May 13, 2019

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Chairwoman  
Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Vice Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Chairman  
Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member  
Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee

Dear Chairs Shelby and Blunt, Vice Chairman Leahy and Ranking Member Murray:

On behalf of the nation’s 1,051 community colleges, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) 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.

Federal investments in student aid and institutional support are essential to our colleges’ mission to educate the citizenry, prepare workers for today’s jobs, and serve their communities. Research repeatedly shows that these investments generate increased tax revenue, lower social services spending, and heightened civic engagement. We hope that the committee will ultimately receive an increased cap on non-defense discretionary spending to dedicate to these programs. The top community college federal funding priorities for the FY 20 Labor, HHS, Education and Related Agencies (LHHS) appropriations bill include:

**Student Aid**

Pell Grants are by far the most important financial aid program for community college students, helping nearly 2.5 million of them access and succeed in higher education each year. We urge appropriators to raise the maximum award by $200 in FY 20, like the FY 18 increase that slightly exceeded the rate of inflation. Additionally, all reserve funds should be kept in the Pell Grant program. Diverting the reserve to other programs threatens the programs’ future stability and, with that, millions of students’ prospects for college success. The Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (FSEOG) and Federal Work Study programs are also vital sources of assistance for community college students.

**Dedicated Funding for Community College Workforce Training Capacity**

AACC and ACCT strongly support the $150 million Strengthening Community College Training Grants (SCCTG) included in the House Appropriation Committee’s LHHS bill. We urge the Senate committee to follow suit. If enacted, SCCTG will build on the success of the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training Grants, which helped many individuals find jobs coming out of the great recession and bolstered community college job training capacity. The TAACCCT program’s lapsing has contributed in part to the large and continuing skills gap.
Support Under-Resourced Institutions and Students

The Higher Education Act Strengthening Institutions Program (Title III-A) helps colleges that serve large numbers of low-income students and have relatively few resources. Funds are used for planning, faculty development, establishing or strengthening endowments, and other purposes. Title III-A also supports improvements in administration and academic programs, often focusing on student completion. In the fierce competition for funds, evidence-based, locally generated proposals receive priority. The program is eliminated in the administration’s budget, but the Senate should reject this proposal and increase the program’s funding by $10 million, as in the House LHHS bill.

Help Parents Attend College

The Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) program helps low-income parents participate in postsecondary education by supporting campus-based child care services. For many students, these services are integral to their success. Colleges that enroll large numbers of Pell Grant recipients and meet other criteria may compete for multi-year CCAMPIS grants. The program provides campus-based child care for infants and toddlers and supports before- and after-school care for older children and parenting classes. The Administration has proposed a dramatic funding cut; instead, we ask the committee to match the House bill’s $10 million increase for this program.

Perkins Career and Technical Education

The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (CTE) programs are the largest ongoing source of federal institutional support for community colleges, to improve cutting-edge CTE programs. The Basic State Grants give postsecondary institutions the flexibility to identify local priorities and to fund innovation in occupational education. Community colleges use grants to prepare students for high-skill, in-demand fields by helping them to meet challenging academic, vocational, and technical standards; improve curricula; purchase today’s equipment and technology; integrate vocational and academic instruction; and tighten links between colleges and the business community. The 2018 reauthorization will enhance colleges’ delivery of relevant, high quality technical education. We urge Congress to continue its recent increased investments in this program and provide $1.35 billion for the Basic State Grants.

Strengthen Workforce Development and Adult Basic Education

Federal workforce education programs are needed both to help individuals navigate the changing economy and to ensure that business has required talent. Record numbers of jobs are currently unfilled simply because of skills deficits. The federal Displaced Worker program can change that. On another critical workforce and even broader front, Adult Basic Education State Grants impact 1.8 million participants each year, helping them gain reading, numeracy and English literacy, and GED preparation. There is acute demand for these programs and tens of thousands of individuals remain on service waitlists. Both these programs should be funded at their authorized levels in FY 20.
Additional Funding Priorities for Community Colleges

Community colleges strongly support the House’s funding levels for the TRIO and GEAR UP programs, Centers of Excellence for Veteran Student Success Program (through FIPSE), international education, Hispanic-Serving Institutions, Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs), Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions, and other programs supporting Minority Serving Institutions, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and Tribal Colleges. We ask that this funding be retained in the final FY 20 bill.

We thank you for your consideration of this request and for your longstanding support for our students and colleges. We look forward to working with you during the FY 20 appropriations process.

Sincerely,

Walter G. Bumphus, Ph.D.   J. Noah Brown
AACC President and CEO   ACCT President and CEO