November 20, 2026

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Johnson, Majority Leader Thune, Minority Leader Jeffries, and Minority Leader Schumer:

I write on behalf of the undersigned higher education organizations regarding the fiscal year (FY) 2027 appropriations process. We understand the difficulties inherent in resolving federal funding, particularly in an election year, but providing certainty as to available federal funding is critical to institutions of higher education and the students that they serve. Continuing resolutions create a great deal of uncertainty for institutional leaders because, for most programs, they remain unable to determine the amount of federal support available to students and institutions. This in turn impacts the ability of students and families to plan for their education and for institutions to budget for student services, educational program offerings, and other elements central to meeting their missions. It is for that reason that we urge Congress to swiftly pass all 12 full-year appropriation bills, especially those that directly impact the higher education sector, restoring certainty for students and institutions.

As you move to resolve these bills, key among our priorities for FY 2027 is ensuring that the Federal Pell Grant program remains stable and sufficiently funded. Due to bipartisan changes to the underlying program, current funding for FY 2027 is projected to fall $17 billion short of what is needed[1] to meet the needs of the over 7.9 million students expected to receive the Pell Grant in the 2026-2027 award year (AY).[2] The House has addressed this shortfall in H.R. 9260, the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies (Labor-HHS) Appropriations Act of 2027,[3] and the Senate has addressed this in its draft Labor-HHS appropriations bill as well.[4] We urge Congress to fully address the Pell Grant shortfall for FY 2027 and beyond[5] while maintaining or increasing funding for the other critical student aid programs.

We also ask Congress to continue bipartisan efforts to ensure its intent is enforced by retaining existing blocking language barring the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) from finalizing its controversial

[1] Congressional Budget Office. (2026, February). *Baseline projections: Pell grant program*. https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2026-02/51304-2026-02-pellgrant.pdf
[2] U.S. Department of Education. (2026). *Student financial assistance: Fiscal year 2027 budget request*. https://www.ed.gov/media/document/fy-2027-congressional-justification-student-financial-assistance-113540.pdf
[3] Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 2027, H.R. 9260, 119th Cong. (2026). https://www.congress.gov/119/bills/hr9260/BILLS-119hr9260rh.pdf
[4] U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations. (2026, November 16). *Senate appropriations committee releases final five FY 2027 funding bills* [Press Release]. https://www.appropriations.senate.gov/news/majority/senate-appropriations-committee-releases-final-five-fy-2027-funding-bills
[5] The Pell Grant program is subject to a shortfall of $17 billion in FY 2027 rising to $132 billion in 2036 if left unaddressed.

proposed revisions to the Uniform Guidance (UG).[6] We believe that the proposed UG regulations would fundamentally alter how grants are awarded, administered, and terminated by increasing political oversight of grantmaking decisions and expanding federal authority to terminate awards. Along with a cross-sector group of federal grantees, we believe this is especially important given that many federal agencies are moving to make changes to grant processes before the OMB UG rule is finalized.[7] Such a rule, if implemented, would cause significant disruption in grantmaking, substitute political considerations for merit, and undermine congressional authority.

Similarly, any FY 2027 appropriations bill should maintain the FY 2026 appropriations rider language blocking OMB and the federal agencies from using appropriated funds to develop or implement a modified approach to how federal agencies such as the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, and others implement and set indirect cost rates. In FY 2026, blocking language was included in numerous individual bills.[8] Congress should continue to block this sweeping, problematic executive action, which could upend the federal research enterprise,[9] and block any actions related to it, such as the proposed revisions by the Department of Education to the Education Department General Administrative Regulations.[10]

Finally, we ask Congress to include language to block the Department of the Treasury and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) from finalizing the proposed regulation regarding racial nondiscrimination in private schools, which was published in the Federal Register on September 4, 2026.[11] While institutions of higher education are committed to eliminating all forms of unlawful discrimination, the IRS's proposed rule is deeply concerning and problematic. It exceeds the agency's statutory authority, is impermissibly vague, and imperils institutions' core freedoms and interests. It also fails to provide institutions with necessary substantive or procedural protections, and would undermine the tax-exempt model of private, nonprofit institutions, which is vital to their existence.

We appreciate your time and attention to this request and hope that Congress will work together to pass all 12 appropriations bills.

Sincerely,



Ted Mitchell
President

Cc:
The Honorable Susan Collins, Chair, Senate Committee on Appropriations

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[6] Regulation for Federal Financial Assistance, 91 F.R. 32198–32305 (proposed May 29, 2026) (to be codified at 2 C.F.R. pts. 1–6600). https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2026-05-29/pdf/2026-10817.pdf

[7] Association of American Universities. (2026, November 4). *Uniform guidance coalition letter to Capitol Hill on agency action.* https://www.aau.edu/resource-library/uniform-guidance-coalition-letter-to-capitol-hill-on-agency-actions

[8] Association of American Universities. (2026, February 12). *Indirect costs-related language in FY26 appropriations bills.* https://www.aau.edu/resource-library/indirect-costs-related-language-fy26-appropriations-bills

[9] Association of Public & Land-grant Universities. (2026, February 3). *Joint associations group thanks Congress for strong support of scientific research funding and infrastructure in final FY26 appropriations* [Press release]. https://www.aplu.org/news-and-media/news/joint-associations-group-thanks-congress-for-strong-support-of-scientific-research-funding-and-infrastructure-in-final-fy26-appropriations/

[10] Education Department General Administrative Regulations, 91 F.R. 54666–54683 (proposed August 24, 2026) (to be codified at 2 C.F.R. pts. 3474 and 3485; 34 C.F.R pts .75, 76, 77, and 79). https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2026-08-24/pdf/2026-17239.pdf

[11] Racial Nondiscrimination in Private Schools, 91 F.R. 56811–56819 (proposed September 4, 2026) (to be codified at 26 C.F.R. pt. 1). https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2026-09-04/pdf/2026-18127.pdf

The Honorable Patty Murray, Vice Chair, Senate Committee on Appropriations
The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito, Chair, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor-HHS
The Honorable Tammy Baldwin, Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor-HHS
The Honorable Tom Cole, Chairman, House Committee on Appropriations
The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member, House Committee on Appropriations and House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor-HHS
The Honorable Robert Aderholt, Chairman, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor-HHS

On behalf of:

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
AACTE (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education)
ACPA-College Student Educators International
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges
American Council of Learned Societies
American Council on Education
American Psychological Association
Association for Institutional Research
Association of American Law Schools
Association of Community College Trustees
Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges
Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities
Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Rhode Island
Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in Massachusetts
Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Pennsylvania
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Association of Schools Advancing Health Professions
Association of Vermont Independent Colleges
Career Education Colleges and Universities
Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges
Council for Advancement and Support of Education
Council for Christian Colleges and Universities
Council for Opportunity in Education
Council of Graduate Schools
Council of Independent Colleges
EDUCAUSE
Great Lakes Colleges Association
Higher Education Loan Coalition
Independent Colleges of Washington
Maryland Independent College and University Association
NAFSA: Association of International Educators
NAGAP, The Association for Graduate Enrollment Management
NASPA-Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education
National Association for College Admission Counseling
National Association of College and University Business Officers

National Association of Colleges and Employers
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
National Council for Community and Education Partnerships
Phi Beta Kappa Society
Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association
Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities