



DAILY BRIEFING

Tuesday, July 20, 2021

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Inside Higher Ed and College Pulse Report Students Favor Free College, Other Affordability Proposals

Inside Higher Ed and College Pulse released the results from a recent survey, which shows how passionate students are about a variety of federal and state policies, particularly those related to paying for college. According to the survey, 90 percent of the 2,035 respondents representing 113 colleges and universities said that they would support the concept of free community college, even though only 250 students in the sample actually attend community colleges. Students of color were even more likely to support free community college and other college affordability and student debt-related policy efforts as Black and Latinx students tend to struggle most to pay for and benefit from college. The survey also found that:

- Students are more likely to support providing up to \$10,000 in student loan forgiveness (about three-quarters of respondents) compared to \$50,000 in forgiveness (less than two-thirds of respondents).
- The majority of students support providing increased access to Pell Grants for several groups, with Pell Grants for short-term vocational programs getting more support than Pell Grants for DACA [Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals] or incarcerated students.
- About two-thirds of students strongly support race-blind admissions, while a little more than half strongly support the banning of legacy admissions, indicating a desire for admissions based on individual merits.

Mark Huelsman, a policy fellow at the Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice at Temple University, stated, “This is another set of evidence that we should listen to students not just about what they’re experiencing but also about how they think we should fix [issues]. It’s issues of affordability or safety or an understanding of fairly complex issues in admissions, students might get it more than an administrator might think.” For more coverage, see this article from [Inside Higher Ed](#).

GAO Report Finds Department of Education Did Not Follow Guidelines on COVID-19 Funds

The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) recently released a [report](#) that found the U.S. Department of Education did not create and follow proper guidelines to ensure COVID-19 relief funds were distributed properly to institutions of higher education. As part of its report, GAO tested the Department’s procedures for approving and processing Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) grants and found that the Department had not effectively designed and implemented procedures needed to identify erroneous obligations after awarding the grants. The office estimated that, for 5.5 percent of schools receiving HEERF grants, the Department awarded grants that exceeded the amounts allocated, including three instances in which the Department obligated \$20 million more than was allocated. The Department’s miscalculations were largely because of the number of grants and the speed at which they needed to be distributed to address the pandemic, the report says. Since March 2020, \$76.2 billion was appropriated through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security or CARES Act for schools to respond to the challenges that came with the pandemic.

Former Secretary DeVos Opposes Nomination of Catherine Lhamon as Top Civil Rights Official

In [an op-ed published in *The Daily Signal*](#), former U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos wrote that Catherine Lhamon is not fit to be the U.S. Department of Education's Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights due to her "dismissive view of basic constitutional due-process rights." Former Secretary DeVos wrote: "While Lhamon may find compatriots in her views amongst fringe leftists, most liberals reject her worldview. Notably, four self-described 'feminist law professors' at Harvard Law School and 16 law professors at Penn Law School opined against the Obama-Lhamon Soviet-style diktat. Even the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, when posed a question about the way campus tribunals were working under the Obama administration, took issue with the lack of due process...Her lack of fitness was perhaps most clearly on display when she doubled down on wholly inaccurate and very troubling comments, she made about the current Title IX regulation." The former secretary concluded that the President should nominate a measured leader who will respect core American principles, uphold the rule of law, and protect the civil rights of all students.

NBER Report Says GI Bill Benefits Do Not Pay Off for Student Veterans

The National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) recently released a [working paper](#) that examined the impact of the Post-9/11 GI Bill on veterans' college-going, degree completion, federal education tax benefit utilization, and long term earnings. The report found that, among veterans potentially induced to enroll, the introduction of the new law raised college enrollment by 0.17 years and bachelor's degree completion by 1.2 percentage points. At the same time, the Post-9/11 GI Bill reduced average annual earnings nine years after separation from the Army by \$900 (on a base of \$32,000). NBER also found that years-enrolled effects are larger and earnings effects more negative for veterans who were less occupationally skilled. Using a variety of assumptions, the report says that veterans are unlikely to recoup these reduced earnings during their working careers. The report found that all veterans who were already enrolled in college at the time of the bill's passage increased their months of schooling; only for those in public institutions did this translate into increases in bachelor's degree attainment and longer-run earnings. For specific groups of students, large subsidies can modestly help degree completion but harm long run earnings due to lost labor market experience.

U.S. Department of Education News

For today's *Federal Register*, click [here](#).

The following announcement was posted to the Information for Financial Aid Professionals website:

- [2022-2023 Application Processing System Specifications for Software Developers \(July 2021 Draft\)\(EA ID: APP-21-08\)](#)
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General News

[University Business](#) continues coverage of the drop in number of FAFSA [Free Applications for Federal Student Aid] filings based on data released by the National College Attainment Network.

[CNBC](#) reports that there are far fewer 50- to 61-year-olds who still carry student loan debt compared to younger age groups, but those that do have high average balances.

[Business Insider](#) reports that deposits from the child tax credit began hitting American families' bank accounts on July 15. This advance tax credit brings cash payments to qualifying families of \$300 for each child under age 6, and \$250 for each child between ages 6 and 17. If the money is not needed now, investing the child tax credit could be a smart move including investing directly to decrease student loan debt and increase savings potentially later.

[Inside Higher Ed](#) reports that the University of California has a more diverse student body without the use of the SAT. The university recently announced a record-breaking number of applicants and a record in admitted students from racial and ethnic minority groups.

[The Chronicle of Higher Education](#) reports that, on Sunday, a federal judge ruled against a legal challenge to the Indiana University system's vaccine mandate, effectively upholding the requirement that all students must be vaccinated from COVID-19 before returning the campus in the fall unless they qualify for an exemption. The ruling sends a strong signal that the lawsuits filed in response to colleges' vaccine requirements may face steep odds in court.

[Higher Ed Dive](#) reports that Missouri's public colleges will be able to hike tuition as much as they like starting in July 2022 after the state's governor signed a bill last week

removing a price cap.

[The Des Moines Register](#) reports that, with the federal student loan freeze coming to an end soon, Iowa's universities and colleges are educating their students on what the next steps are to pay back their loans.

[CNBC](#) reports that a college education is more expensive than ever and examines how families are paying the tab.

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