Community College Federal Legislative Priorities

Enhance Federal Funding for Community Colleges and Students

- Maintain the FY14 funding level for the Pell Grant program, which, combined with mandatory funding, will provide a projected $100 increase in the maximum award next year.

- Reinstate funding for the Perkins CTE program to pre-sequester levels. This would require an increase over the current (FY14) level.

- Reinvest in the Adult Basic Education program, starting with restoring sequester cuts in FY15.

- Bolster funding for the HEA Title III-A Strengthening Institutions program, along with funding for the other Title III programs and Title V, Hispanic-Serving Institutions.

- Preserve funding, at a minimum, for the Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, Federal Work-Study, TRIO, GEAR UP, the NSF ATE program, and the Workforce Investment Act job training programs.

Strengthen the Pell Grant Program

- Restore Pell Grant eligibility for “ability-to-benefit” students and reinstate the year-round Pell Grant.

- Increase the maximum number of semesters that a student can remain eligible for a Pell Grant from 12 to 14 semesters.

Improve the Higher Education Act

- Give institutions more tools to limit unnecessary student loan indebtedness and lower aggregate loan limits for community college students.

- Change the calculation for federal student loan cohort default rates to factor in the low borrowing rates at community colleges.

- Improve consumer information to help prospective students and their parents with the college and program selection process.

- Encourage states to maintain higher education funding for public colleges and universities.

Improve Higher Education Tax Incentives

- Pass the Student and Family Tax Simplification Act and similar efforts to streamline, improve, and extend tax-based aid.

- Preserve the charitable deduction, since donations to community college foundations provide critical funding for programs and scholarships.

- Renew benefits associated with the IRA charitable rollover, which allows older individuals to donate up to $100,000 from their Roth IRA accounts to public charities, including community colleges.

Expand Job Training Opportunities at Community Colleges

- Enact dedicated federal support for job training at community colleges to replace the expiring TAACCCT grants.
Help Community Colleges Better Serve Veteran Students

• Increase funding for the Centers of Excellence for Veterans Student Success and Veterans Upward Bound under the Federal TRIO programs. Continue the Veterans Administration’s Veterans Retraining Assistance Program.

Reauthorize the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act

• Establish uniform accountability measures within the Perkins CTE programs and across related programs, drawing from the Voluntary Framework of Accountability.

• Increase focus on high-quality CTE programs at the national level while preserving flexibility at the local and state levels to deliver these programs.

• Facilitate, but not require, secondary/postsecondary consortia.

• Make the Perkins CTE application process more rigorous, particularly with regards to showing the alignment between funded programs and industry needs, rather than requiring competitive grants.

Pass the DREAM Act

• Provide an expedited path to citizenship for undocumented students who were brought to this country as children.

• Remove the federal ban on offering in-state tuition to undocumented students.