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National Community College Associations Support Year-Round Pell Grant Restoration

The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) and Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) commend Senator Patty Murray (D-Wash.) and Senator Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) for their inclusion of a provision to reinstate Year-Round Pell Grants in the fiscal year (FY) 2017 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill.

For community college students, the Federal Pell Grant program remains by far the most important student aid program. Pell Grants assist more than seven million postsecondary students each year, and approximately one-third of these students attend community colleges. Pell Grants represent the federal government’s commitment to ensuring that qualified students from all income levels are able to afford college.

“The Year-Round Pell Grant provides invaluable aid to students seeking to stay in school and progress more rapidly to attainment a credential,” AACC President and CEO Walter Bumphus said. “The Year-Round Pell Grant has long garnered strong bipartisan support from Congress. The elimination of Year-Round Pell in 2011 was unfortunate, and solely an economic decision. Given the current fiscal state of the Pell Grant program, we now have a momentous opportunity to reverse those cuts.”

“Year-Round Pell offers students much-needed flexibility in accessing financial aid. This is particularly important for nontraditional students,” said ACCT President and CEO J. Noah Brown. “Research has shown consistently that staying and making progress in college are important for completion. This is especially true for the neediest students who are often served by community colleges.”

When Year-Round Pell was suddenly eliminated in 2011, many community colleges were in the process of planning for and implementing Year-Round Pell programs. These activities could resume immediately upon reinstatement of the program. By expediting time-to-degree, students may also more rapidly enter the workforce, lowering overall opportunity costs.

AACC and ACCT hope to work with Congress over the next several months to craft a final funding bill for FY 2017 that provides the best possible outcome for students. We urge Congress to maintain support for the Pell Grant program and to block attempts to rescind or reallocate surplus Pell Grant funds.
About AACC

Founded in 1920, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) is the primary nonprofit advocacy organization for community colleges at the national level, representing nearly 1,200 two-year, associate degree-granting institutions and more than 13 million students. AACC’s mission is to “Build a Nation of Learners by Advancing America’s Community Colleges” by supporting and promoting its member colleges through policy initiatives, innovative programs, research and information, and strategic outreach to business and industry as well as the national news media. For more information, visit www.aacc.nche.edu.

About ACCT

Founded in 1972, the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) is the nonprofit educational organization of governing boards, representing more than 6,500 elected and appointed trustees of community, technical, and junior colleges in the United States and beyond. ACCT’s purpose is to strengthen the capacity of community, technical, and junior colleges and to foster the realization of their missions through effective board leadership at local, state, and national levels. For more information, visit www.acct.org. Follow ACCT on Twitter at www.twitter.com/CCTrustees.