill. However this may be changing on the for-profit side. One committee staffer commented that,

In the last year on the for-profit side we’ve seen the tie between APSCU and their use of students. Often, when I get a visit from an individual for-profit school they will bring students with them, which is a very different tactic than what happens on the non-profit side, at least at the committee level.

This staffer thought it was hard to tell if this tactic was effective since the students had clearly been invited by the college and the president was sitting in the meeting with them. It was difficult for the staffers to know if the student was being completely honest about his/her experience because, “they are very clearly coming to lobby, so at some point it is not necessarily different than the school coming.”

While most staffers thought student lobbying was effective, they recognized that it was difficult to get students organized. One staffer said, “students don't usually call in and that's unfortunate.” Another said, “as long as they are getting their Pell, as long as their student loan is coming in, you really don’t hear from them except on some really particular case work issues, which is usually a state or school issue.” One staffer still felt that presidents had a greater impact than students and said, “I think it’s more effective that the president of that college came in rather than 100 students.” These views did not vary based on party or type of office.
Overall, membership mobilization can clearly be effective in lobbying. According to the Congressional staffers interviewed, legislators are interested in what constituents think, so this tactic provides them with valuable information. Even if the constituent communication was stimulated, the constituent still took the time to contact the legislator’s office and since electoral participation is so low, it would be risky to ignore constituents who are taking action. The Congressional staffers’ view of membership mobilization fits with signaling theory.

Membership mobilization is not a silver bullet that is universally effective and blindly trusted. It is a tactic that should be used strategically and selectively. Congressional staffers talked about the for-profits using this tactic too often and that they tended to pay more attention when the Big Six used it, because they used it more selectively. While there was a great deal of discussion among both the association representatives and the Congressional staffers about the frequency of using membership mobilization, no ideal amount was proposed. The Big Six associations tended to use membership mobilization a few times each year, while according to Congressional staffers the for-profits used it on every issue. It appears that the ideal amount is somewhere in between these two. Membership mobilization should be used strategically on legislators who need to be influenced. When using this tactic, it is important to know each legislator’s opinion on the issue and where they have been in the past on similar issues. Several staffers expressed frustration about receiving mass amounts of communications about an issue that they have always been supportive of. They found this to be wasteful and oftentimes annoying. They felt that a simple “thank you” to
supportive legislators would be more effective, while focusing the mobilization on legislators who are not informed on the issue or against the issue and could be swayed.

There appear to be some issues of trust among some Congressional staffers in terms of the messages shared by the associations. Several Congressional staffers talked about instances where the associations had sent statements about an issue to legislative offices, but members in the staffer’s district did not agree with the message or were not aware the message was being circulated. These staffers also had experience with constituents who did not realize they had sent one of these canned messages. Because of these past experiences, several Congressional staffers talked about double-checking the messages that appear to be prompted by membership mobilization. Conversely, college and university presidents were clearly the most reputable messengers for the associations and were generally afforded the highest level of access in congressional offices. While presidents were seen as most effective, the student voice was also important to legislators and their staffs. This confirms importance of directly involving members and students in lobbying activities. Hearing directly from constituents appears to have a greater impact than hearing from the association. Obviously, more personal communications are most effective, but canned messages are effective as long as the members understand them and can support the positions if called by a legislator’s office for confirmation. Membership mobilization will be discussed further in regards to signaling theory below.

**Public relations efforts.** The use of public relations activities varied among the associations. Public relations is defined as indirect ways of using the media by encouraging them to cover an organization’s activities and views (Schlozman & Tierney, 1986). Public relations activities include sending press releases, submitting op eds and
letters to the editor, and meeting with editorial boards. Public relations is a valuable tool because it is a free source of exposure that can reach a national or local audience, depending on who the organization is targeting. In describing the value of public relations one association representative focused on the local aspect of public relations strategy. Because the first thing legislators and staffers do in the morning is read their local paper, this representative said,

\[
\text{We know that an op-ed in a small paper in a Congressional district is probably worth way more than something in the New York Times when you are trying to effect a particular member. Alternatively, op-eds in the papers of every member of a committee means a lot more than one in the Wall Street Journal.}
\]

According to the media analysis, ACE, AACC, and APSCU were most recognized in media accounts. In stories about lobbying in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Inside Higher Ed* ACE was either quoted or mentioned 28 times, AACC was quoted or mentioned 15 times, and APSCU was quoted or mentioned 36 times. The full media analysis can be found in Appendix D. In the media analysis, the Big Six were primarily quoted or mentioned in terms of commenting on an issue or writing letters to Congress. The media accounts presented APSCU as using a wide variety of lobbying tactics ranging from campaign donations to issuing reports. The topics of student loan reform and the for-profit sector were the topics most frequently reported on in regards to higher education lobbying. This may be due to the controversial nature of these issues, or because these two industries put a greater emphasis on public relations efforts. The Congressional staffers did not talk much about the associations in relation to public relations efforts.

Some governmental relations representatives seemed to work closely with public relations/ public affairs staff at their association, while others did not mention it. Public
relations activities were one of the first things the ACE representative discussed. The ACE representative talked about working with the press to answer their questions and/or getting information to them. Most of their work in this area is responding to media calls. According to the AAU representative, advocacy often had a public affairs element, so they have been trying to incorporate more public affairs activities into their lobbying strategy. They may set up meetings with columnists who they think would share their perspective. They may also write letters to the editor and encourage their members to seek opportunities in the public affairs realm as well. The AAU representative talked about working closely with their public affairs staff and included these activities in his/her daily activities,

A typical day involves surveying all of the issues that we know are either bubbling up or already hot, understanding where we're going on those issues, asking questions like ‘should we be weighing in?’, ‘who should we be weighing in with?’, and trying to think ahead if there is a public affairs element… maybe op eds, meetings with columnists who we think would see our perspective, writing letters to the editor, or pushing our members to seek opportunities in a public affairs realm.

Public relations activities were particularly important to APSCU. According to one APSCU representative, “because we are under attack we have to immediately respond to attacks, so we have a very active PR group and that’s a very important component of what we do.” Part of this public relations strategy included Twitter. One of the APSCU representatives said, “I think one thing we have lacked is relevancy, so in a way I almost don't care if we don't change anyone's mind. I just want us to be there and part of the dialogue.” Because APSCU is trying to improve its visibility and reputation, as well as respond to attacks, they appeared to be more proactive in their public relations activity compared to the Big Six.
All of the associations have Twitter accounts, with AASCU and APSCU each having specific legislative/policy accounts in addition to general association Twitter accounts. This may signify a greater connection between public relations and governmental relations activities.

Table 7

*Association Use of Social Media*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Twitter</th>
<th>Followers</th>
<th>Following</th>
<th>#of Tweets</th>
<th>Start date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACE</td>
<td>4623</td>
<td>1448</td>
<td>2,297</td>
<td>3/3/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APLU</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>7/8/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAU</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>5/12/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AASCU</td>
<td>947</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>7/21/09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AASCU Policy</td>
<td>1106</td>
<td>1146</td>
<td>2041</td>
<td>10/15/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AACC</td>
<td>5112</td>
<td>841</td>
<td>6081</td>
<td>7/19/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAICU</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>790</td>
<td>856</td>
<td>3/9/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APSCU</td>
<td>1584</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>3/24/09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APSCU legis</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>6/10/11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facebook</th>
<th>Likes</th>
<th>Start date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACE</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APLU</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAU</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AASCU</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>7/17/09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AACC</td>
<td>1276</td>
<td>7/4/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAICU</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>3/9/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APSCU</td>
<td>623</td>
<td>9/24/10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* These numbers were compiled on December 14, 2011. Twitter followers refer to the number of accounts following the association’s account. Following refers to the number of accounts the association follows. Facebook likes refer to the number of people have “liked” the association Facebook page.

According to the numbers, AACC with more than 5,100 followers and 6,000 tweets and ACE with more than 4,600 followers and 2,200 tweets, were the most active on Twitter. Yet, the governmental relations representative from each of these associations commented on not using Twitter much in their activities. In fact, the AACC representative felt they were “behind the curve” in terms of social media, yet according to
the numbers they were the most active on Twitter. It is likely that someone in another
division of the association manages this account. AAU recently began using twitter and
the representative had found it to be useful and said, “so far it's been a pretty positive
experience from what we can tell and we want to use more of it.” They do not use social
media to activate their membership because they run the risk letting everyone else know
what they are doing. Additionally, not all of their members use social media regularly.
In reviewing association accounts, Twitter appeared to be used more generally to convey
information, not to spur advocacy. One APSCU representative said, “it's become
important to be in that space, but I don't really know from a grassroots perspective how
valuable it is, but it's kind of like you have to be doing it.” All of the associations except
for ACE, APLU, and AAU also have Facebook accounts, but did not find them
particularly useful in terms of governmental relations.

Overall, the use of social media by the higher education associations appeared to
be primarily for public relations. Initially, this lack of use of social media in higher
education advocacy was a surprise since college-aged students use this medium so
frequently. It appeared that social media would be the perfect way for the associations to
communicate with students and mobilize them. However, since the membership of these
associations is made up of college and university presidents and institutions, the
associations are more focused on communication methods most appropriate to that group.
While many higher education institutions are very active in social media, it is likely not
the president or governmental relations staff that is operating those accounts.

Advertising was not mentioned by the associations or the Congressional staffers,
but was mentioned in media accounts. Most media mentions of advocacy advertising
were in reference to the for-profit sector. The APSCU representatives did not mention advertising, but several television, radio, and print advertisements can be found on their website, most of which are focused on the gainful employment issue. Individual for-profit schools use advertising extensively, often focusing on success stories of their students. APSCU’s use of advertising is another example of their tendency to use every tool available to them. Since advertising is expensive, it also shows the availability of financial resources for APSCU, or at least their willingness to use financial resources on a variety of tactics. Additionally, APSCU’s use of advertising illustrates the multiple functions of outside lobbying that Kollman (1998) discussed. APSCU is not only trying to directly influence legislators, but they are also trying to influence general public opinion as well. On the other hand, the Big Six associations appear to be focused primarily on directly influencing legislators.

Overall, all of the associations utilized public relations activities to support their lobbying activities. Some governmental relations representatives were more involved in public relations activities than others. It appears that in some associations the public relations activities and governmental relations activities are closely tied, while they are quite separate at other associations. APSCU appeared to be more aggressive in their public relations activities than the Big Six. All of the associations used social media, but more for public relations purposes and not governmental relations. APSCU was the only association that used advertising as part of its governmental relations strategy. It is important to note that my interviews were with association governmental relations representatives and not with public relations representatives. If I had, I may have received different information. The above observations are based on my interpretation of
statements in the interviews with governmental relations representatives and media accounts.

**Organizational maintenance.** According to Kollman (1998) activities that fall into the organizational maintenance category include entering coalitions, sending letters to membership, polling members on policy issues, fundraising within the membership, and advertising to attract new members. Cook (1998) found that the federal relations activities of the associations were viewed as a major benefit of membership both by the associations and by members. It is important to note that membership may have differing meanings for the Big Six association compared to APSCU. As described in Chapter 4, the Big Six are multipurpose associations. Lobbying is a major focus of the associations, but they have other purposes as well, whereas lobbying is the main mission of APSCU.

Schlozman and Tierney (1986) argue that organizations use valuable resources on organizational maintenance because their survival and success depends on membership. According to their survey, 77% of trade associations said they spend a great deal of their time and resources on communications with members (Schlozman and Tierney, 1986, p. 143). These communications include an early warning system, educating members, and “farming” members (Schlozman and Tierney, 1986, p. 144-45). The early warning system includes communications that alert members and inform them about Congressional actions that may effect their institutions. Communications that educate members provide information and instructions about the process and mechanics of the lobbying and often involves “how to” materials. “Farming” of members refers to association efforts to build support for association positions.
All of the associations in this study involved their members in their governmental relations activities by keeping them informed about federal issues and providing opportunities for members to act. They used all of the types of communication Schlozman and Tierney (1986) discussed. Some associations sent these communications on a needed basis while others sent them on a regular schedule. For example, NAICU sent information when they felt it was necessary, while AASCU and ACE sent weekly updates. Some of these communications were informational and some were focused on action. The associations also sought feedback from their members. This feedback opportunity allowed members to feel invested in the association and play an active role in the association. Most of the associations have built in structures for member involvement in governmental relations with various councils and committees. These structures were used more for gathering input from members about issues and lobbying strategy, but also used for membership mobilization. According to the AACC website, they have a Commission on Communications and Marketing that works on public relations activities and a Commission on Research, Technology, and Emerging Trends that looks at the changing role of federal, state, and local governments in community colleges as well as several specific federal issues. APSCU has a federal legislative committee made up of members and has “constant calls” with their members to keep them apprised of what they are doing, coordinating efforts, and gathering feedback from members.

APLU has numerous councils and commissions made up of a large volunteer structure. In regards to their members, the APLU representative said they have, “lots of volunteers, lots of input, lots of say coming in from basically our clients on how they want us to help them do their job and to achieve our common objectives.” The
governmental relations staff worked most closely with the Council of Governmental Affairs (CGA), which is made up of the governmental relations staff from all of their member campuses. This group helps guide the APLU governmental relations staff on positions and in the broad issues they will cover throughout the year. The governmental relations staff will develop a proposal or a set of suggestions regarding that year’s governmental relations activities and encourage the feedback. The governmental relations staff organizes four meetings each year for the CGA. They also have task forces organized by issues including authorization, appropriations, and budget.

AASCU has a body called the Council of State Representatives with one or two members from each state. Historically, this group has served as an advisory group, but AASCU has started to branch out and involve them in advocacy as well. Ideally, the AASCU representative hoped this group would eventually be able to activate other member schools in their state, so if AASCU needed schools to contact legislators who represent Missouri, the Council of State Representatives members in Missouri could help rally AASCU member schools in Missouri to action. Currently, this type of outreach is organized by the governmental relations staff, but with limited time and staff resources, they are not able to do this widely.

AAU membership is smaller than the other associations, which has advantages and disadvantages. The AAU staff are able to be in close contact with their member institutions, but there is also an expectation because they are a smaller association that there is an opportunity for members to have some sort of discussion about AAU activities.
The AAU representative said,

Ideally we seek the views of our members. We absolutely lean towards creating forums with our members and having an opportunity to talk about where we ought to be going as an organization on a given issue.

As the federal landscape becomes increasingly complex, AAU is being asked to cover more and more issues that impact their member institutions.

What we find is that our members want to play with our association, which is a great place for us to be. Because of the smallness of the organization, our members know they have a forum to actually talk, influence, and coalesce around a position and then go forward in terms of its advocacy. Our members tell us that this is a valuable service and one they appreciate.

AAU uses its Council on Federal Relations (CFR) to guide its governmental relations efforts. This group is made up of individuals from the member institutions that had been designated by the presidents to be the primary conduit on governmental relations. The AAU representative said, “most of the AAU institutions have one or more designated professionals. They are usually senior university staff members who are in charge of federal relations. We convene them monthly.” According to the AAU representative, other associations often say that AAU has an army available at all times, because many of the CFR members are based in Washington, D.C.

NAICU has a large, diverse membership. In terms of describing the association’s membership, the representative said, “my short answer to this is that we have everyone from Harvard to Appalachian Bible College.” Despite this diversity, getting agreement among members is not that difficult.

Within our association it’s not that hard because each one really prides itself on its individual mission, so they respect each other’s mission. The balance that we’re trying to maintain is to help low income students go to whichever school suits them most, and to let the board and the mission statement drive the institution and how they do things. That is acceptable to everybody.
NAICU has a state executive network in 40 states through their associations of independently affiliated associations at the state level. This network is made up of private colleges that put together their own associations in the states to do at the statehouse what NAICU does in Washington. These state associations are not satellites of NAICU—they are dues paying members. NAICU also has a Committee on Policy Analysis & Public Relations made up of members throughout the country.

The ACE representative felt that the association is a somewhat different organization, because they represent a variety of types of colleges and universities and their membership is made up both of individual college and university presidents, as well as other associations. Because of this, their principle responsibility in terms of governmental relations is to try to fashion consensus and compromised positions that the entire higher education community can support. According to the ACE representative, “My general view is if it works for all of the other major associations, it works for me.”

No specific committees or councils were mentioned in the interview or on the website.

There was a clear sense among the Big Six association representatives of wanting to keep members happy with their efforts. They were conscious of their members’ time and planned their communications to members accordingly. They were careful with the type of information they sent to members and the frequency in which they sent it. They may provide in-depth analyses of issues, but will provide short summaries as well. They were also careful about when they mobilized their members to participate in advocacy of legislators. This was not only because of members’ busy schedules, but also for member morale. Several Big Six representatives talked about only mobilizing members on issues where there was a strong chance of success. The concern was that if the mobilization
efforts did not have the intended result, members would become discouraged and not participate in the future, or doubt the effectiveness of the association’s governmental relations abilities.

The association representatives did not talk about specifically polling their members on policy issues, but member feedback is sought in more informal methods as seen above. The Big Six association representatives did not talk about fundraising efforts directed at their members or advertising to gain new members. Since these are specific trade associations, potential members are fairly limited. In the case of AAU, membership is by invitation only, so they certainly are not advertising. However, all of the associations have links on their web pages about the benefits of membership and information about how to join.

Again, APSCU is a bit different when it comes to organizational maintenance. Because the association’s main purpose is to lobby on behalf of the sector, member expectations may be higher than in the Big Six. According to one staffer, a new organization has been created called the Coalition for Educational Success and schools may be members of both. This staffer said it was rumored that some schools did not feel like ASPCU was aggressive enough and formed this group in response. In fact this coalition also created the Foundation for Educational Success that developed a voluntary code of conduct for for-profit institutions to follow (Fain, September 15, 2011). There was no mention of this new group in my interviews with APSCU representatives. The demands of members and the creation of this new group may put APSCU in a difficult position. While the staffers interviewed for this study felt that APSCU was plenty aggressive, it seems that some APSCU members did not agree. It appears that APSCU
has to balance between keeping members happy and doing what they feel is effective. Another difference between APSCU and the Big Six associations was their use of fundraising. The APSCU representatives talked about holding fundraising events to encourage its members to donate to the association’s PAC.

An interesting component of organizational maintenance for the Big Six is their overlapping memberships. ACE’s membership overlaps with all of the remaining five associations, but they play a different role serving as an umbrella organization. Except for AACC, the remaining Big Six’s memberships have various overlaps. AAU has the most overlap in membership with APLU. According to the AAU representative, many of their members that are private institutions are also members of NAICU, but that association is not asked by its membership to work on research issues, while research issues are a major focus of AAU. Both the AAU representative and the APLU representative talked about working jointly on research-related issues. According to the AASCU representative, AASCU and APLU have approximately 150 members in common. Despite this overlap in memberships, which one may assume would lead to competition, there was no mention of negative feelings or competition between the Big Six associations.

As seen above in the discussion about consensus opinions, the Big Six work extensively in coalitions. According to the AAU representative, “most of our work is usually done in coalition with our members or in coalition with like organizations.” These coalitions extend beyond the Big Six associations, particularly for APLU and AAU who also work extensively with research and industry groups on issues of research funding. While the use of consensus opinions has value, it can also have a conservatizing effect.
In order for the Big Six to come to an agreement on a message that is suitable for their diverse memberships, messages are often diluted. It can also lead to less aggressive lobbying because the Big Six are trying to appeal broadly to their membership. By attempting to achieve broad appeal, working in consensus may suppress minority voices. For example, minority serving institutions face issues that other types of institutions may not face, but because these issues are only faced by small number of members they may not be addressed by the Big Six.

While APSCU does not work with the Big Six, they also try to work with other like-minded groups. One APSCU representative said they, “try to work with other groups or other organizations that have a similar mission or at least establish a good relationship with them.” According to media accounts, these groups have ranged from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to the National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators.

Overall, organizational maintenance is important to all of the associations, but it appears that many of the activities that fall into this category support activities in other categories. Many of the information sharing and policy analysis activities in inside lobbying used to inform legislators are also used to inform the association’s membership. The format used to present the information may be different, but much of the work is completed as an inside lobbying tactic. The same can be said for outside lobbying tactics. Involving members in lobbying activities either through seeking opinions or mobilizing them to contact legislators is used in both outside lobbying and organizational maintenance, but the main purpose for using these activities appears to be for outside lobbying. APSCU’s fundraising events for their PAC help engage members in the organization, but the main goal of this activity is to support financial incentive activities.
While all of these activities are important for the organization, it could be argued that they are designed more for lobbying with organizational maintenance being a positive byproduct. On the other hand, it could be the reverse. Organizational maintenance may be of primary importance, with members seeking lobbying representation. These overlaps in the purposes of tactics seem to illustrate that the exclusiveness of the categories of lobbying tactics in the literature may not apply in practice.

**Financial incentive strategy.** The financial incentive strategy includes tactics like political contributions, honoraria for speaking, and campaign work (Hillman & Hitt, 1999). Because they are non-profit organizations, the Big Six associations are not legally permitted to use the financial incentive strategy. Because of this, one of the biggest differences between APSCU and the Big Six is their use of campaign contributions.

APSCU has a PAC that provides campaign donations to members of Congress and other candidates. APSCU has a full-time staff person in the association who runs the PAC, but the governmental relations staff also help with the strategy and attend many fundraisers. APSCU develops a targeted list of members they will donate to and often go to fundraisers to deliver the checks personally and may organize their own fundraisers for the targeted members. One APSCU representative said, “several times a year we check in and create a plan about who we are going to give to based on where our schools are.”

The Big Six representatives for the most part felt that APSCU’s ability to use campaign donation was an advantage, but they did not feel disadvantaged by not having that option. One Big Six association representative said,

Is it a valuable tool for the people who can do it? You bet. Is it indispensible? No. We have managed to do reasonably well for 40 or 50 years without having a PAC
and I don’t think there is any likelihood that we will be creating one in the near future.

Most agreed that money can buy access, but not votes and they felt they had good access to legislators. One Big Six representative stated that, “as an association we have pretty good access and if we need access to members of Congress we often work with our members.” Another stated, “I think I can get into any office because I have an institution in a lot of Congressional districts and I think I can be heard, so I'm not disadvantaged in that way.” One representative felt that fundraisers were just another opportunity to talk about issues and that there were conversations that take place there that one would not get to have otherwise because of the friendliness of the situation. Another representative felt that legislators were making a judgment on the quality of education and not based on campaign donations. This representative felt that some legislators have been impressed with what they have seen at these schools and felt the education provided at for-profit institutions is adequate for their constituents. Perhaps the money helped get the legislator to visit the institution, but maybe they would have gone anyway because it is a local business in their district. This representative thought it was difficult to gauge the impact of campaign contributions.

The Big Six association representatives agreed that the biggest difference between their associations and APSCU was that APSCU has a lot more money and they can use that money for campaign donations. Yet, most of the Big Six representatives did not feel that they should get involved in campaign donations because, “once you start you can't stop and I don't think it behooves higher education to do that.” Several representatives also felt that their limited financial resources were a major reason why the associations should not form Political Action Committees (PACs) and get involved in political
contributions. One association representative said,

The fact of the matter is that we would never have enough money to be an effective Political Action Committee. So, if you’re not going to have a lot of money, you’re not going to be able to do very much by way of making political contributions. They are going to be very small and very limited and you’ll probably make as many enemies as you do friends.

Another representative thought it might hurt their image and said, “there may be a downside to having a PAC in that we would be considered too political for what we are doing.” This representative thought that by not being political they could make the case that they were doing this not for their own profit, but for the good of the country.

Another association representative did point out that higher education is known for not returning favors or rewarding support. This sentiment was also found in Cook’s (1998) study. This representative said,

I like to think we are special. We are different in some ways in the fact that we don’t play the political game in the way that other people do, but maybe we’re weaker than if we did play the game in that way.

However, one Congressional staffer was quick to point out that the non-profit associations and schools are not completely shut out of the financial incentive strategy. According to this staffer the non-profit institutions have their own ways of being involved,

While for-profits can give a direct donation, never forget that on the non-profit side they can give away a lot of tickets to a lot of sporting events and that shouldn’t ever be discredited. That’s a big thing. They have other ways to put themselves out there… if you’re a big sports school, you’re advertising every Saturday on national TV.

None of the staffers interviewed were impacted by campaign donations. Staffers said they do not “play in that space” and that there is a firewall between campaign donations and legislative staff, so staff really do not know who is giving what money.
One staffer said, “perhaps in some offices, but from my perspective, from my boss’s perspective, it doesn’t really make a difference. I have a pretty open door policy and certainly don’t check who’s donating before taking meetings.” In terms of the impact of campaign donations on legislators the staffers were mixed. Most did not feel that campaign donations had a big impact on votes. In fact one staffer felt donations could sometimes seem like harassment. Another staffer felt that fundraisers and donations were another opportunity for conversations, but that it had more of an impact on legislators who are not intimately involved in the issue. A few of the staffers did wonder about the impact of campaign donations regarding for-profit issues. One staffer said,

> When I look at it I see it a serious concern for the welfare of students and I'm thinking that Democrats should be student-minded. They should be looking out for the little guy first, so this has been a really interesting exercise in learning about the process.

> There was frustration among several staffers that they did not feel the Big Six associations were appreciative of their work. One staffer said,

> When [we] got in the majority we made huge strides in making college accessible and affordable and it was never enough for them and now … they realize that now we're just trying to protect the gains that we made I think maybe they realize that the [we] did do a lot for them.

According to Wolanin (1998), this is where the Big Six have the potential to participate in the electoral process without giving campaign contributions. Wolanin (1998) argued that in addition to thanking legislators more often, the Big Six should invite legislators to campus and provide them with free media opportunities. This could not only serve as a “thank you” to a supportive legislator, but also provide visibility and media attention that is useful in a legislator’s re-election attempts.

> Overall, views on campaign contributions varied among respondents. The Big
Six do not participate in the financial incentive strategy. Much of this has to do with their non-profit status that prohibits them from participating in campaigns. However, most of the Big Six representatives did not feel the associations should participate in these activities even if they were legally able to. They cited concerns about not having enough money to be competitive and worried that it would tarnish their image as a public good and cause them to be viewed just like any other interest group. One Big Six representative felt that not participating in financial strategies puts them at a disadvantage, but this view was in the minority among the Big Six representatives. However, this view may be more in line with the view of some in Congress.

The general view of both the association representatives and the Congressional staffers was that campaign contributions could have an impact, but more in terms of access, not legislative decisions. The Big Six associations believed APSCU’s ability to make campaign contributions was an advantage, but did not believe they were hurt by not making contributions. The Big Six Associations believed they could get access to most offices and did not need to enter the campaign realm. The APSCU representatives seemed to agree with this assessment. They did not think their ability to give campaign contributions gave them a major advantage, because the Big Six associations already had extensive access to legislators because of their reputations and historic relationships. This view may change as the for-profits expand and have more influential graduates. Of course, since campaign finance is a controversial issue, the interviews for this study may not have provided a complete picture. For example, if a staffer, or his/her legislator, had been impacted by campaign donations, it is highly unlikely that they would state that in an interview.
**Signaling.** According to signaling theory, mobilizing membership shows that constituents are particularly interested in an issue and by doing this the group sends a signal to legislators that their constituents are paying attention, which could impact re-election in the future (Austen-Smith & Wright, 1992 & 1994; Ainsworth, 1993; Kollman, 1998). However, not all constituents are equal. Fenno’s (1978) and Miler (2010) found that legislators view their constituents in a series of concentric circles, with the inner circles having more influence and receiving more attention.

**Member mobilization as signal.** All of the congressional staffers and association representatives agreed that membership mobilization could serve as a signal to congressional offices. In fact, one staffer practically described signaling theory without prodding,

> The point of leveraging grassroots relationships in terms of governmental relations specialists is to signal to the persons they are communicating with that they are speaking on behalf of a constituency. Politics is local. Members are compelled by voters.

A house staffer concurred and said, “Yes [it can serve as a signal]. It's good to hear from people. We certainly like to know that people are paying attention to what's going on.” Another staffer said that when members hear from home they listen and it is a tool that gets attention. One personal office staffer commented, “it gets your attention and if there are so many to a point on an issue it probably does make the office stop and think.” Another staffer agreed, “yes [it can serve as a signal], potentially, because someone is generating the attention to it.” This staffer often entered a stock phrase from the e-mails and phone calls the office was receiving into Google to figure out who was generating the communications. This often leads to the organization’s website. It was not clear how this information impacted the staffer, but it was viewed as important information and
appeared to signal that there was organization behind the issue. Another staffer felt membership mobilization was particularly effective at sending signals if it was a district-specific issue and said,

If there is something unique about our district that affects the bill or something that they don't like in the bill because it affects the district more than the rest of the country, we definitely pay attention.

Another staffer agreed that it depended on the issue and did not think it would serve as a strong signal if it was on an issue that the member was already aware of, but could if it was a new issue. Several staffers also said that it depended on the type of communication, with more personal communications being more effective. Several staffers spoke specifically about the Big Six’s use of membership mobilization serving as a signal that gets attention because of their influence. One staffer said that association signals could not be completely ignored because, “they do have legs to stand on because when they want to they can rally a lot of people and get presidents to call their members of congress.” One staffer felt that membership mobilization by the non-profits sent a particularly strong signal because, “they don’t use it on every issue.”

The association representatives also recognized the ability of membership mobilization to serve as a signal to legislators. One representative focused on the value of constituent votes since legislators are always thinking in terms of re-election and voter turnout is so low. Another representative felt that higher education tends to not be an issue of priority to most legislators unless they are heavily lobbied, “so when a member institution goes to their member and the member is hearing from their constituent, there is a community aspect to my institution too, I think they take notice.” One representative
did stipulate that for membership mobilization to serve as a signal it needs to come from multiple sources.

If they [congressional offices] know that we have sent out an alert and they hear from two campuses that tells them that it probably isn’t a big deal, but if they hear from 20 campuses they get a very different impression. So I think it depends on the extent to which we have gauged campus interest in it and the nature of the response from campuses to elected officials.

This puts pressure on the associations to be confident that their members will mobilize in high enough numbers to make an impact.

Constituency levels. Fenno (1978) and Miler (2010) found that legislators view their constituents in a series of concentric circles, with the inner circles receiving more attention. The interviews for this study appear to support this concept and placed college and university presidents in one of the inner constituency circles. One staffer said, “I think most [legislators] are very responsive to the university president or the system president letter or meeting. That is probably, of everything those folks do, the most effective thing.” Another staffer said,

The senators always meet with college presidents and really consider college presidents to be leaders in their states and so really take to heart what their perspective is. I think members really value the college presidents’ perspectives because of their role in the economy, so I think that is a much more powerful way of weighing in than just having a lobbyist from DC sit down with a staffer and say here are our priorities.

One staffer did not think that many presidents understood how much access they already had. This staffer said, “It's just so funny how presidents will pay as much as it takes to feel like they have their finger in the mix, when really they could just pick up the phone and call us.” This staffer encouraged presidents not to hire outside lobbyists to get them meetings, particularly when the meetings were about money. This staffer said, “I am here to serve our constituents and that's my job so don't feel like you need to hire some
fancy person to get a meeting because I would meet with you.” Based on these responses, the college and university presidents are likely in a more influential constituency circle than a lobbyist, unless that lobbyist is a personal friend of the legislator.

Several associations seemed to understand the influence of their member presidents and talked about the need to improve engagement of their members with legislators. They felt this would help make the issues more personal and impactful. It would also keep it from seeming like all of the communication is just coming from inside the beltway lobbyists. One association representative said, “our members have a ton more influence with these offices than we ever will.” Another said, “If a member of Congress gets a call from a major university president they have to at least take into account that a serious constituent is asking them to do something.” Another staffer concurred,

I think that a president calling a member of Congress right before a vote might be able to get through directly to a member in a way that somebody who doesn’t have that kind of a high profile might not be able to get through.

Because of the influence of the college and university presidents, several associations were trying to increase their use in outreach. One representative wished, “our membership did more direct stuff with their members of Congress, because these are ultimately grassroots [local] issues that they care about and affect the local colleges, but I think too often they leave it to us to explain.” Another representative hoped to strengthen relationships between the association’s members and Members of Congress,

I know a number of presidents who have great relationships with their members both in the Senate and the House and so when they call the member is actually engaged. They're not just saying ‘mmm hmm, thanks, appreciate that.’ They are having a conversation with my folks and that’s the relationship they've developed and that's what I'm trying to develop with others. I want all my members to be able to do that.
It is clear that college and university presidents are respected members of their communities and that members of Congress see them as being a select part of their constituency. Being in an inner constituency circle may give presidents more influence even though they do not participate in direct electoral activities in their official role. It is important to note that I did not directly address this concept or show a graphic of the constituency levels in my interviews, so I cannot say precisely which constituency circle college and university presidents are in. I assume it would vary by legislator, but it was clear that staffers and association representatives felt that college and university presidents tend to be in an inner circle of the constituency and have greater influence over the legislator than compared to other constituents. This appeared to be true for both non-profit and for-profit presidents.

Overall, signaling theory appears to effectively explain the effectiveness of membership mobilization. Congressional staffers talked about the value of constituent feedback. Effectiveness may depend on several factors including the issue being advocated, the size of the mobilization, the chamber of the legislators, and the type of communication. They discussed how even if the constituent communication was stimulated by a group, it could not be ignored. In fact, several staffers talked about the importance of knowing what group stimulated the communication. The fact that these communications were generated by an organization seemed to send a powerful signal. While some staffers complained about the more canned efforts, it appears that even these efforts could not be disregarded because legislators know the communications were stimulated by a group who could potentially organize around an election in the future.
Membership mobilization by the higher education associations may send particularly strong signals because college and university presidents are the ones doing the communicating. Using Fenno (1978) and Miler’s (2010) discussion of constituency levels, college and university presidents tend to fall into an inner constituency circle. Because of their location in one of the inner constituency circles, college and university presidents are more visible and influential than other constituents. When a legislator sees that college and university presidents are organized around an issue, it sends an especially powerful signal.

**Additional themes**

Additional themes not directly related to this study’s theoretical framework emerged from the data. These included a discussion of the role of the association representatives, the increase in higher education lobbying groups, critiques of the associations, and partisanship in association lobbying.

**Association representative role.** All of the association representatives considered themselves to be lobbyists, with a few qualifications. One representative said, “Do I consider myself to have the same profession as someone who is a hired gun? No, but yes I am a lobbyist. A lobbyist is anyone whose profession is to advocate with Congress.” Of the Big Six representatives, some are registered as lobbyists, some are not, but none of these associations come near the lobbying thresholds that would require them to register by law.

All but one of the staffers interviewed considered the associations’ governmental relations staff to be lobbyists. One staffer summarized this, “Yes. I don't know what their technical federal registration is, but they certainly are contacting me about specific
issues and not in general support higher ed.” The staffer who did not view them as lobbyists said it depended on the issue, the bill, and the context in which they are having the conversation,

I do not think of them as lobbyists. I tend to think of them in the same way I think of individuals who are employed in the capacity of governmental relations specialists who lobby for homeless kids or foster kids, which is very different than the way I look at someone who would come to our office to talk about gainful employment, for example, where the conversation is much more focused on profit and or an institution, with little regard for individuals attending or not attending... I think technically that term is the colloquial term to talk about all of those individuals, but I distinguish between the two.

This view is reminiscent of the traditional view found by both King (1975) and Cook (1998), where many higher education representatives felt they were above lobbying. However, based on this study, it appears this view has largely dissipated with most viewing governmental relations representatives at higher education associations to be lobbyists.

The Big Six representatives tended to see their role differently than that of the for-profit governmental relations professionals. Several Big Six representatives noted that APSCU was more focused on advocacy while the Big Six associations did a lot of other things as well. One representative felt the motivations were different between the non-profit and for-profit sectors and said, “the motivation of the for-profit colleges is different than the motivation of our colleges. These people, it’s their livelihood, so it’s different from what we do.” Another representative concurred and said, “there’s a role for the federal government and it’s to help students and they [the Big Six] see the federal government as supporting their students and they consider it very important, but they don’t see that as a place that directly funds their institutions.” Another Big Six
representative distinguished between staff make-up of the Big Six and APSCU, “I think our folks are more public policy people.”

**Crowded lobby.** The seven associations in this study are far from being the only players in the higher education lobbying arena. Cook (1998) and Pusser and Wolcott (2006) also found this to be true. While it is difficult to quantify, it does appear that the higher education lobbying arena has become even more crowded since Cook’s study. One association representative commented, “the higher ed advocacy environment has gotten more crowded over time, so there’s all these foundations and groups that have kind of complicated things and creates a more crowded room for us.” This increased competition puts pressure on the associations to improve their own advocacy efforts.

One representative felt that, “the growth of the for-profit industry fueled as it is by federal student aid, has created substantive problems in terms of funding programs and all kinds of political complications.” Another representative felt there was room for both sectors and that there may be a push to apply regulations and requirements currently being pushed for for-profits to be applied to all of higher education.

What it comes down to is an accountability issue and we need to be careful in the traditional higher ed world of how much accountability do we want on some of our programs compared to what we're asking of the for-profits.

The Congressional staffers were clear that the major associations were not the only players in higher education lobbying and that activity went beyond just the non-profit and for-profit institutional perspective. When asked about higher education lobbying, one staffer referenced the Committee for Education Funding (CEF). According to this staffer the CEF was good at laying out the issue and providing “sky is falling” scenarios and also produced a good summary of the entire education budget that showed
historical patterns, what the program specifically did, and the impacts of cuts. When I followed up and asked specifically about the Big Six, he/she said that everyone goes through CEF. This staffer said, “as far as the individual groups themselves, I just don't feel like I get lobbied individually on higher ed as much, I just think they are people who band together and I hear from them that way.” This staffer also talked about the Education Trust and said they had been very active on Pell and were sending stories about Pell recipients to congressional offices once or twice a week. It is interesting that this staffer mentioned these organizations because they are both focused on all levels of education, not just higher education.

When I arrived in DC I learned that July 25th, was Save Pell Day, organized by the Education Trust. Most of the associations were aware of it, but not all, and none of the associations were involved in the event. Opinions on this varied. One representative seemed a little annoyed that they were not included, while another saw it as a positive. He/She saw it as example of the tremendous support for Pell and was happy that others were organizing efforts and said, “what's great about this, is that there is just this drum beat that’s going on about Pell right now.” Another representative said his/her association had already done a Pell event earlier in the summer.

This increased crowdedness was confirmed in the media analysis. While ACE, AAC, and APSCU were the most frequently mentioned organizations in the media coverage with more than 15 mentions each, several other organizations were also prominently covered. In fact, 90 associations and groups other than the Big Six and APSCU were mentioned in articles about higher education lobbying. The U.S. Public Interest Research Group, the Institute for College Access and Success, and Sallie Mae
were all mentioned 14 or more times in the media analysis. Additionally, 23 individual colleges and universities were mentioned at least once in articles about higher education lobbying. Several of the individual for-profit colleges or companies were mentioned seven or more times in the media analysis including Corinthian Colleges, Kaplan Inc., and the Apollo Group/University of Phoenix. Several articles focused on the amount spent on lobbying and APSCU was the only association mentioned in those articles, the rest were individual colleges and universities.

The role of individual colleges and universities was supported by the Congressional staffers, several of who had more contact with individual schools than with the associations. This contact was not limited to schools in their legislative district. Several Congressional staffers talked about meeting with college and university presidents from all over the country. One staffer said, “I think sometimes the individual campuses are much more effective than the associations as a whole.” This staffer worked “with colleges and universities both in our state and outside of our state more closely on an individual level than with the associations.” Interestingly, the association representatives did not talk much about individual lobbying by their member institutions.

On the for-profit side, the staffers reported that the individual schools were as active, if not more active than APSCU. Most of the Congressional staffers thought the for-profit sector tended to be disjointed. One staffer said, “APSCU has an agenda, but individually the schools are very active and have very high powered, well-paid lobbyists from the firms in DC who come in as well.” Another staffer said that “tons of schools” from the for-profit sector come to the Hill and many have their own agendas. According to this staffer each school has in-house lobbyists, but many have also hired lobbying and
public relations firms. Most of the staffers had more interaction with individual for-profit colleges and universities than with the association. One staffer said,

    APSCU is certainly a force, but in the last couple of years I think there is a desire by many of the schools and many of the corporations to show where they may be different from the association.

Several staffers commented that this was because individual schools did not want to be associated with the bad actors in the sector. These staffer had encouraged what they considered to be the good actors to separate themselves and not defend the lowest common denominator, but no one wanted to call out the bad actors. One staffer said, “They would all say we agree something needs to be done, but just don't paint us all with a broad brush.” Another staffer said, “APSCU tried to coordinate, but the good schools tried to separate themselves from that and the bad schools hung on to whatever they were doing, so it just became… it was very disjointed.”

Overall, the association representatives did not talk much about this concept of a crowded lobby, but it was certainly a major theme for the Congressional staffers. The majority of the staffers did not see the Big Six and APSCU as being the leaders of higher education lobbying. These staffers had more contact with the individual institutions and some of the broader coalitions. This raises questions about the relevance of the associations. If Congressional staffers look to individual institutions, what is the role of the associations? Of course it is difficult to separate the individual institutions from the associations because the college and university presidents may be using talking points from the associations and may have sought meetings with their legislators based on request from their association. Nevertheless, the Congressional staffers tended to view the college and university presidents as having more influence.
Critiques of the associations. Several staffers had frustrations with the associations. According to one staffer, “there is a lot of frustration with the Big Six. A lot of staffers feel they have been burned by the association folks many times and that those associations often don’t represent their membership well.” Another staffer said the associations can be cliquey and “they are very predictable. You know what they are going to say.” Another staffer wished the associations would focus less on money and more on substantive policy issues,

They get program happy and by that I mean they are under the belief that if they get a new program authorized, even if it duplicates 15 other programs, somehow that’s successful. What’s going to be interesting, the world has changed and that they may not always get what they want in the future, so it’s an interesting period of time right now to see who will pivot and get to substance and figure out that to be effective it has to be more than did I get more money.

Another staffer agreed that the associations needed to be more flexible as they can get wrapped up in their position that they become almost unmovable,

I feel like some of them have blinders on that they can't really see the forest for the trees and they would rather maintain the status quo at all costs then have conversations about what is best for higher ed going forward… I think it would be better if they loosened their grip on their issues, and just at least have conversations, I understand your priority, but lets have a conversation of what's really the best policy here.

Another staffer wished the associations realized that higher education is a system and when you touch one part it impacts the entire system. Several staffers also commented that many of the association representatives used to work on the Hill, but it sometimes seemed like they had forgotten what it was like. One staffer said, “I think they could do a better job of talking to us like they understand where we're coming from as policymakers and understanding all of the other pressures on us.”
Others talked about missed opportunities. One staffer felt that the associations needed to distinguish themselves and use the power they have and said, “they don't take advantage of the fact that they have some of the most prominent universities in the world.” This staffer felt that far lesser groups were more influential and did not have the kind of reputation or the voices of some of the associations. This staffer said that the associations were there when information was needed, “but they're not forceful advocates for those things.” Another staffer shared frustrations and referred to the handling of recent for-profit issues. This staffer felt that several of the Big Six associations were short-sighted in supporting some of the proposed regulations on for-profits because it is only a matter of time before those regulations are imposed on them and said, “the non-profits cannot be immune forever, particularly in this budget environment.”

The staffers also had frustrations with APSCU and the for-profit sector. While one staffer commented that the for-profits have always been a strong lobby, several felt they did not lobby until more recently. Either way, most agreed that the for-profit sector was plenty aggressive now, particularly pertaining to gainful employment. One staffer said,

I keep referring to gainful employment, but it was such a big deal for higher education and there is so much money at stake for people, for these corporations to lose, that it was an all out assault on us.

This staffer said that some Democrats were persuaded which created strange bedfellows. Another staffer thought it was a good example of going overboard with lobbying,

When this debate started off there were a lot of folks here who were very sympathetic to the for-profits view on things and felt that maybe some of what the Department had proposed was not necessary, maybe some of it seemed kind of arbitrary, but the more these people lobbied and the more they kind of harassed members and staff, it had the reverse effect. If you would have told me two years ago that not one moderate democrat or a democrat with a heavy presence of these
schools would have put up a fight for them I would have been shocked. I think that had a lot do with the overwhelming force that they thought would be effective, but had the opposite effect.

This staffer felt it had a similar effect with Republicans. While they were not happy with the proposals, no one was really out there defending the sector. Several commented that things could not be that bad for the for-profit sector if they were able to hire former members of Congress and high-powered lobbyists. One staffer said, “they [the for-profits] assumed the more people that were up here, the more money they spent, the better off they'd be. That had the opposite effect.” Another staffer thought it was a short-term success with long-term consequences. “Yes, they weakened the rules, but as far as building support for the sector long-term, they did more long-term damage for their schools.” It is important to note that in spite of these frustrations, one staffer felt all of the associations were doing a good job and said, “I feel like I'm not being lobbied poorly. I feel like when issues come up, people reach out to me.”

Partisanship. Party affiliation did not appear to have much of an impact in this study. All of the Big Six associations lobby on a non-partisan basis and tend to be organized by issue area instead. One Big Six representative said, “One of the interesting things about this line of work is how one prevents one’s personal political views from in any way clouding what one does or impacting what one does professionally.” According to the AASCU representative, “My job in this role is to represent AASCU—it's not to represent one side or the other side or my beliefs or anything else.” The ACE representative concurred saying, “We don’t have Republican lobbyists and Democratic lobbyists, we have lobbyists.” The Big Six representatives acknowledged that because of the nature of Washington, D.C., everyone has a sense of where people stand politically,
but it is not a big deal in higher education. The ACE representative said that while staffers may know his/her background, “they make their decisions on every issue that we interact with them on whether or not they think I’m giving them a straight story and trying to be helpful to the situation they are facing.” APSCU was the only association in the sample that did lobby on a partisan basis. They organize their lobbying by political party, so some of their governmental relations staff focuses on Democratic members and others focus on Republican members.

The interview responses of Congressional staffers did not vary much based on party affiliation. The Republican staffers tended to be slightly more negative about the Big Six and more accepting of the for-profit sector, but not drastically so. A few association staffers and Congressional staffers felt there was room for improvement in terms of partisanship. Several staffers, both Democrat and Republican, said that the associations tend to be more comfortable with Democrats and the associations could be less partisan and stop making assumptions about how people are going to respond. Several association representatives thought the higher education community could also do a better job engaging a broader audience. According to one representative, they all know the key core legislators and staff they need to reach, but there are many more legislators that vote. This representative also thought that the associations tend to focus on those in the majority, particularly when it is the Democrats. While higher education tends to be one of the least partisan issue areas, there are still pockets of partisanship. One representative commented that, “education in general tends to be more Democratically focused or leaning, so they tend to just make friends easier with Democrats.” This
representative thought the higher education community could to do a better job of engaging on a more bipartisan level.

**Summary of findings**

Overall, this study has confirmed several prior assessments of higher education lobbying, as well as opened new areas of study. This study also raised new questions, which will be addressed in Chapter 6. When looking at the lobbying tactics used by associations, this study found the associations needed to be divided into two categories: the Big Six and APSCU. A clear distinction was made between the two in the interviews and document review. I sought to determine which tactics associations used most frequently, assuming that those tactics had been deemed the most effective use of the associations’ limited resources. Overall, the associations used similar tactics, with a few exceptions, but APSCU was more aggressive and did more of everything. The Big Six used inside lobbying tactics most frequently, but it was difficult to ascertain which tactics APSCU used most frequently, because they used most available tactics on a regular basis.

All of the associations used membership mobilization to some degree in their lobbying efforts. The Big Six used this tactic a few times a year, while APSCU used it more frequently. The association representatives all agreed that membership mobilization can serve as a powerful signal to legislators. Several commented that their members have more influence on their local legislator than the association representatives. They believed this tactic was powerful because it provided legislators with a local perspective from influential people in their communities. Congressional staffers also believed that membership mobilization can be an effective tactic. Personal communications were seen as more effective than communications that were obviously
generated, but those could also be effective if they came in large numbers. College and university presidents were seen as the most effective messengers, but students were also seen as effective.

Everyone interviewed believed that membership mobilization could serve as a signal to legislators. Staffers said that legislators were concerned with constituent opinion and listened when constituents contacted their offices. Most reported that their legislator received regular summaries of the constituent communications that had come in to the office. Membership mobilization serves as a signal because it provides legislators with valuable information about constituent opinion and shows that the group could cause electoral consequences. Several Congressional staffers talked about paying attention to which group was mobilizing their members and that re-election is a concern for many legislators.

The higher education arena has changed and is continuing to change. The emergence of the for-profit sector was recognized by everyone interviewed in this study as having a major impact on the community. The associations in this study were recognized as playing an important role in higher education lobbying, but were not always viewed as being the leaders. Other groups and the individual higher education institutions also play an active role in lobbying and are sometimes viewed as playing a larger role than the associations. This view may signify a need for the associations to reevaluate their lobbying strategies, which will be discussed further in the following chapter.
CHAPTER 6
CONTRIBUTIONS, IMPLICATIONS, FUTURE RESEARCH

This study explored the lobbying tactics of seven major higher education associations. Chapter 1 introduced the context, purpose, and research questions for the study. Chapter 2 looked at prior literature about higher education lobbying as well as literature about lobbying tactics in general, with a particular focus on grassroots lobbying. This chapter also introduced the theoretical framework for the study. Chapter 3 introduced the research methods and the sample used in the study. Chapter 4 introduced each of the seven associations, providing information gathered from previous literature and document reviews. Chapter 5 provided a cross-case analysis of the seven cases informed by interviews and document reviews organized by pre-determined and emergent themes. This chapter includes contributions of the study to literature, policy implications, and areas for future research.

Contributions

The results of this study offer several contributions to existing higher education literature and literature on lobbying. Signaling theory appeared to be explanatory for membership mobilization in lobbying and its use in higher education. Prior literature on for-profit lobbying in higher education was nearly non-existent, yet this study found that important differences exist between the lobbying tactics used by for-profit higher education compared to non-profit higher education. This study also found that traditional descriptions of membership organizations may not apply to the associations because these associations generally have college and university presidents as members. Having
presidents as members is quite different than having the general public as members.

Finally, this study offered updates to Cook’s (1998) study of higher education lobbying. Each of these contributions will be discussed further below.

**Use of signaling theory in higher education.** Based on the findings from this study, signaling theory appears to describe higher education lobbying decisions and tactics, particularly the use of membership mobilization. This fits Kollman’s (1998) description of signaling theory in outside lobbying. Kollman (1998) found that inside and outside lobbying tactics were generally used together, but that signaling is most powerful through outside lobbying. The current study also showed that inside and outside lobbying were often used together, but I argue that inside lobbying tactics can also serve as signals when used with outside lobbying.

During inside lobbying, groups share information with legislators through direct meetings, testimony to committees, and publications. If these groups are also using outside lobbying, particularly membership mobilization through phone calls, letters, and constituent visits, they can use that information in their inside lobbying efforts as well. Lobbyists can provide numbers of constituents who are supportive of the issue as well as constituent impacts and stories gathered through the membership mobilization process. Membership mobilization still sends the strongest signal to legislators because it provides direct contact with constituents, but using the information garnered through these efforts can also provide information to be used to send signals in inside lobbying efforts. Membership mobilization provides valuable evidence for lobbyists’ inside lobbying arguments. This can be seen in a revised model of signaling in lobbying.
In prior literature, signaling theory has been described using both one-shot games and repeated games. Kollman (1998) used a one-shot game saying that each lobbying interaction is new and different. Austen-Smith and Wright (1992) and Ainsworth’s (1993) use of signaling theory depended on a repeated game where prior interactions played a role. The findings in this study rely on a repeated game. Reputations and relationships were important aspects of the lobbying process in higher education. All of the association representatives discussed the value of their relationships on the Hill and the reputations of their associations among legislators and staffers.

The most striking evidence for the need to use a repeated game to describe signaling theory in this study was the finding of double-checking by several Congressional staffers. These staffers talked about following up with constituents when a

Figure 5. Revised model of signaling in lobbying where inside lobbying serves as a signal when used with membership mobilization, but not as strong of a signal as membership mobilization.
communication was sent by an association on their behalf. The staffers double-checked with constituents in their district to make sure the communications the legislator received were accurate. They also probed constituents on their communications to make sure they really understood and believed in the message they sent. Congressional staffers were willing to take the time to make sure they understood where their constituents, particularly key constituents, stood on issues and who was attempting to influence them.

This double-checking activity supports Ainsworth’s (1993) idea of improving the accuracy of information received from lobbyists by periodically checking the information provided and imposing punishments for inaccurate information. Because of this, Kollman’s (1998) use of a one-shot game where legislators have limited time and financial resources to get this information and therefore, will rely on the information provided by membership mobilization efforts, may not be as explanatory for higher education lobbying. According to this argument, legislators and their staffs would not have the time to double check the communications from these efforts and would need to decide if they trusted accuracy of the information provided by lobbyists. While the theme of double-checking was strong in this study, it was not clear how often staffers used this tactic. It is also not clear if the associations are aware of this double-checking and if it affects their behavior.

Another important distinction for the use of signaling theory is the signal of re-election consequences. Austen-Smith and Wright (1992) and Ainsworth (1993) talked about re-election consequences broadly, where legislators make decisions on policy based on what will mostly likely lead to re-election. While Kollman (1998) talked broadly about re-election, he also talked specifically about a group’s ability to organize in
a legislator’s next campaign. I believe a broad definition of electoral consequences is necessary for signaling theory to accurately describe higher education lobbying. Except for the for-profit sector, higher education associations and institutions do not participate in direct electoral activities in terms of organizing around a political campaign. So, while the Big Six associations can mobilize their membership on an issue, the legislator knows that they will likely not mobilize members in an electoral campaign. Because of this, it is important that a broad definition of electoral consequences is used when applying signaling theory to higher education. The Big Six do not give campaign donations or participate directly in elections, yet they still send powerful signals to legislators. Membership mobilization by the Big Six is still effective because their members are high-ranking, influential people in their communities. They are also highly likely to vote based on these issues and may influence voters independent of the associations. Additionally, the members of the associations are generally in the inner constituency circles of the district and therefore have more influence and receive more attention. This study showed that it is important to look beyond direct political activity when exploring lobbying influence.

Finally, it appears that not all signals are equal and not all messengers are equal. Congressional staffers were clear that college and university presidents were more influential than other messengers with one staffer saying that a visit from a college or university president is more powerful than hearing from 100 students. This is good for the associations in this study since their memberships are made up of presidents. This finding provides an important contribution to existing literature on grassroots lobbying as most prior literature (Goldstein, 1999; Austen-Smith & Wright, 1992 & 1994; Ainsworth
& Sened, 1993; Kollman, 1998; Caldeira & Wright, 1998) looks at organizational membership in general. These previous studies do not look at the differences in the types of members in organizations. The current study shows that the type of membership may be an important factor in the effectiveness of grassroots lobbying. College and university presidents not only had greater access to legislators, but their opinions also appeared to carry greater weight compared to other messengers. Presidents appeared to have more power compared to other messengers like association staff and students. This raises questions for other types of groups who do not have these influential members. Do these groups need higher numbers of communications from members to compensate for the lack of prestige of their members?

**Member mobilization and signaling theory.** Overall, this study supported prior assessments of the effectiveness of membership mobilization as a signal to legislators. The association representatives and Congressional staffers saw membership mobilization as a useful tactic that can signal constituent support and future electoral consequences. Since signaling theory is based on membership mobilization being resource intensive, only used on issues of great importance, on the surface the findings of this study seem to imply that this tactic is more influential for the Big Six associations compared to the for-profits. Several staffers commented that the Big Six use membership mobilization selectively where APSCU and the for-profit sector use it on every issue. The staffers felt this selective use was more impactful, which aligns with signaling theory. However, several staffers also talked about APSCU’s focus on issues that pertain to their sector and not on general higher education issues. This implies that APSCU was using membership mobilization selectively. Issues like federal student aid are of great importance to the for-
profit sector’s survival, yet they did not use membership mobilization efforts on those issues. Instead, APSCU focused their efforts selectively on a few issues that specifically targeted their institutions. The for-profit sector is known for lobbying aggressively, so it may have given the sense that they used membership mobilization on every issue, but in reality, they were using it selectively.

While most of the staffers thought the for-profits may have done long-term damage to their reputation with their aggressiveness, the staffers did acknowledge that the for-profits had been somewhat successful in their recent efforts. Under Kollman’s (1998) use of a one-shot game, this idea of potential long-term damage would not matter. Each interaction is new and separate from previous interactions. Even under Ainsworth’s (1993) repeated game scenario this may not be an issue. As long as the information the for-profits provide through their membership mobilization is accurate and they only use it on selected issues, they can still be effective. According to Ainsworth, reputation is based on reliability of information, not general perception of the organization. The staffers’ frustrations with the for-profit sector’s lobbying efforts were not with membership mobilization specifically or inaccuracies in the information they provided, rather the frustration was with the sector’s overall aggressiveness. Annoying is not the same as inaccurate or ineffective. In fact, it may serve as a signal. The for-profits have let it be known that they will fight back and will aggressively mobilize their members on the issues that are most important to them. It is not clear yet how this will impact their future effectiveness.

This study showed that signaling theory can be used to predict both the choice to use membership mobilization and the effectiveness of the tactic. Congressional staffers
felt that membership mobilization was effective, particularly when used on selective issues. This limited use of the tactic sends a strong signal about constituent support for that issue. The selective use of membership mobilization is an important factor in the tactic’s effectiveness. Because mobilizing members is a resource-intensive tactic, the willingness of an organization to use this tactic sends a costly signal to legislators. The Big Six associations understand that membership mobilization sends a powerful signal and only use the tactic when they are confident that they will have strong participation from their members to ensure the signal is as strong as possible. While the for-profits use this tactic more frequently, they still use it selectively and not on all issues.

**For-profit role in the higher education community.** This study supports media accounts describing the dramatic increase in for-profit lobbying and contributes to literature on higher education lobbying. Both the Congressional staffers and the Big Six association representatives acknowledged this increase, with several of the staffer interviews being dominated by the topic. There was not the same recognition of APSCU as there was for the Big Six associations. The sector as a whole was referred to more than the association representing the sector. As detailed earlier, the associations all used similar lobbying tactics, but the for-profit sector used tactics more aggressively and used financial incentives not used by the Big Six. This increased intensity and use of tactics fits with Schlozman and Tierney’s (1986) view that resources play an important role in what lobbying tactics are used. While one Big Six representative felt there was room for both the non-profit and for-profit sectors, there was a general uneasiness about the increasing role of the for-profit sector.
Staffers talked about being overwhelmed by for-profit lobbying efforts and almost feeling like they were under attack. It is important to refer back to the history of higher education lobbying discussed in the literature review to consider these feelings. Historically, higher education had been a fairly passive lobby, with many shying away from the practice altogether. While the traditional higher education associations have progressively increased their lobbying over the years, it was still on a much smaller scale than most other issue areas. Many of the Congressional staffers interviewed for this study had worked primarily on education issues, so they may not have been exposed to the lobbying efforts of other more aggressive interest groups. It is not surprising that the efforts of the for-profits shocked some staffers. They were not used to that level of aggressiveness or did not feel it was appropriate for education.

Yet, based on my experience, the for-profit sector’s lobbying efforts are closer to the norm for interest group lobbying. While it may be rare for higher education, it is not rare for many other issue areas. Because of this, the for-profits’ recent lobbying efforts may signify a change in overall higher education lobbying. While change is difficult and not well received, it is often inevitable. The for-profits have clearly secured a spot in higher education policymaking and do not appear to be going away. As they continue to lobby aggressively, legislators and staffers may not agree with the policy stances of the for-profits, but their tactics will likely become more accepted as people get used to it.

If this is the case, the traditional higher education associations may need to reevaluate their lobbying strategies. As discussed earlier, legislators and staffers have been encouraging the Big Six to be more aggressive and proactive in their lobbying for more than 40 years (Wolanin, 1998). This sentiment was echoed in the current study as
well and pressure to increase their aggressiveness may elevate with the increase of for-profit lobbying. To remain relevant and competitive in higher education policymaking, the Big Six may need to emulate the for-profits in some ways, which will be discussed in the implications section.

**Structure of higher education associations and membership.** This study highlighted the differences in structure and membership in the major higher education associations compared to other interest groups. Most interest groups do not have an umbrella group like ACE. Many coalitions exist that are made up of a variety of interest groups, but they are typically ad hoc in nature and are organized around a particular issue or action. While they can be effective, these coalitions have not existed for more than a century and do not regularly come together to develop common positions. This collegial structure of the Big Six creates a rare unified (generally) presence in Washington, but is time-intensive, a luxury not afforded in Washington. This consensus structure can also have a conservatizing effect on the positions taken by the major associations that represent smaller associations and institutions. This may cause minority voices to be overlooked. Another interesting aspect of having this umbrella structure is that associations are sometimes asked to support issues that do not impact them, or in some cases, may not be in their best interest for the greater good of the higher education community. This seems to be counterintuitive to the main purpose of interest groups and sets the Big Six apart from others.

For all of the associations in this study, members are generally represented by the institutional president or other high-ranking campus officials. This is quite different from many other interest groups whose membership tends to be made up of average citizens.
College and university presidents are generally well-respected and influential members of their communities, located in the inner constituency circles of legislators. While this prestigious role of the presidents is useful to the associations, it also creates unique challenges. Their time is limited and much is demanded of them. The associations must play a delicate balancing act between utilizing their member presidents and angering or alienating them.

Based on the results from this study, it appears that in many cases the individual association members have more influence and more access than the association itself. Several Congressional staffers said that college and university presidents generally get direct meetings with the legislator where association representatives generally meet with staffers. Additionally, Congressional staffers relied more on the views of individual college and university presidents than they did on statements from the associations as a whole with several staffers regularly following up with college and university presidents in their districts when they received a statement from an association to determine its accuracy.

This brings up issues of relevancy for the associations. Are they needed if their members have more access and influence than the associations? It appears that the associations do still play an important role higher education policymaking. While college and university presidents do have more access and influence, they do not have the time to focus on and keep track of legislation in Washington, particularly general higher education issues like student aid. Their job, and the job of their governmental relations staff, is to look out for the interests of their specific institution, not the higher education community as a whole. While many higher education institutions would have similar
concerns, these concerns are in relation to their institution. The associations play an important role in looking at the broader community and how various policies impact higher education as a whole. While Congressional staffers may favor individual college and university presidents, partially because they are constituents, they did still value the efforts of the associations.

The issue of relevance would be a greater concern if the associations did not recognize the power of the college and university presidents. However, the association representatives clearly understood and valued this power of their members and tried to utilize it to further association goals. They clearly saw their members as their greatest asset and worked to gather feedback from them and incorporate them in not only in implementing lobbying strategy, but also in developing strategy. The associations were not threatened by or jealous of the power of their members. Instead, they respected that power and tried to use it to benefit all of its members.

This study contributed a new perspective on membership in interest groups and showed that membership is not equal across all groups. Most prior literature looked more broadly at the most common types of interest groups, where membership was typically made up of the general public. Having college and university presidents, who are often more influential than the association as a whole, as members of an association is very different than having members from the general public. These influential members tend to have greater access and impact, but also create unique challenges for the associations in terms of maintaining relevance of the association. Future studies involving membership organizations should take into account differences in membership and their influence.
While Congressional staffers felt that college and university presidents were the most influential messengers on higher education issues, it was clear that not all presidents are equal. The college and university presidents located in a legislator’s district were seen as most influential because they represent important institutions in the district, but several staffers also talked about taking meetings with college and university presidents outside of their district. These were generally elite, “brand name” institutions and major research universities. Because these college and university presidents are not only influential with their own legislators, but also with legislators outside of their district, it appears these presidents have more power than others.

Pfeffer (1992) presented position and reputation as two major sources of power. While all college and university presidents maintain both of these sources of power, it appears that different levels of power exist, with the reputation of the institution impacting the president’s influence outside of his/her legislative district. With this increased power and access for presidents of “brand name” institutions, it seems likely that these presidents may send stronger signals to legislators than presidents of less powerful institutions. It is also likely that these presidents, and the issues they care about, are heard more widely. Additionally, while the presidents of for-profit institutions did not appear to carry the same weight as non-profit presidents, they have a unique argument. Since many for-profit institutions are largely based on-line, presidents of these institutions can argue that they have constituents in many Congressional districts. This may provide them with additional access.

**Update to Cook.** The current study was not simply an update to Cook’s (1998) study, but there were areas in the two studies that can be compared. While the current
study was smaller than Cook’s, it is interesting to compare issues that were studied in each study. Many of Cook’s (1998) findings were echoed in this study, but there were notable differences and new information as well. Cook found that association members valued the associations’ federal lobbying efforts. Because I did not talk with association members I can neither confirm nor deny this finding, but based on my interviews the associations appear to be quite attentive to their members. They not only utilize their members in their lobbying activities, but also involve them in the development of strategy and seek their feedback.

This study, like Cook’s study, showed that many individual institutions are lobbying on their own and in many instances are more familiar to Congressional staffers than the associations. This could be a result of these institutions feeling that they were not getting enough representation from their association or that these institutions just wanted to focus on more institution-specific issues. I did not specifically ask about individual institutional lobbying in my interviews and association representatives did not discuss it, but several staffers said that they had more contact with individual institutions, both inside and outside of their districts, than they did with the associations. Based on this data, it appears that individual institutional lobbying continues to increase. In Cook’s study, the Big Six were still seen as the leaders in higher education lobbying, but the staffers unprovoked statements about individual institution lobbying in the current study indicates that individual institutions may be taking the lead in some offices. Of course, these institutions could be lobbying on behalf of the associations, but that was not the impression that the staffers provided. The Big Six’s focus on developing consensus opinions was one focus of Cook’s (1998, p. 121) study, and the current study found that
this consensus building continues. Both the Big Six association representatives and the Congressional staffers talked about the frequency of using consensus opinions.

Cook’s respondents listed several concerns about the Big Six’s lobbying activities that continued to be concerns in the current study. Her study found that while the Big Six are technically apolitical, some legislators and staffers felt that the Big Six should lobby on a more bi-partisan level (Cook, 1998, p. 190). This concept came out in the current study as well. There was a feeling among staffers that the associations were more comfortable with Democratic legislators and spent more time lobbying them. A major difference from Cook’s study was the addition of APSCU, who is political and actively lobbies on a partisan basis. The general sense in this study was that APSCU has more friends on the Republican side, but that their lobbying efforts were fairly balanced between the two parties.

Respondents in Cook’s (1998) study wished the Big Six would be more proactive in their lobbying (p. 190). This was also raised in the present study. Both the association representatives and the Congressional staffers talked about the need for the Big Six to be more proactive, flexible, and play a bigger role in setting the agenda. The Congressional staffers shared frustrations about the time it often takes for the Big Six to develop consensus decisions, often lessening their influence. Respondents in Cook’s (1998) study also thought the associations could be more gracious and take better advantage of free media opportunities, both of which continue to be concerns and are discussed further below (p. 192). Additionally, Cook (1998) found that many legislators and staffers relied on the associations for information and policy analysis (p. 185). This continued to be the case in the current study. Several Congressional staffers talked about the associations
being good sources of information and the association governmental relations representatives being knowledgeable and valuable resources.

Cook (1998) predicted that the associations’ lobbying activities would shift more to the state level due to some of the weakness cited above and because of changing context in Washington (p. 195). This does not appear to be the case. The lobbying activities at the associations seemed quite focused at the federal level. In fact, only three of the seven associations involved in this study had specific staff members dedicated to state lobbying.

Overall, comparing the findings of the two studies showed that many things have not changed within the Big Six associations. They are largely operating in the same way they did nearly 15 years ago. The biggest difference between the studies is the current study’s inclusion of the for-profit sector. While Cook’s study stated that the two sectors were different, this study showed the differences. These differences included the number of lobbying tactics used, the intensity of lobbying efforts, and reputations of each sector.

**Contribution of using qualitative research.** One of the major contributions of this study is its use of qualitative research methods to explore lobbying tactics and signaling theory. As was discussed earlier, most prior studies using signaling theory have been quantitative. These studies provided valuable insights and guided the development of this study. Using qualitative methods allowed me to go beyond “yes” and “no” questions and get to the “how” and “why” of why certain lobbying tactics were used and what kinds of signals they sent. Being able to immediately follow up on a respondent’s statement provided many opportunities to gather information and ideas that I had not thought to seek.
Utilizing open-ended questions provided deeper data and a greater understanding of the issues. For example, I would not have known about the confusion over the term “grassroots” had I used a survey. This distinction was important in understanding the tactics used. I likely would not have learned about some staffers’ use of double-checking for membership mobilization activities if I had not used qualitative interviews. This discovery had a major impact on how signaling theory applied to this study. Additionally, having one staffer use signaling theory to explain the effectiveness of membership mobilization before I had mentioned signaling was quite powerful. Not only did this support the use of signaling theory to describe membership mobilization, but the fact that the comment was unprovoked showed that this was the staffer’s true understanding of the membership mobilization process. These unprovoked responses added value and authenticity that would not have been easily achieved through quantitative research.

**Policy implications and recommendations**

Because of the struggling economy, pressures to cut federal spending, and the proliferation of new players in higher education policymaking, effective lobbying is becoming increasingly important. This study provides useful information to help guide future lobbying activities of higher education associations and beyond. It is important to note that there are many factors like internal and external politics and the availability of resources that may impact the feasibility of these recommendations, but that is not the focus of this section. Instead, these recommendations are based only on the findings of this study.
Potential improvements for the Big Six. Research is limited on what specific lobbying tactics are effective. This study provided feedback from Congressional staffers about what tactics were perceived to be effective in the higher education arena. This knowledge could be useful to associations and other higher education lobbyists in terms of strategizing their lobbying efforts. Because of the differences in the sectors, recommendations differ for the Big Six and APSCU.

Increase assertiveness. If they want to stay relevant at the federal level, the Big Six associations should be more aggressive and proactive in their efforts, particularly with the increase of for-profit and individual college and university lobbying. This means playing a bigger role in setting the policy agenda for higher education instead of just reacting to the agenda of others. In order to play a larger role in setting the agenda, the Big Six will likely need to increase their level of influence as associations on the Hill. Currently, it appears that they may be getting lost in the crowd, sometimes being overshadowed by their own members.

Perhaps the biggest potential for the Big Six to increase their level of influence lies in membership mobilization. This study showed that this tactic is effective and may be particularly useful for the Big Six because of their reputations, large number of audiences they impact, and their role in their local economy. The selective use of membership mobilization was clearly important to the Congressional staffers, so it may not be necessary for the Big Six to increase the use of this tactic, but instead increase the intensity of this tactic. College and university presidents were clearly viewed as respected and influential messengers and should continue to be utilized in this way by the Big Six. However, there are hundreds of thousands of additional potential messengers
that should also be utilized including current students, alumni, parents, venders, and community leaders. By increasing the numbers of people who participate in membership mobilization activities, it will only strengthen the messages currently being delivered by the presidents.

The Big Six have a strong competitive advantage in this area because of the large audience they impact. Most interest groups do not have this built in constituency available. Having this resource available helps to compensate for their inability to use financial incentive strategies. Obviously, this will require cooperation of the associations’ members, since they are the ones who have access to many of these constituencies. This coordination could occur in two ways. The associations could provide their member institutions with all of the messaging and materials for their members to distribute, or the member institutions could provide the associations with contact lists for the associations to distribute. This would be resource intensive, but still cheaper than most other tactics. Costs could be controlled by relying on e-mail and web-based communications and social media.

**Legislator appreciation.** The Big Six associations should increase their efforts to show appreciation for supportive legislators. There are numerous ways in which this could be done. When the associations host lobby days on the Hill, association members could hand deliver thank you notes to supportive legislators instead of lobbying them. The associations could follow AAU’s lead in highlighting supportive actions of legislators on their Twitter feeds and other social media outlets. Association members should frequently invite legislators to visit campus and provide free media opportunities during those visits. These public displays of appreciation serve the dual purpose of
showing appreciation to the legislator, but also providing indirect re-election support through free media opportunities.

**Timeliness of consensus.** Although staffers appreciated the Big Six working together, these associations were largely seen as being reactive and sometimes irrelevant because by the time they have developed a position policymakers have moved on to the next issue. The Big Six should work to develop ways to reduce the amount of time it takes to make coordinated decisions. There will always be issues that come out of nowhere and cannot be anticipated, but often there is a general sense of what issues are going to be addressed in a legislative session, so the association could develop broad positions at the beginning of the year that could be tweaked during the session, instead of starting from scratch each time. Additionally, if the Big Six are able to play a greater role in agenda setting, they will not need to react to as many policies throughout the year because they will have had more influence in the development of those policies.

**Internal coordination.** The Big Six’s lobbying activities could be improved by infusing governmental relations into all aspects of each association’s work. In this study, it appeared that many of the associations worked in silos, with limited interaction between departments or divisions. By incorporating governmental relations work into membership, research, public relations, etc… it would help create a culture of political thinking. With all staff members thinking in terms of governmental relations, the association representatives will be better informed about what is happening with association members, which may allow them to move more quickly with a stronger voice.

**Potential improvements for APSCU.** The recommendations for APSCU are not as clear-cut. In terms of previous literature on lobbying tactics, they are doing most
everything they can. They utilize a wide variety of tactics and lobby aggressively. While some of the recommendations for the Big Six may also be able to be applied to APSCU, they are largely different.

**Reputation.** The negative reputation of the for-profit sector appeared to be the biggest hindrance to APSCU’s lobbying efforts. In some ways this is not a surprise, because they are a newer player in higher education lobbying and need time to build a reputation. Additionally, the for-profits’ business model is quite different from traditional higher education and may never be fully accepted. While difficult, the best thing APSCU could do to improve its reputation would be to distance itself from the less reputable institutions in the sector. This would do more to help their reputation than the thousands of dollars they spend on campaign contributions, public relations firms, and advertising. This is particularly important in light of the Coalition for Educational Success’ release of voluntary standards for the sector. This group is clearly heeding the suggestions of Congressional staffers to distance themselves from controversial actors and improve the quality of the sector. While no association wants to lose members, with 1,900 members, APSCU is the biggest association in this study, so it could afford to lose some members in an effort to improve not only the reputation of the association, but the sector as a whole.

**Coordination.** Another frequent complaint about the for-profit sector was its lack of coordination. This may be in part due to the lack of recognition of APSCU as the voice of the for-profit sector. Congressional staffers often referred to the for-profit sector as a whole instead of APSCU. This appeared to be an issue of relevance for APSCU. It may benefit APSCU to launch an awareness campaign about the association to brand it as
the source of information and coordination of the for-profit sector. One way to look at this would be moving towards making APSCU the ACE of the for-profit sector, bringing together both for-profit institutions and other organizations interested in for-profit higher education issues under one umbrella. This campaign should not be focused on supporting APSCU’s positions, but instead be an awareness campaign about what the association offers. This campaign should be targeted at Congressional staffers and focused on presenting the association as the source of information about the for-profit sector. Policy proposals regarding the for-profit sector are likely to increase, so legislators and their staffs will be looking for information about the sector. If APSCU is viewed as the voice of the for-profit sector, institutions in the sector will be more likely to participate in association activities and speak with a unified message.

**Membership mobilization.** Finally, APSCU should concentrate on making sure their membership mobilization efforts are sending the strongest signal possible. One solution could potentially alleviate two concerns raised by Congressional staffers. In addition to feeling like APSCU used membership mobilization on every issue, thus weakening its effectiveness, Congressional staffers also talked about APSCU not working with other higher education associations on general higher education issues, like student aid. It is unclear if the higher education associations would be willing to work with APSCU on these issues, but either way APSCU should increase its work on these issues, particularly student aid. Work on these issues should fall primarily into the inside lobbying category. This would make their membership mobilization activities on sector-specific issues stand out because they would not be using this tactic on every issue.
**Potential improvement for all associations.** All of the associations could benefit from talking more about students and the impacts legislation would have on them. Congressional staffers talked about not only wanting to hear more from students, but also about them. Several staffers talked about the associations focusing on institutional issues, instead of the impacts on students. This focus on institutional issues can seem self-serving. These staffers stressed that the impacts on students were of most importance to legislators.

Staffers did acknowledge that it is difficult to mobilize students, but that student stories and voices can be powerful. An easy way for the associations to improve in this way is to simply infuse student impacts and stories into their messaging. Additionally, the associations should find ways to increasingly incorporate students into their membership mobilization. While students are not technically members of the associations they are the primary audience served by their member institutions. Again, this would require coordination between the associations and member institutions. The associations should also increase their work with student groups who already participate in advocacy. This is a natural fit and could benefit all involved. In recent years, the for-profit sector has used students in its advocacy efforts a fair amount, so this recommendation is more for the Big Six. Yet, all associations would benefit on an increased focus on students.

**Future work**

This study helps us to understand what associations are doing in regards to lobbying. This study updated previous work and began to fill in gaps of knowledge, particularly about the lobbying activities of the for-profit higher education sector. This
study also revealed numerous gaps in knowledge and opportunities for future research. Since the study of higher education lobbying has been limited, the areas of potential work in the future are extensive and this study revealed even more areas for future work.

**Earmarks.** Many colleges and universities, particularly those involved in research, actively sought Congressional earmarks independent of their associations. These institution-specific efforts may have limited the amount of attention these institutions were willing to give to their associations. Now that a moratorium on earmarking is in place, it would be interesting to see if the institutions that were involved in seeking earmarks are now more involved in association lobbying efforts. How are these institutions adjusting to the lack of earmarks? Does the absence of earmarks make the associations more relevant? Has the move from Congressional earmarks led individual higher education institutions to lobby more at the agency level instead?

**Collective action.** While collective action theory was not used in this study, two instances of the free-rider problem came out in the data and there are likely more examples that did not come in this study. APSCU is not involved in the Big Six’s joint activities. The issues that APSCU’s efforts focus on tend to be sector-specific and not general higher education issues like threats to student aid. Yet, their member institutions are highly dependent on student aid. Several Congressional staffers felt that the for-profit sector should be involved in these issues because they are currently reaping the benefits of the Big Six’s efforts without expending resources. It would be interesting to look deeper into this dynamic. Would APSCU be welcome if they wanted to participate in the Big Six’s activities? How would the for-profit sector’s involvement in issues like student aid impact the argument?
Another apparent example of the free-rider problem is in regards to NAICU and research funding. Some of NAICU’s members are large, research universities, but NAICU does not work on research issues. Some of these universities are also members of AAU and rely on that organization to work on research funding issues. Yet, AAU’s membership is quite small, leaving some NAICU members to benefit from the work of associations they are not members of (AAU and APLU) who do work on these issues. While this did not appear to be a concern among the association representatives interviewed, it would be interesting to look closer at this issue. How many colleges and universities are benefiting from AAU and APLU’s work on research funding without paying membership dues? Is this a concern or source of frustration at AAU and APLU?

In what other cases is free-riding occurring in higher education lobbying?

**Campaign donations in higher ed.** While the impact of campaign donations on legislative decisions has been studied in regards to other issue areas, it has not been studied in regards to higher education. Historically, this was not a major issue for higher education since most of the players were non-profit and not able to make campaign contributions. The higher education community is changing, with the for-profit sector playing an increasingly active role in higher education lobbying. APSCU and individual for-profit schools are making considerable campaign donations and it is unclear how this is affecting higher education policy. Media accounts have discussed potential impacts and several Congressional staffers expressed concerns about the impact, but it has not been studied in-depth.

Based on interview responses, it was clear that there were a lot of unknowns about the impact of campaign donations in higher education. The increased use of this
tactic in the for-profit sector could dramatically change higher education policymaking and higher education lobbying, particularly for the non-profit associations who are not able to use this tactic or higher education could continue to follow its historical path of being considered a “special” interest where traditional lobbying rules do not apply. Studying the impact of campaign donations in higher education would be particularly interesting, and a unique case, because it is an area that has been largely untouched by this tactic until recently. How are campaign donations from higher education associations and institutions viewed by legislators? Do these donations impact legislation and/or access to legislators? Because higher education has traditionally been seen as a public good, are campaign donations looked upon negatively? Would the Big Six benefit from using campaign donations?

**Lobbying expenditures in higher education.** Expenditures on higher education lobbying have increased dramatically in the past ten years as was illustrated in the introduction of this study. Much of this increase comes from the for-profit sector and individual colleges and universities, but increases have occurred across the board. Most of the associations featured in this study talked about having limited financial resources, so it would be interesting to see how that impacts their effectiveness when competing with other higher education entities who are spending more money. Do higher education actors that spend more money have access to additional lobbying tactics, increasing their influence? Is this increased amount of money spent on lobbying changing the make-up of the higher education lobbying community and is it impacting policy decisions? What is being cut from association and institutional budgets to make up for the increase in lobbying expenditure?
**Good will of higher education.** Historically, many in the higher education community have relied on the goodwill the sector has received from Congress. As discussed in the literature review, higher education was generally seen as a public good and was often immune to drastic budget cuts. However, that view appears to be changing, with drastic cuts to higher education gaining momentum on the Hill and the increased role of the for-profit higher education sector encouraging competition.

Examples of both views were found in interviews with Congressional staffers for this study. How will this changing view of higher education impact future funding? Will higher education be expected to lobby in the same way as other interests? How are lobbyists adjusting, if at all, to this changing view of higher education?

**Other lobbying.** While this study only focused on seven major higher education associations, there are hundreds of higher education associations who focus on a variety of issues and populations. These include minority-serving institutions and specialty associations. It would be interesting to know how the tactics and messages used by these associations mirror or differ from the tactics of the Big Six and APSCU. Additionally, it would be interesting to see how associations’ lobbying activities vary based on the audiences like other federal branches and agencies.

**Impact of for-profit sector on higher education policy.** Perhaps the biggest change in higher education lobbying has been the emergence of the for-profit sector. With their seemingly unlimited resources and ability to utilize campaign contributions, some observers believe the for-profit sector is fundamentally changing the higher education lobbying arena, yet very little research has been conducted. This study confirmed that the for-profit sector is a major player in higher education lobbying and
that little is known about it, particularly APSCU. This study also confirmed that the for-profit sector is more aggressive in its lobbying activities and uses different tactics than the non-profit sector. As a major player in higher education lobbying and one that differs significantly from historic players, it is important gain a better understanding of the for-profit sector and their lobbying activities. Is there room for the non-profit and for-profit sectors to work together on issues of joint concern? Will the increased lobbying efforts of the for-profit sector lead to less distinctions being made between the for-profit and non-profit sectors in policymaking? Does the emergence of the for-profit sector signify a fundamental change in the higher education policymaking?

**Impact of individual college and university lobbying.** Historically, the associations were the leaders in higher education lobbying, but individual colleges and universities have become increasingly active. This was confirmed in interviews with Congressional staffers in this study, with several staffers commenting that they have more contact with college and university representatives both in and outside of their districts than they do with the associations. This was particularly true for the for-profit sector. It is important to understand how this shift impacts higher education policymaking. How does the increased lobbying by individual colleges and universities impact the associations’ efforts? Does this strengthen the associations’ efforts or are the associations losing relevance? Are Congressional offices more receptive to individual colleges and universities, particularly those in their districts? How do college and university presidents and governmental relations professionals view association lobbying?
Higher education messaging. This study was designed to look at all of the lobbying tactics used by the major higher education associations. A lot of their work falls under a general category of communications. It would be interesting to look in-depth at the messages used in higher education lobbying. How do they vary across associations? How do they vary based on the audience? How have they changed over the years? Are new forms of communication like social media changing the way the associations communicate with their members, the press, and with legislators?

Chamber/party/office differences. While this study did not show major differences in the responses of Congressional staffers based on characteristics like chamber (House vs. Senate), party (Democrat vs. Republican), or office type (committee vs. personal office), a few potential differences did arise, but because the sample was small, it was difficult to generalize by category. Multiple Congressional staffers thought that membership mobilization may be more effective in the House and several committee staffers thought it would have greater impact in personal offices because they are more closely connected to constituents. The Republican staffers tended to be slightly less trustful of the Big Six and less apprehensive towards the for-profit sector. Several staffers also thought that the House appeared to be more receptive to the for-profit sector than the Senate. It would be interesting to study these potential differences with a larger sample. By understanding differences in staffer characteristics, associations could tailor their strategies to be more effective based on whom they are targeting. Do certain types of lobbying tactics resonate better with certain types of offices? How does the view of higher education differ based on political party?
Conclusion

Overall, this study found that the associations use a variety of tactics in their lobbying efforts. All of the associations mobilized their membership as part of their lobbying strategies and this tactic was shown to serve as a signal of constituent support to legislators. Signaling theory effectively explained the value of membership mobilization in higher education as long as a repeated game is used to account for association reputation and relationships on the Hill. While the associations used many of the same tactics, significant differences exist between the non-profit and for-profit associations. The for-profit sector uses all tactics at its disposal and uses these tactics more intensely than the non-profit associations.

The for-profits have come on strong and appear to be challenging traditional norms in higher education lobbying. This, combined with the economic and political conditions in Washington, could lead to major changes in the way higher education lobbying is conducted. With an increasing number of groups competing for a decreasing pot of money, effective lobbying is more important than ever. The Big Six associations may need to make adjustments or risk being left behind.
REFERENCES


American Association of State Colleges and Universities. (n.d.). www.aascu.org

American Council on Education. (n.d.). www.acenet.edu


Association of Public and Land Grant Universities. (n.d.). www.aplu.org

Association of Private Sector Colleges and Universities. (n.d.). www.career.org


Citizens for Higher Education. (n.d.) www.citizensforhighered.org


National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (n.d.). www.naicu.edu


Informed Consent

Description and Purpose of the Research

This research is being conducted by Stacy Bennett, under the supervision of Dr. Jennifer Delaney in the Education Policy, Organization and Leadership Department. The project will lead to a case study that will involve interviews and document review as well as interpretation and analysis of information gleaned from these activities. The case will be about higher education lobbying during the 111th Congress. The general purpose of this research is to understand the lobbying tactics used by the higher education community and how those tactics are viewed by Congressional staffers. Interviews will be for about 1 hour.

This interview is for the pilot study portion of this project. Your responses will not be recorded and will be used to gauge the effectiveness of the questions.

Voluntary Nature of Participation

Participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from this study at any time. To withdraw, contact the Project Investigator. Your choice to participate or not will not impact your employment status or relationship with the university.

Confidentiality

In this study, every effort will be made not to reveal personally identifiable information in publications based on this research. To accomplish this, no records will be created or retained that could link you to personally identifiable descriptions, paraphrases, or quotations. Your actions or things you say may be presented without specific reference to you, reference only by pseudonym, or combined anonymously with the actions and words of other participants.
Risks and Benefits

Your participation in this project should not involve risks beyond those of ordinary life. You will not be paid for your participation in this research project, nor is it expected that your participation will bring you any benefits, tangible or otherwise. It is hoped that the results will help the researchers gain a better understanding of higher education lobbying.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns about this research project, please contact the Responsible Project Investigator (RPI) or Project Investigator (PI):

Dr. Jennifer Delaney (RPI): delaneyj@ad.uiuc.edu, 217 333-2155
Stacy Bennett (PI): bennetts@illinois.edu, 217-244-0711

Consent Statement

I have read and understand the forgoing description of this research project, including information about the risks and benefits of my voluntary participation.

__________________________________________  ____________
Signature                                        Date

______________________________________________
Print Name

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant please contact Anne Robertson, Bureau of Educational Research, 217-333-3023, or ber-irb@ed.uiuc.edu or the Institutional Review Board at 217-333-2670 or irb@uiuc.edu

*There are two copies of this form. Please sign both. Return one to the researcher and keep one for your records.*
Informed Consent

Description and Purpose of the Research

This research is being conducted by Stacy Bennett and Dr. Jennifer Delaney in the Education Policy, Organization and Leadership Department. The project will lead to a case study that will involve interviews and document review as well as interpretation and analysis of information gleaned from these activities. The case will be about higher education lobbying during the 111th Congress. The general purpose of this research is to understand the lobbying tactics used by the higher education community and how those tactics are viewed by Congressional staffers. Interviews will be for about 1 hour and audio-recorded with your permission.

Voluntary Nature of Participation

Participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from this study at any time. To withdraw, contact the Project Investigator. Your choice to participate or not will not impact your employment status or relationship with the university.

Confidentiality

Every effort will be made not to reveal personally identifiable information in publications based on this research. Your name and job title will not be reported in the study report or on data records. You will be referred to as a “representative from Association… [insert your association name]” or simply by your association name in the study report. Your actions or things you say may be presented without specific reference to you, referenced only by the above pseudonyms, or combined anonymously with the actions and words of other participants. Because there is a limited number of governmental relations staff at each association, some insiders may be able to make assumptions about the participants’ identities. You will receive a draft of the final report to review for accuracy, and therefore will have an opportunity to express concerns about your representation.

Risks and Benefits
Your participation in this project should not involve risks beyond those of ordinary life. You will not be paid for your participation in this research project, nor is it expected that your participation will bring you any benefits, tangible or otherwise. It is hoped that the results will help the researchers gain a better understanding of higher education lobbying.

**Contact Information**

If you have any questions or concerns about this research project, please contact the Responsible Project Investigator (RPI) or Project Investigator (PI):

Dr. Jennifer Delaney (RPI): delaneyj@ad.uiuc.edu, 217 333-2155  
Stacy Bennett (PI): bennetts@illinois.edu, 217-419-5620

**Consent Statement**

I have read and understand the foregoing description of this research project, including information about the risks and benefits of my voluntary participation.

I give my permission for this interview to be audio taped _____ (Please check to grant consent)

________________________________________  
Signature  

________________________  
Date

________________________
Print Name

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant please contact Anne Robertson, Bureau of Educational Research, 217-333-3023, or ber-irb@ed.uiuc.edu or the Institutional Review Board at 217-333-2670 or irb@uiuc.edu

*There are two copies of this form. Please sign both. Return one to the researcher and keep one for your records.*
Description and Purpose of the Research

This research is being conducted by Stacy Bennett and Dr. Jennifer Delaney in the Education Policy, Organization and Leadership Department. The project will lead to a case study that will involve interviews and document review as well as interpretation and analysis of information gleaned from these activities. The case will be about higher education lobbying during the 111th Congress. The general purpose of this research is to understand the lobbying tactics used by the higher education community and how those tactics are viewed by Congressional staffers. Interviews will be for about 1 hour and audio-recorded with your permission.

Voluntary Nature of Participation

Participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from this study at any time. To withdraw, contact the Project Investigator. Your choice to participate or not will not impact your employment status or relationship with the university.

Confidentiality

Every effort will be made not to reveal personally identifiable information in publications based on this research. Your name and job title will not be reported in the study report or on data records. You will be introduced in the study with information about the congressional body you represent (House or Senate) and the political party of your employer. In the report you will be referred to as a “Staffer A, B, C….”. Your actions or things you say may be presented without specific reference to you, referenced only by the above pseudonyms, or combined anonymously with the actions and words of other participants. Because there are a limited number of Congressional staffers that work on higher education issues, some insiders may be able to make assumptions about the participants’ identities. You will receive a draft of the final report to review for accuracy, and therefore will have an opportunity to express concerns about your representation.

Risks and Benefits
Your participation in this project should not involve risks beyond those of ordinary life. You will not be paid for your participation in this research project, nor is it expected that your participation will bring you any benefits, tangible or otherwise. It is hoped that the results will help the researchers gain a better understanding of higher education lobbying.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns about this research project, please contact the Responsible Project Investigator (RPI) or Project Investigator (PI):

Dr. Jennifer Delaney (RPI): delaneyj@ad.uiuc.edu, 217 333-2155
Stacy Bennett (PI): bennetts@illinois.edu, 217-419-5620

Consent Statement

I have read and understand the forgoing description of this research project, including information about the risks and benefits of my voluntary participation.

I give my permission for this interview to be audio taped _____ (Please check to grant consent)

__________________________________________
Signature

__________________________________________
Date

__________________________________________
Print Name

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant please contact Anne Robertson, Bureau of Educational Research, 217-333-3023, or ber-irb@ed.uiuc.edu or the Institutional Review Board at 217-333-2670 or irb@uiuc.edu

There are two copies of this form. Please sign both. Return one to the researcher and keep one for your records.
Potential interview questions

Association staff:

Begin by introducing myself and explaining my background: worked for 5 years in public affairs and political consulting. Entering 4th year of Doctoral study, focusing on higher education policy.

Thank participant for taking the time to talk with me. Go over consent form (they will have received it prior to interview in an e-mail). Answer any questions and collect signed consent form.

Ask them about their background, when they arrived in their current position and what they did prior to joining the association.

1. Could you please describe your role in the association?

Potential probe:
- How do you go about your daily activities?

2. Could you please tell me about the association’s governmental relations work during the 111th Congress?

3. What approaches did the association use in its governmental relations work?

- Contacting congress personally
- Testifying in congress
- Outreach to the press
- Mobilizing group members
- Advertising policy positions
- Polling group members on policy issues
- Entering coalitions with other groups
- Contributions to politicians or party
- Campaign work

4. What activities does your association use most frequently? Least frequently?
Potential probe:
Approximately how much time does the association spend on each strategy? (percentage)

5. How do your association’s tactics compare to other higher education associations?

Potential probes:
- Similarities?
- Differences?

6. How do you decide which tactics to use?

Potential probes:
- Does it depend on the issue?
- Does it depend on the political atmosphere?
- Does it depend on the resources available?

7. Grassroots outreach is defined as organizing your membership to contact their elected officials about a specific issue. How does your association use grassroots outreach? *(If the interviewee has already mentioned grassroots outreach, I will follow up on previous comments)*

8. What are the benefits of using grassroots outreach?

9. What are the challenges of using grassroots outreach?

10. How do you decide when to use grassroots outreach?

11. How do you think Congressional staffers interpret your use of grassroots outreach?

Potential probes:
- Letters?
- Phone calls?
- E-mails?
- Rallies?
- Students?
- Alumni?
- University representatives?

12. How well do you think your grassroots outreach efforts signal constituent support to legislators and their staffs?
Potential probes:
Does it impact:
- legislation?
- the legislative agenda?
- salience of issues?

13. How do you think the higher education associations could improve their lobbying efforts?

14. Do you have anything else to add or questions for me?

Congressional staff:

Begin by introducing myself and explaining my background: worked for 5 years in public affairs and political consulting. Entering 4th year of Doctoral study, focusing on higher education policy.

Thank participant for taking the time to talk with me. Go over consent form (they will have received it prior to interview in an e-mail). Answer any questions and collect signed consent form.

Ask them about their background, when they arrived in their current position and what they did prior.

1. Could you please describe your role with the member/committee?

2. How much time do you spend on higher education issues?

3. Do you consider governmental relations officers from higher education associations to be lobbyists?

4. What approaches did the association use in its governmental relations work?
Potential probes:
- Contacting congress personally
- Testifying in congress
- Outreach to the press
- Mobilizing group members
- Advertising policy positions
- Polling group members on policy issues
• Entering coalitions with other groups
• Contributions to politicians or party
• Campaign work

5. What activities does your association use most frequently? Least frequently?

6. How are tactics similar among the higher education associations?

7. How are tactics different among the higher education associations?

8. Grassroots outreach is defined as organizing a group’s membership to contact their elected officials about a specific issue. How do the associations use grassroots outreach?

9. How do you view the use of grassroots outreach in general?
Potential probes:
  - Letters?
  - Phone calls?
  - E-mails?
  - Rallies?
  - Students?
  - Alumni?
  - University representatives?

10. How do you view the use of grassroots outreach by the higher education associations?

11. How does the Committee/Congressman (woman)/Senator view the use of grassroots outreach by the higher education associations?

12. Does the use of grassroots outreach signal constituent support for an issue?
   Does it impact:
     - legislation?
     - the legislative agenda?
     - salience of issues?

13. How do you think the higher education associations could improve their lobbying efforts?
14. Do you have anything else to add or any questions for me?

Coding

Once the interviews were transcribed and summaries were member-checked, the summaries were coded. The codes used were developed from prior literature and included:

- Decision on tactic
- Lobbying tactics
- General grassroots outreach
- Higher education grassroots outreach
- Big Six consensus
- Campaign donations
- Signaling, timing of lobbying
- Use of social media

When coding the data, attempts were made to fit the data into one of these categories. If data did not fit into one of these categories, emergent categories were developed.
July 14, 2011

Stacy Bennett
Education Policy, Organization and Leadership Department
362 College of Education
MC708

Dear Stacy,

On behalf of the College of Education Human Subjects Committee, I have reviewed and approved your modifications to your research project entitled “Higher education association lobbying: Grassroots lobbying as a signal of constituent support”. This project continues to meet the exemption criteria for federal regulation 46.101(b)2 for research involving the use of normal interviews where the identity of the participant is protected.

No changes may be made to your procedures without prior Committee review and approval. You are also required to promptly notify the Committee of any problems that arise during the course of the research. Your project number will be 4826 and exempt projects are normally approved for 3 years with annual reports requested. Please don’t hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Best regards,

Anne S. Robertson
Coordinator, College of Education Human Subjects Review Committee

Cc: Dr. Jennifer Delaney
Appendix D

COMBINED MEDIA COVERAGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Association</th>
<th>Chronicle</th>
<th>Inside Higher Ed</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACE quoted</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACE mention</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AACC quoted</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AACC mention</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AASCU quoted</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AASCU mention</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAICU quoted</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAICU mention</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APLU/NASULGC quoted</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APLU/ NASULGC mention</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAU quoted</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAU mention</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APSCU/CCA quoted</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APSCU/CCA mention</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other associations/ groups</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign for Environmental Literacy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Progress</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Public Interest Research Groups</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sallie Mae</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students for Academic Choice</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>America's Student Loan Providers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council for Economic Opportunity in Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Association for College Admission Counseling</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The National Consumer Law Center</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institute for College Access and Success</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coalition for Education Success</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States Student Association</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida College System Council of Presidents</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Alliance of Community and Technical Colleges</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nexus Research and Policy Center</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAACP</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Council of La Raza</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexican American National Association</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bipac</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization Name</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association of American Medical Colleges</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice of Adult Learners United to Educate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Immigration Law Center</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federation for American Immigration Reform</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Bankers Association</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Medical Student Association</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee of Interns and Residents (SEIU)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Association of University Professors</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Association of College Stores</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center for American Progress</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Veterans of America</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The American Medical Association</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universities Allied for Essential Medicines</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Negro College Fund</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Community College Alliance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recording Industry Association of America</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computing Research Association</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Association for the Advancement of Science</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FinAid</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AARP</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biotechnology Industry Organization</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American College Health Association</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Progress</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign for the Future of Higher Education</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California Faculty Association</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Faculty Majority</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council for Opportunity in Education</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Direct Student Loan Coalition</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Association of College and University Business Officers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Sector</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach for America</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Pacific Islander American Association of Colleges and Universities</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Negro College Fund</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Project on Student Debt</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MANA: A National Latina Organization</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Black Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Organization of Black Elected Legislative</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainbow PUSH Coalition</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Invincibles</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association of Community College Trustees</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization Name</td>
<td>Vote 1</td>
<td>Vote 2</td>
<td>Vote 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council for Higher Education Accreditation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountable America</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliance for Economic Stability</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center on Education and the Workforce at Georgetown University</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coalition for Consumer Bankruptcy Debtor Education</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Bankers Association</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council for Advancement and Support of Education</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Coalition for Adjunct Equity</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Federation of Teachers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Board</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association of Colleges of Nursing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Finance Council</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Association of Student Loan Administrators</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Council of Higher Education Loan Programs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security on Campus</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurgood Marshall College Fund</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Computing Project</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Colleges and Universities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College Name</th>
<th>Vote 1</th>
<th>Vote 2</th>
<th>Vote 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University of Arizona</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaplan Inc</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corinthian Colleges</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State University of New York system</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Texas</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthem Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keiser University</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devry</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Management Corporation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Education Corporation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apollo group/ U Phoenix</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capella University</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walden University</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Alabama</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Mississippi</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi State</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Mississippi Medical Center</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Southern Mississippi</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stevens-Henager College</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Joaquin Valley College</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miller-Motte College</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argosy University</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lobbying Tactics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign donations</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grassroots</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct lobbying</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue report/study</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiring outside lobbyists/pr</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter to DOE</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter to Hill</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testifying at hearings/meetings</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposing legislation/alternatives</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiring insiders</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facilities funding</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student loans</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For-profits</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lobbying expenditures</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research funding</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical education</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student aid</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dream act</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor laws</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit card fees/regulations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical research</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community college</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online learning</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student health insurance</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HBCUs</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Based on 124 articles about lobbying found in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Inside Higher Ed* between January 20, 2009 and June 30, 2011.*