



April 25, 2019

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Chairwoman  
Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Chairwoman  
Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Ranking Member  
Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee

Dear Chairs Lowey and DeLauro and Ranking Members Granger and Cole:

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 institutions' mission to educate the citizenry, prepare workers for better jobs, and provide a myriad of services to their local communities. Research has repeatedly shown that these investments pay dividends in the form of increased tax revenue, lower social services spending, and heightened civic engagement. We hope that before the year is out, the committee will have at its disposal more resources to dedicate to these programs through an increased cap on non-defense discretionary spending. The top community college federal funding priorities for FY 20 include:

### **The Federal Pell Grant Program**

Pell Grants are the most important form of financial aid for community college students, helping nearly 2.5 million access and succeed in higher education each year. We urge the House appropriations committee to match what it did for students in FY 18, when it raised the maximum award by inflation and provided an additional \$50. For FY 20, that would be a \$200 increase. Additionally, all reserve funds should be kept in the Pell Grant program. Diversion of the reserve to finance other programs threatens the future stability of the program and the ability of millions of students to succeed in college.

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

Congress should reflect recent history of providing direct support for community colleges' efforts to train American workers. In 2005, this was achieved through Community-Based Job Training Grants, proposed by the Bush Administration, and in 2010 it was effected through the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College to Career Training grants, promoted by President Obama. These key programs are lapsed, yet the need for the support they provided is as acute as ever, as evidenced by the continuing skills gap.

### **Support Under-Resourced Institutions and Students**

The Higher Education Act Strengthening Institutions Program (Title III-A) helps colleges serve low-income students by providing funds to improve and strengthen the academic quality, institutional management, and fiscal stability. A majority of program resources are received by community colleges with relatively few resources. Funds may be used for planning, faculty development, establishing endowments, and other purposes. Title III-A also supports improvements in administration and academic programs, and many recent grantees have focused on improving student completion rates. In the fierce competition for funds, evidence-based proposals receive priority. The program is eliminated in the administration's budget, but Congress should reject this proposal and increase funding for the program by \$25 million.

### **Help Parents Attend College**

The Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) program supports the participation of low-income parents in postsecondary education through campus-based child care services. Multi-year, competitive grants are awarded to institutions of higher education that enroll large numbers of Pell Grant recipients. In addition to campus-based child care for infants and toddlers, the program also funds before- and after-school care for older children and parenting classes. The Administration has proposed to dramatically cut funding. We ask that the committee instead increase funding for this important student success 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, 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. Community colleges use these grants to prepare students for high-skill, in-demand fields by helping them meet challenging academic, vocational, and technical standards; improve curricula; purchase the equipment students need to know how to use in today's jobs; integrate vocational and academic instruction; and foster better links between colleges and the business community. The Act was reauthorized in 2018 and will be even more effective in helping institutions provide 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 to help individuals navigate the changing economy. Record numbers of jobs are currently unfilled because businesses cannot find workers with needed skills. The best opportunity for displaced workers is to augment their skills and education to meet these needs. Adult Basic Education State Grants help serve 1.8 million participants each year to gain reading, numeracy and English literacy, and GED preparation. Demand for these programs far outstrips supply, as tens of thousands of individuals remain on waitlists for services. These programs should be funded at their authorized levels in FY 20.

### **Additional Funding Priorities for Community Colleges**

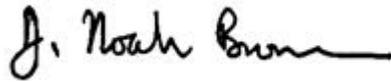
Community colleges strongly support Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, Federal Work Study, international education, the federal TRIO and GEAR UP programs, Hispanic-Serving Institutions, Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs), Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions, and other programs supporting Minority Serving Institutions and Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Cuts to these programs could have a devastating impact on student access and success. Hence, we ask for at least level funding for these programs.

We thank you for your consideration and look forward to working with the committee during the FY 20 appropriations process.

Sincerely,



Walter G. Bumphus, Ph.D.  
President and CEO, AACC



J. Noah Brown  
President and CEO, ACCT