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Washington Watch

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Congress will be returning to the nation's capital next week with only a few weeks before the August recess to hammer out a budget agreement for FY 2018 and mark up the various appropriations bills, including the Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill. The House Budget Committee and House Appropriations Committee have both scheduled tentative markups for next week and the following week. Earlier this week, AACC and ACCT sent a joint letter to the chairs and ranking members of the House Appropriations Committee and the Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Subcommittee requesting their continued support for community college priority programs. For more details, [click here](#).

Remedial Education Bill Introduced

Last month, Rep. Donald Norcross (D-NJ), a member of the House Education and the Workforce Committee, introduced the [Remedial Education Improvement Act](#). The bill (H.R. 2961) would amend the Higher Education Act (HEA) to reform remedial education and establish a competitive grant program to institutions to "develop or improve a remedial education program that includes evidence-based, effective strategies for providing instruction to ensure that students are prepared for courses at the postsecondary level." Five program models mentioned include aligning coursework, accelerated coursework, modular instruction, co-requisite enrollment, and systemic reform.

The Community College Success Act

On June 20, Rep. Grace Meng (D-NY) introduced legislation that would create a grant program to help

fund “comprehensive support services and resources designed to increase transfer and graduation rates at community colleges.” Her bill, the [Community College Success Act](#) (H.R. 2960), has several Democratic co-sponsors including Rep. Bobby Scott (D-VA), the ranking member of the House Education and the Workforce Committee.

U.S. Department of Education News

One-Year Delay in Gainful Employment Regulation Deadlines—The U.S. Department of Education (ED) [announced](#) that deadlines for certain gainful employment provisions, which had already been deferred to July 1, 2017, from an early deadline, are delayed for another year (i.e., until July 1, 2018). This July 5 notification in the [Federal Register](#) pertains specifically to submission of alternative earnings appeals and certain disclosure requirements under 34 CFR 668.412(d) and (e). These apply to promotional materials and direct distribution to prospective students, respectively. Unchanged are the requirements that institutions post completed GE Disclosure templates on their websites and distribute student warnings for failing programs.

Pell Grant Program Shrinks in Amount and Number of Recipients—For the fourth consecutive year, total Pell Grant expenditures and the number of recipients has declined. According to the Federal Pell Grant 2015-16 [Annual Data Report](#), Pell Grant expenditures fell below \$30 billion (\$30.6 billion in 2014-15, compared to \$28.6 billion in 2015-16) and the total number of recipients dropped below 8 million, from 8.3 million in 2014-15 down to 7.7 million in 2015-16. The decline was primarily felt by proprietary institutions and public 2-year institutions. Public 2-year colleges received \$8.255 billion in 2015-16, compared to \$9.422 billion in 2014-15, representing a slight decline in the share of total expenditures from 31% to 29%. There also was a 2% decrease in the share of Pell Grant recipients at public 2-year institutions, from 34% in 2014-15 to 32% in the most recent academic year. The average grant actually increased across all institutions (+\$45) as well as public 2-year colleges (+\$37).

Glossary of Federal Student Aid Terms—ED announced the publication of the latest volume of the [Federal Student Aid Handbook](#). This 80-page appendix serves as a veritable treasure trove of acronyms and terms most commonly used by student aid program administrators.

Experiences and Outcomes of Early Millennials Over a Decade—In a [275-page report](#) based on data from the Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002), ED examined the educational attainment and other milestones in the lives of the sophomore class of 2002 through 2012. For context, the report points out that millennials were born in the mid-1980s and grew up during a tumultuous period, which included the dot-com bubble, the 9/11 attacks, and the great recession. A decade after their sophomore year in high school, 84% had enrolled in postsecondary education, with a majority earning a credential. More than a third (36%) first enrolled in a public 2-year institution and slightly less than half (47%) earning a credential. The report also contains information about student demographics as well as employment outcomes, and coming of age experiences, such as living arrangements and military service.

Policy Related Reports

Low-income Students at Public Institutions Benefit from Federal Work-Study—In a recent Brookings Institution report, [Federal Work-Study: Past Its Prime, or Ripe for Renewal](#), the author proposes to modify the Federal Work-Study program. Based on independent analysis and numerous studies of the effectiveness of FWS on college completion, the author urges policymakers instead of cutting the program funding in half as proposed in the administration’s budget or simply renewing it as is, to better spend their energy on “innovating, experimenting, and rigorously evaluating this half-century old program that still appears to have a valuable place in a modern college completion and career readiness agenda.”

Symposium on Higher Education Policy Reforms—This [third issue](#) in the Unleashing Opportunity series of National Affairs is focused on policy reforms intended to strengthen higher education. Topics include reforming needs-based aid, student loans, and tax credits as well as accountability policies and regulations. AACC supports some of the specific reforms recommended, such as year-round Pell (the

article was published before the passage of the year-round Pell provision in the FY 2017 appropriations bill), simplification of the loan process, and more data transparency, including a student unit record system and earnings information.

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