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National Service Recommendations

Minneapolis Community College Student Congress

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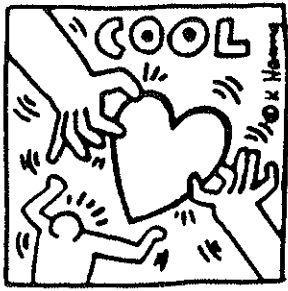
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National Service Recommendations

On April 10, 1993 the Campus Outreach Opportunity League (COOL) and the Minneapolis Community College Student Senate (MCCSS) hosted a forum of approximately 30 students and community service professionals from around the state of Minnesota to discuss the proposed National Service plan and its impact on America's financial aid system for higher education.

Specific recommendations from forum participants:

- Since students and communities will be most directly affected, it is imperative that all segments of the federal government involved in developing the plan (e.g. the Commission on National and Community Service, the White House Office of National Service, and Congress) hold open discussions to gather input from the public. Prospective national service participants and community agencies wishing to testify must be given priority when determining the speakers list.
- Current college work-study programs should be considered as a model for part-time national service. The lower administrative cost would allow more students to participate and permits students to earn their tuition as they need it as opposed to accumulating a large debt to be paid off later.
- The language of the national service debate must be broadened to include non-traditional students. Adults over the age of 25 must be given the same opportunity to participate and earn money for their education. Since community college students make up the majority of Americans involved in higher education, their special concerns must be addressed.
- Provisions must be made to support participants with families. They should receive a larger living stipend based on the number of children they have, similar to the armed service's pay scale.
- Participants must see the national service experience as more than just a job. Applicants must be screened to ensure that their attitudes towards service and the community where they will be working are not detrimental to the individuals they will be working with.
- Service placements must reflect the skills and interests of the individual participants.

- In the past, students have faced higher tuition with the false promises that financial aid will offset the increase. Extra caution must ensure that the amount of financial aid grants will not be reduced with the expectation that students will be able to handle more loans.
- Students who do not graduate must be given the opportunity to participate and reduce their outstanding loan commitments.
- The amount of post-service benefit should not be twice as high for college graduates. If there is a difference between high school and college graduates, then all higher education degrees (associate, bachelor, and technical) should be rewarded equally.
- Special concern must be taken to ensure opportunities for differently-abled individuals.
- The federal and state offices administering the programs should be as small and flexible as possible. Oversight boards on both the state and federal levels must include students and representatives of community agencies.
- In order to determine the amount of loans they can realistically afford to take out, potential participants should be allowed to apply up to two years before they graduate.

For further information please contact:

Joel Rittle, Associate Programs Director, COOL 612-624-3018

Kathlene O'Connor, Communications Director, MCCSS 612-341-7074