

November 8, 2016

The Honorable Harold Rogers  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Chairman  
Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Rogers and Cole and Ranking Members Lowey and DeLauro:

On behalf of the nation's more than 1,100 community colleges, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACCT) and the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) request your continued support for essential programs that create higher education opportunity and prepare the nation's workforce.

With more than 12 million students enrolling annually in community colleges, federal investments in student aid and institutional support are making a significant difference. Federal support remains critical to our institutions, as we seek to graduate more students in high-need areas. It is essential that adequate funding is provided for Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, as these investments are directly linked to our nation's social and economic wellbeing. While we recognize the constraints that the appropriations committee is under in developing its FY 2017 appropriations bills, AACCT and ACCT urge you to consider the following priorities:

### **Reinstate Year-Round Pell Grants**

Our top priority for final FY 17 appropriations legislation is reinstatement of year-round Pell Grants, using the language found in the Senate's Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill. In FY 2011, Congress made the sweeping move to eliminate year-round Pell Grants in order to generate savings for the program. Given that the Pell Grant surplus exists, in part, due to reductions in awards for needy students, we highly encourage Congress to invest some of the current surplus for this purpose. Students need greater flexibility in accessing financial aid. In particular, low-income students should be able to enroll continuously. It is essential that year-round Pell is available to all students, and not limited to just those attending full-time.

### **Maintain Adequate Funding For the Pell Grant Program**

Pell Grants are essential to helping low-income students access and complete higher education. Each year more than 7 million students – 2.9 million community college students -- rely on the program to help pay for tuition, books, fees, transportation, and living expenses. Congress should maintain mandatory and discretionary funding levels for this program, which combined will produce a projected maximum award of \$5,935 in award year 2017-18. Reducing the discretionary baseline would be particularly detrimental to the Pell Grant program, as those cuts would likely carry forward to future years resulting in an exponentially larger funding cut for the Pell Grant program. Additionally, we urge the committee to refrain from reallocation or rescission of the Pell Grant surplus in FY 2017. The surplus should be utilized the strengthen the Pell Grant program.

### **Child Care Access Means Parents in School**

AACC and ACCT remain very concerned about efforts to eliminate funding for the Child Care Access Means Parents in School program (CCAMPIS). CCAMPIS funds are used by postsecondary institutions to support campus-based child care programs. These funds are especially important on many community college campuses given the large number of students who care for a dependent. Seventeen percent of community college students are single parents. Lack of child care options can present a significant barrier to postsecondary access for these students. We urge you to continue federal funding for CCAMPIS, and restore it to its pre-sequester funding level of \$15,970,000.

### **Strengthen Workforce Development**

It is essential that we provide workers with job training programs they need in the changing economy. Continued funding for the federal workforce system is a priority for community colleges in order to maintain access and build programs for training workers. After enactment of WIOA, Congress increased its investments in many of these programs, though they still remain well below their FY 10 levels and the authorization levels noted above. We urge you to provide at least level funding for these programs in FY 2017.

### **Other Important Funding Priorities**

The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act programs are the largest ongoing source of federal institutional support for community colleges, helping them to improve all aspects of cutting-edge CTE programs. The Perkins Basic State Grants give postsecondary institutions the flexibility to identify local priorities and to fund innovation in occupational education programs. We urge Congress to provide adequate funding for this program that is at least level to funding provided in FY 2016.

Adult Basic and Literacy Education State Grants (ABE) grants help serve 1.8 million participants each year in gaining reading, numeracy and English literacy, and GED preparation. Demand for these programs, however, far outstrips supply, as tens of thousands of individuals remain on waitlists for services. We urge Congress to provide at least level funding for this program to help raise our workforce's educational attainment to the levels.

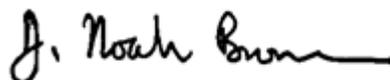
Community colleges strongly support Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, Federal Work Study, the Strengthening Institutions program (Title III-A of the Higher Education Act), Hispanic-Serving Institutions, Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs), Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions, international education, the National Science Foundation Advanced Technological Education (ATE) program, and the TRIO and GEAR UP programs. Cuts to these programs could have a devastating impact on student access and success. Hence we ask for a minimum of level funding for these programs.

These investments in our education and workforce system are vital to our nation's economic prosperity and thus also vital to the health of the federal budget over time. We urge you to keep those considerations in mind when allocating resources in FY 2017.

Sincerely,



Walter G. Bumphus  
AACC President and CEO



J. Noah Brown  
ACCT President and CEO