

January 31, 2024

Honorable Kay Granger
Chair, House Cmte on
Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Mbr, House Cmte on
Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chair, House Subcmte on
Labor-HHS-Education
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Patty Murray
Chair, Senate Cmte on
Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Susan Collins
Vice Chair, Senate Cmte on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Chair, Senate Subcmte on
Labor, HHS, Education
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Shelly Moore Capito
Ranking Mbr, Subcmte on
Labor, HHS, Education
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Appropriations Committee Chairs and Ranking Members:

On behalf of the members of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU), and our member associations listed below, I write to ask you to finalize FY 2024 funding for the federal student aid programs as quickly as possible.

We appreciate that Congress has avoided a government shutdown, but the new March 8 deadline to finalize appropriations coupled with the issues surrounding the rollout of the new FAFSA form, makes it impossible for colleges and universities to package financial aid offers for millions of students and families who rely on federal student aid to make informed decisions about where to attend college.

It is imperative that Congress determine the funding levels for the Pell Grant maximum, Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG) and Federal Work-Study (FWS) as soon as possible. The federal student aid programs are critical to students' ability to go to college. We greatly appreciate that federal student aid continues to garner bipartisan support and hope you can reconcile the differences between the House and Senate bills to provide a Pell Grant maximum increase while maintaining funding for the campus-based aid programs.



This winter, colleges are finding themselves at the confluence of unfortunate events that are beyond their control, but that will have an impact on enrollment, especially of low-income students, for the next four years.

First, the Department of Education is experiencing difficulties in rolling out the new FAFSA as required by the 2020 FAFSA Simplification Act, and the 2019 FUTURE Act. The FAFSA form is typically available on October 1, and many institutions immediately start packaging aid for families. Currently, colleges and universities are still not receiving any information on student aid eligibility from the Department and will not for many more weeks.

Second, financial aid offices are further hampered by the uncertainty surrounding the core federal student aid programs. Still to be determined is the Pell Grant maximum for next year. Also, because the House proposes to eliminate SEOG and FWS, our members cannot assume supplemental grant aid will be available for the Pell students most in need, nor do they know if work study opportunities will be available this coming year.

We are very concerned that the late FAFSA combined with unknown funding levels will result in low-income students postponing or, worse, giving up on, their dreams to pursue a college degree.

Founded in 1976, NAICU serves as the unified voice for the 1,700 private, nonprofit colleges and universities in our nation. Our membership reflects the diversity of private, nonprofit higher education in the U.S and includes major research universities, faith-based colleges, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs), art and design colleges, traditional liberal arts and science institutions, women's colleges, work colleges, two-year colleges and schools of law, medicine, engineering, business and other professions.

On behalf of these institutions and their students, I thank you for your continued bipartisan support of the federal student aid programs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Barbara K. Mistick".

Barbara K. Mistick, D.B.A.
President

Cc: Members of the House and Senate

Alabama Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
Associated Colleges of the Midwest
Association of Advanced Rabbinical and Talmudic Schools
Association for Biblical Higher Education
Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities
Association of Chiropractic Colleges
Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities
Association of Independent Colleges & Universities of Rhode Island
Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in Massachusetts
Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Ohio



Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Pennsylvania
Association of Independent Colleges of Art & Design
Association of Independent Kentucky Colleges and Universities (AIKCU)
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities
Association of Presbyterian Colleges and Universities
Association of Private Colleges and Universities of Puerto Rico / Asociación de Colegios y Universidades Privadas de Puerto Rico (ACUP)
Association of Vermont Independent Colleges
CCCU - Council for Christian Colleges & Universities
Commission on Independent Colleges & Universities, New York
Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges
Consortium of Hospital-Affiliated Colleges and Universities
Council of Independent Colleges
Council of Independent Colleges in Virginia, Inc.
Council of Independent Nebraska Colleges
Federation of Independent Illinois Colleges and Universities
Georgia Independent College Association
Great Lakes Colleges Association
Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida
Independent Colleges and Universities of Missouri
Independent Colleges and Universities of New Jersey
Independent Colleges and Universities of Texas
Independent Colleges of Indiana
Independent Colleges of Washington
Independent Higher Education of Colorado
International Association of Baptist Colleges and Universities
Iowa Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
Kansas Independent College Association
Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges & Universities
Maryland Independent College and University Association
Michigan Independent Colleges & Universities
Minnesota Private College Council
Mississippi Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
Network of ELCA-Lutheran Colleges and Universities
North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities
Oregon Alliance of Independent Colleges and Universities
South Carolina Independent Colleges & Universities
Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities
Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
Work Colleges Consortium
Yes We Must Coalition