

Wednesday, January 15, 2014

## AASCU Update



To: AASCU Presidents, Chancellors and Government Relations staff

From: Ed Elmendorf, Senior Vice President of Government Relations and Policy Analysis  
Barmak Nassirian, Director of Federal Relations and Policy Analysis  
Makeese Motley, Assistant Director of Federal Relations and Policy Analysis

Re: FY 2014 Government Funding Bill/Immigration/College Rating System

Date: 1/14/2014

### Immigration Reform

AASCU expects there to be a coordinated campaign among several organizations to push for a vote on comprehensive immigration reform. For this push, AASCU has been asked to identify Presidents that would be willing to do an op-ed piece on the importance of immigration reform. An immigration deal could have significant repercussions for higher education in International Education and STEM. In addition, many AASCU students would directly benefit from provisions related to the DREAM Act, H-1B visas, and green cards. If you are interested in doing an op-ed please contact Makeese Motley, Assistant Director of Federal Relations at [motley@aacu.org](mailto:motley@aacu.org) or via phone 202-478-4652.

### Government Funding Bill

On January 13, House Appropriations Committee Chairman Hal Rogers, Senate Appropriations Committee Chairwoman Barbara Mikulski, House Appropriations Ranking Member Nita Lowey, and Senate Appropriations Ranking Member Richard Shelby announced the release of the fiscal year 2014 consolidated appropriations bill otherwise known as an "omnibus" spending bill. This bill follows the framework of the budget agreement that was negotiated between Senator Patty Murray and Rep. Paul Ryan in December. \$1.02 trillion is provided to fund the federal government for the 2014 budget year. The House of Representatives is expected to vote on Wednesday, January 15, with a follow up vote in the Senate on Thursday or Friday of this week. Some key highlights for Higher Education:

Labor, HHS, and Education Funding Levels

<b>2013 Enacted level:</b>	<b>\$156.6 billion</b>
<b>2014 Committee mark:</b>	<b>N/A-No vote taken in committee</b>
<b>2014 Omnibus:</b>	<b>\$156.8 billion</b>

- Would provide an additional \$1-billion for the National Institutes of Health and raise the maximum Pell Grant by an estimated \$85, to \$5,730. Additionally, \$1 million is appropriated to study the effect of regulations and reporting requirements on colleges by requiring the Education Department to report on enrollment, graduation and default rates for Pell Grant recipients, disaggregated by institution
- \$49-million increase for Federal Work-Study and a \$37-million increase for supplemental education grants, while raising spending on the TRIO college-preparatory programs by \$42-million.
- GEAR-UP, a \$15 million increase

- Strengthening institutions would receive increases of \$2.7 million, HBCUs \$7.7 million, HBCU graduate institutions nearly \$2 million, Asian American \$108 thousand, Hispanic Americans up by \$3.4 million
- Includes \$75-million for President Obama's proposed "First in the World" grant program, aimed at encouraging colleges and universities to take steps to improve educational outcomes and reduce the net price paid by students and families
- \$2.6 billion for job training through WIA Training and Employment Formula Grant program, which is \$10 million less than the 2013 enacted level but \$121 million more than the post-sequester level.
- \$14.4 billion for Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies, which is \$103 million less than the 2013 enacted level but \$625 million more than the post-sequester level.
- \$11.5 billion for Special Education state grants (IDEA), which is \$82 million less than the 2013 enacted level but \$498 million more than the post-sequester level.
- \$2.36 billion for Child Care & Development Block Grants, which is \$36 million more than the 2013 enacted level.

For additional information please see these links below

<http://www.aascu.org/policy/federal-policy/outreach/FY2014CEfTable.pdf>

<http://democrats.appropriations.house.gov/top-news/summary-of-omnibus-appropriations-act/>

<http://appropriations.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=366721>

### **Administration's Proposed Postsecondary Institutions Rating System (PIRS)**

AASCU supports federal efforts at better gatekeeping, improved accountability, and greater transparency for colleges and universities participating in federal student assistance. As public institutions, our members respect and understand the public's right to demand good educational and economic outcomes for students after they leave their institutions. AASCU believes that effective accountability metrics can be devised in a manner that provides meaningful information to the public and respects the heterogeneity of institutional missions.

The Administration's proposed Postsecondary Institution Rating System can be a component of a broader effort to promote accountability and transparency. It will, however, not be a substitute for good front-end monitoring and enforcement to weed out waste, fraud, and abuse.

Devising a rating system that can equitably and effectively capture the relevant attributes of a large and diverse universe of postsecondary institutions will be a daunting task. By its very nature, a rating system must simplify inherently complex qualities and measures it factors into account, and is thus susceptible to distortions that may prove prejudicial or problematic. Data issues, in terms of their availability, quality, reliability, and privacy consequences, represent a huge challenge in setting up any rating system, and deserve very careful consideration.

The inherent difficulties of constructing a meaningful ratings system need not, however, be fatal. It would be possible to capture a subset of the most essential attributes of institutions and combine them into a rating that involves minimal normative judgments.

The Administration's thinking on the configuration of the rating system has not been revealed, and little is known about the process and the timeline for the launch of the rating system. AASCU is actively engaged with the Administration and other stakeholders, and will attempt to be helpful to the effort as appropriate. While we are concerned about possible adverse consequences of the proposed system, we are willing to give the Administration a chance to produce a proposal, and will attempt to be helpful to the efforts as appropriate.

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**Contact Us**

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#### **SUMMARY**

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