



2010 COMMUNITY COLLEGE FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Enact the American Graduation Initiative

The American Graduation Initiative (AGI) would provide unprecedented federal support totaling \$12 billion for community colleges to help return the nation to world leadership in higher education attainment by 2020. The AGI is a significant component of the FY 2010 budget reconciliation legislation (H.R. 3221; no Senate bill yet), which Congress should enact as soon as possible. Congress should provide the full \$12 billion for AGI and final AGI legislation should allow community colleges to compete for grants throughout the ten-year program, rather than directing all grants to states for years 5-10 of the program, as in H.R. 3221. The matching requirement for these grants should be no more than 1 to 3. Community colleges should be allowed to use facility funds as grants with a match of 3 to 1 by all non-federal sources. The misguided transfer reporting language in H.R. 3221 should be altered.

Help Community Colleges Respond to Huge Demand For Education and Training

During the last two years, community colleges have seen a 16.9% enrollment increase as the economic downturn has caused more and more students to seek their programs. Simultaneously, the colleges have been faced with significant state and local budget reductions. As a result, colleges cannot retain or hire sufficient numbers of faculty and staff to meet the student influx, denying access to thousands of students. The House-passed Jobs for Main Street Act (H.R. 2847) includes a \$23 billion Education Jobs Fund that would provide badly needed financial support; H.R. 2847 should be enacted along with the Community College Emergency Stabilization Fund Act (H.R. 4196), which authorizes a new program designed specifically to help community colleges provide needed services to help mitigate the recession's impact.

Increase the Pell Grant

Pell Grants help more than 2.5 million low- and moderate-income community college students attend college each year by helping cover the cost of tuition, books and equipment, and living expenses. Pell Grants are the foundation of the federal student aid system and represent the nation's commitment to providing access to college for all qualified students. Congress needs to provide sustained increases to the maximum grant, which will reach \$5,550 for the 2010-11 award year. Community colleges support the Administration's budget reconciliation recommendation to increase the Pell Grant maximum each year by an amount equal to the Consumer Price Index plus one percent.

Reauthorize the Workforce Investment Act

Congress should reauthorize the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) this year and preserve the Career Pathways Innovation Fund (CPIF) at \$125 million to enhance the ability of workers to obtain postsecondary education and training. WIA reauthorization legislation should prioritize the community college role in delivering training services and deliver integrated support for adult basic education that emphasizes bridges to postsecondary education and training. Public institutions of higher education should automatically be eligible training providers. The federal government should directly support One-Stop Career Centers rather than diverting resources from other critical programs.

Extend and Improve Higher Education Tax Incentives

The \$2,500 American Opportunity Tax Credit (AOTC), included in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, replaced the Hope Scholarship tax credit, but expires in 2010. The AOTC provides \$2,500 each year, covers course materials as well as tuition, and is partially refundable—all extremely positive features. The Administration proposes to make the AOTC permanent and index it to inflation, which AACC and ACCT strongly support. The credit should be further improved to ensure that needy grant recipients, particularly Pell Grant recipients, are eligible for the credit. Current law largely precludes this.

Strengthen the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act Programs

Congress should continue its bipartisan support for the improvement of career and technical education (CTE) programs at the secondary and postsecondary levels by increasing funding for the Perkins CTE programs in FY 2011 to \$1.4 billion. The Basic State Grant, Tech-Prep and other Perkins programs help community colleges improve their CTE offerings that lead to high-demand, high-skilled occupations. Congress should maintain a separate line item for Tech-Prep.

Enhance Funding for Higher Education and Training Programs

Congress should continue to support the Career Pathways Innovation Fund (formerly CBJTG) at \$125 million. Congress should increase funding for the Advanced Technological Education (ATE) program to \$76 million in FY 2011. Increased funding also is needed for key higher education programs such as Title III-A (Strengthening Institutions), Hispanic-Serving Institutions, Predominantly Black Institutions, and workforce training programs.

Pass the DREAM Act

The Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act (H.R. 1751, S. 729) provides a path to legal status for thousands of undocumented students who were brought to the U.S. as children, worked their way through high school, and now face an uncertain future. The DREAM Act would return to states the decision of whether to extend in-state tuition to undocumented students. The DREAM Act has bipartisan support and should be enacted now.

Support Community College Sustainability Initiatives

The Community College Energy Training Act (S. 1097, H.R. 3731) would authorize a competitive grant program for community colleges to develop their renewable energy training programs and related sustainability initiatives. Congress should support this legislation, which would expand community college capacity to provide workforce training and education in alternative energy, energy-efficient construction, sustainable energy technologies, and other “green” industries, and bolster college initiatives to improve sustainable practices on their campuses and in their communities.

Improve the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

The reauthorized ESEA (“No Child Left Behind”) should reflect the critical role played by community colleges in working with the nation’s K-12 system. Community colleges have a great interest in partnering with the federal government through the ESEA to offer more dual-enrollment programs and early college high schools, as well as playing an enhanced role in teacher preparation and professional development linked to high standards. Community colleges support the Administration’s College Pathways and Accelerated Learning program, which is focused on dual enrollment and early-college high schools.