



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES  
ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRUSTEES



October 21, 2011

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye  
Appropriations Committee  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Appropriations Committee  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Labor-HHS-Ed Subcommittee  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Labor-HHS-Ed Subcommittee  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Inouye, Ranking Member Cochran, Chairman Harkin, and Ranking Member Shelby:

On behalf of the nation's 1,200 community colleges and their CEOs and trustees, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACCC) and the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) are writing to express our support for the Senate's approach to Pell Grant program funding in its FY 2012 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee bill. We thank you for your ongoing commitment to the Pell Grant program. Although we regret that savings from the student loan programs have had to be used to maintain the current maximum grant and current student eligibility, this is far preferable to any of the alternatives that have been presented.

Community colleges enroll more than 13 million credit and non-credit students each fall. Enrolling approximately 45 percent of all U.S. undergraduates, community colleges represent the largest sector of higher education and serve the highest percentages of first-generation, low-income and minority students. Each year, the Pell Grant program enables more than 3 million of our students to pay for tuition, books, transportation, and living expenses.

With cuts to state and local funding, the availability of federal student aid has been a significant factor in many of our institutions' ability to remain affordable. Community colleges are also less likely than other institutions to be able to make up for these proposed reductions in Pell Grant awards with other types of institutional support, leaving students with higher debt and fewer options to obtain critical education and training.

We thank you for your consideration and look forward to working with you on this and other fiscal issues impacting our nation's community colleges and their students.

Sincerely,

Walter G. Bumphus  
AACCC President and CEO

J. Noah Brown  
ACCT President and CEO