



AACC Advocacy Priorities Update (Advocates in Action) September 10, 2026

David Baime, SVP, Public Purpose and National Advocacy
Jim Hermes, Associate Vice President, Government Relations
Kathryn Gimborns, Director, Government Relations





AGENDA

- **Legislative Landscape**
- **Blue Sheet Priorities**
 - **FY 27 Appropriations:**
 - Fund the Pell Grant Shortfall
 - Increase the SCCTG Program
 - Reject Proposed Cuts
 - Increase the NSF ATE Program
 - **OMB Uniform Grant Regulations**
 - **Farm Bill**
 - **College Transparency Act**
 - **Tax-Free Pell Grant**
- **Regulatory Issues**





Congressional Landscape

- **Congress in DC briefly before adjourning until after elections**
 - House work period ends and Senate returns next week
- **Continuing resolution funds government through Dec. 11 and removes threat of Oct. 1 shutdown**
- **Funding and other decisions punted until after elections**
- **Unproductive Congress overall**





FY 27 Appropriations

- **Senate Appropriations Committee leaders unable to agree on top-line funding levels**
 - **Funding bills ultimately need bipartisan support to pass in Senate**
 - **Parity between defense and non-defense spending remains an issue**
 - **Markups delayed due to impasse and other issues – may not happen at all**
 - **Unlikely to see Senate bills until after elections**





FY 27 Appropriations

- **Fund the Pell Grant shortfall in full**
 - Program faces ~\$17 billion cumulative shortfall in FYs 26 and 27
 - House bill provided funds for a one-year fix and increased Pell maximum award by \$50
 - “Paid for” by eliminating in-school interest subsidies on Direct Loans
 - Final funding legislation should address the shortfall in FY 27 and for the foreseeable future
 - Adding funds to the program’s baseline essentially accomplishes this





FY 27 Appropriations

- **Increase the Strengthening Community College Training Grants by \$10 million**
 - Program currently funded at \$65 million
 - High-quality applications outstrip supply
 - FY 25 funds focused on Workforce Pell – possibly true for FY 26 also
 - House bill increases program to \$75 million
 - Senate should follow suit





FY 27 Appropriations

- **Reject cuts to critical investments in community colleges and students**
 - **House bill eliminates or deeply cuts Adult Basic Education, Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, Federal Work Study**
- **Provide level funding for these and other programs**
 - **House - \$11 million increase for HEA Title III-A SIP program**
 - **Modest gains for TRIO, GEAR UP and Perkins CTE**





FY 27 Appropriations

- **Provide \$85 million for the National Science Foundation's Advanced Technological Education (ATE) program**
 - **Program focuses on educating highly qualified science and engineering technicians in advanced technology fields**
 - **Funded at \$75 million for several years – overdue for an increase**
 - **House bill would eliminate program (and NSF STEM funding overall)**
 - **Senate position TBD**





Uniform Guidance Regulations

- **Proposed rule would have far-reaching consequences for the grantmaking process across federal government**
- **AACC commented with other higher education organizations expressing deep concern about several aspects of rule**
 - **Replacing merit review with political oversight**
 - **Facilitating arbitrary grant terminations**
 - **Requiring approval for all “incurred costs”**
- **Continuing resolution blocks implementation of rule until Dec. 11**
 - **Urge Congress to extend delay for all of FY 27 in final funding bill**
 - **Blocking language should be expanded to include proposed EDGAR regulations**





ED General Administrative Regulations

- **ED August 24th NPRM independently implements some of the Uniform Guidance regulation's troubling provisions**
 - NSF has also proposed similar rule, possibly more to come
- **Key provisions include:**
 - Codifying ED's ability to terminate grants for "convenience"
 - Grant notices and competitive priorities no longer published in *Federal Register*
 - Priority given to proposals that limit indirect cost rates
 - States and subgrantees must comply with executive orders
 - Greater Secretarial discretion over continuation awards
 - Grantees must ensure that hiring, compensation, admissions, and promotions are based on "merit and high standards"





College Transparency Act

- **Longtime AACCC priority would create a federal student-level data network generating accurate, meaningful data on postsecondary outcomes, including post-completion earnings**
- **Legislation would facilitate and improve other federal programs, such as Workforce Pell**
- **Longstanding bipartisan, bicameral support**
- **In July, Senate HELP Committee approved the CTA with near-unanimous support**
- **Path forward in House remains murky; Rep. Foxx longstanding staunch opponent**

- **ASK: Thank Senate HELP Committee members for a positive markup, thank current cosponsors in House and Senate for their support, urge future support**





Farm Bill

- **Farm Bill should authorize new federal support for community college agricultural programs**
- **The Senate Ag Committee released an updated version of the *Agricultural Act of 2026***
 - **Contains an authorization for a new capacity building grant program for community college agriculture and natural resources programs**
 - **Very closely modeled after the AACCC-endorsed *Community College Agricultural Advancement Act***
 - **The markup was scheduled for August but has been postponed until September**
- **Earlier this year, the House passed its *Food, Farm and National Security Act***
 - **Contains authorization for a new program to provide funding for community college agriculture and natural resources programs; less focused on capacity, more focused on work-based learning**
- **ASK: Urge Senators on Senate Ag to maintain the program in a markup, thank Republican members on House Ag for including this support in their bill, urge all members to see this type of program in a final Farm Bill**





Tax-Free Pell Grant Act

- **Makes Pell Grants completely tax-free for community college students and ensures that low-income students can take full advantage of the American Opportunity Tax Credit (AOTC)**
 - Top AACC priority despite exclusion from OBBBA
 - Bipartisan bills pending; key cosponsors leaving Congress (Senator Tillis, Reps. Feenstra, Doggett, and Davis)
 - Cost (\$1.9 B over ten years) remains minimal relative to positive impact for community colleges and tax code generally
 - Broader higher education tax issues may be on table in 120th Congress
 - Issue needs continued emphasis
- **ASK: Thank current cosponsors and urge cosponsorship of the Tax-Free Pell Grant Act**



Regulatory Issues

- **ED “Call to Action”**
 - **Institutions asked to by ED to post responses on their websites by 12/31/26 and to engage in subsequent reforms; no “carrots or sticks”**
 - **Transparency and Merit in Admissions**
 - **Free Speech and Open Inquiry**
 - **Intellectual Pluralism and Academic Vitality**
 - **Affordability, Value, and Student Outcomes**
 - **Academic Standards and Rigor in the Age of AI**
 - **Safeguarding Research Integrity from Malign Influence**
 - **Prioritizing American Interests**



Regulatory Issues

- **GE/FVT/STATS Reporting**
 - Trump Administration largely continuing Biden GE/FVT reporting requirements with limited burden reductions under the “Student Tuition and Transparency System” (STATS)
 - Trump Administration stressing compliance [Guidance on FVT/GE Data Reporting, STATS Early Implementation, and Next Steps for Publication | Knowledge Center](#)
 - ED to hold [FSA Office Hours](#) session on Sept. 10, 3:00 – 4:00 PM
 - **Student aid offices, institutional researchers, and registrars all involved**





Regulatory Issues

- **Accreditation NPRM**
 - Published 8/20; comments due 9/21; AACCC will submit a response
 - **Vast impact on higher education system -- far-reaching, complex, and controversial provisions**
 - **Major changes include requirements related to transfer of credit, viewpoint diversity, First Amendment protections, programmatic student outcomes, cost/benefit analyses**
 - **Transfer of credit a big plus for community colleges**





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QUESTIONS?

