PREPARING FOR THE

VIRTUAL
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE SUMMIT

VIRTUAL
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE SUMMIT

February | 8 - 10 | 2021

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Dear Colleague,

Our associations thank you in advance for your participation in the upcoming virtual Community College National Legislative Summit (NLS). The 2021 NLS, which will take place from February 8–10, is a major component of community college leaders' ongoing advocacy efforts. Your involvement in the 2021 NLS is crucial to helping Congress and the Administration understand the great benefits that community colleges offer to millions of students each year.

The NLS will feature sessions with Members of Congress and the Administration, nationally known political analysts, and policy experts. These sessions are designed to provide up-to-date insights about current political and policy developments affecting our sector. While we are unable to come together in person this year, we hope that you will take the opportunity to conduct virtual meetings with your Congressional representatives and make your voice heard—ultimately, that is what the NLS is all about.

To assist you in preparing for your participation in the NLS, we are happy to provide you with the enclosed documents. We hope that you will review this information and coordinate with your college and colleagues to prepare materials and talking points that will help guide your meetings with policymakers.

We look forward to seeing you all virtually. Please do not hesitate to contact the ACCT or AACC legislative staff if you need any assistance.

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Taking Steps to Prepare for NLS

The following items should be completed in preparation for NLS. We suggest coordinating with your college and state delegation to complete these tasks and have included a recommended timeline.

Timeline	Action
December and January	**Schedule Hill meetings** – Contact your Senators and Representative(s) in December or January to request a virtual meeting during the NLS. (When applicable, please contact your state association because in many situations the state association will schedule meetings for the state's delegation.)
Early January	**Ask your community** – What are the needs of the community, how is your community changing, and how is the college responding to these changes?
Mid-January	**Learn all you can about your college** – Refreshing yourself with the institution's mission, key programs offered, facts about the student population, the business community served by the college, and, if available, the economic impact of college programs (one-page summary*).
Mid-January	**Complete federal funds worksheet** – Sharing the impact of these programs on your colleges demonstrates to members and their staff the importance of federal investments in education and training programs.
Late January	**Know your legislators** – Do some research into members' backgrounds; doing so helps you make a connection and communicate in a way that gets your points across most effectively.
Early February	**Virtual group visits** – *Before* the virtual meeting, choose one person to be the spokesperson and start the meeting, decide the key points that should be covered, and who will raise which points.

* A one-page summary about your college is more likely to be referred to than a lengthy packet with the college catalog, numerous program brochures, and financial reports. After the meeting, be sure to send a follow up email to let congressional staff know that you can answer any questions they have or provide more information about items on the one-pager. This will be much preferred to an overabundance of information.

Scheduling Virtual Hill Meetings

'What should the invitation to my Member of Congress say?'
- Make sure your request is specific, relevant, timely, and that it appeals to the interests of your members of Congress. If you know your Senator or Representative has a specific interest (for example, STEM), consider tying the invitation to their priorities.

'What details should I include?'
- Congressional offices want to know basic information. We've already talked about the 'why.' Your invitation should also address the 'who,' 'what,' 'when,' and 'where.' The office will want to know what issue areas you want to speak about in order to assign the correct staffer to the meeting.

'Where should I send the invitation?'
- In most instances, a request for a meeting on Capitol Hill will go through the D.C. scheduler. Simply call any office and request contact information for the individual who handles scheduling requests in Washington, D.C.
- Congressional offices receive many scheduling requests, so they prefer to receive them in writing. Save yourself a stamp. Email is your best bet when requesting a meeting unless otherwise stated by the congressional office.
- If you have previously met with other staffers in the D.C. or district office, consider including them on the request.
- Make sure you follow up as the NLS gets closer. If you placed a request but have not heard back, call or email the scheduler.

'How much advance notice do they need?'
- Probably not as much time as you may think. Congressional schedules are constantly in flux, but generally begin to shape up two or three weeks in advance. Try to request your meeting at least a month in advance. Early-January is a good time to request meetings for NLS.
- Offer a few different options for meeting times if possible.

'How long will the meeting last?'
- The standard meeting window is generally a 30-minute block. However, on a particularly busy day you may only be allotted 15 minutes.
- Allow time for overages. Even if you believe you have a 30-minute meeting, it is better to plan for an hour. Meetings can start late or go long.

Sample Meeting Request

To: [DC Scheduler]
CC: [Education Legislative Assistant]
RE: Scheduling Request–Community College Meeting

Dear Mr./Ms. DC Office Scheduler,

I am writing to request a virtual meeting with the Senator on either February 9 or 10. Leaders from our college will be convening for a virtual community college summit to discuss ongoing activities on our campuses and our legislative priorities for 2021. Our group would like to apprise the Senator of our work on behalf of the community. The Senator may be particularly interested in our efforts around dual enrollment given her committee work.

Representatives from the college would also like to discuss our legislative and funding priorities for the upcoming fiscal year, including the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act.

The following individuals are slated to attend the meeting:
>   Betty Smith, President
>   Bob Thomas, Board Chair
>   Jane Jones, Trustee
>   Diane Roberts, Student

Our group is available during the following times:
>   February 9 – between 2 and 5pm.
>   February 10 – between noon and 4pm.

I can be reached at (555) 333-2999 or pbsn@commcoll.edu. Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Appointment Information

Your Representative/Senator: _____

Congressional District: _____   State: _____

Meeting Date and Time: _____

Virtual Meeting Platform (i.e., Zoom, Microsoft Teams) _____

D.C. Phone Number: (202) _____-_____

D.C. Scheduler Name and E-mail: _____

Legislative Staffer for Education: _____

Legislative Staffer for Job Training: _____

Legislative Staffer for Appropriations: _____

Notes

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Know Your Legislator

- Knowing your Representatives' and Senators' backgrounds helps you make a connection and communicate with them in a way that makes your point come across most effectively.
- Do your research. Know their backgrounds and priority issues. Do they have connections to your college?
  - ✓ What congressional committees do they serve on?
  - ✓ Has your Representative/Senator visited your campus? When? What did they do there?
  - ✓ Is your Representative/Senator active in your community colleges' activities?
  - ✓ Did your Representative/Senator attend a community college?

Know Your College & Community

- College leaders should be able to briefly articulate to members of Congress their institution's mission, key programs offered, facts about the student population, and the business community served by the college.
- You represent the same people your Representatives and Senators do. Be able to discuss the needs of the community, how your community is changing, and how the college is responding to these changes.
  - ✓ Provide examples of how your institution is serving the community.

Know Which Federal Programs are Important to Your College

- Community college students receive substantial assistance from federal student aid programs, especially the Pell Grant program. Additionally, many colleges benefit directly from grant programs, such as funding for Minority Serving Institutions, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, TRIO programs, and the Carl D. Perkins Act, or have received federal pandemic-related aid.
- Sharing the impact of these programs on your colleges demonstrates to members and their staff the importance of federal investments in education and training programs.

  - ✓ Provide examples of the impact of federal support on your institution.
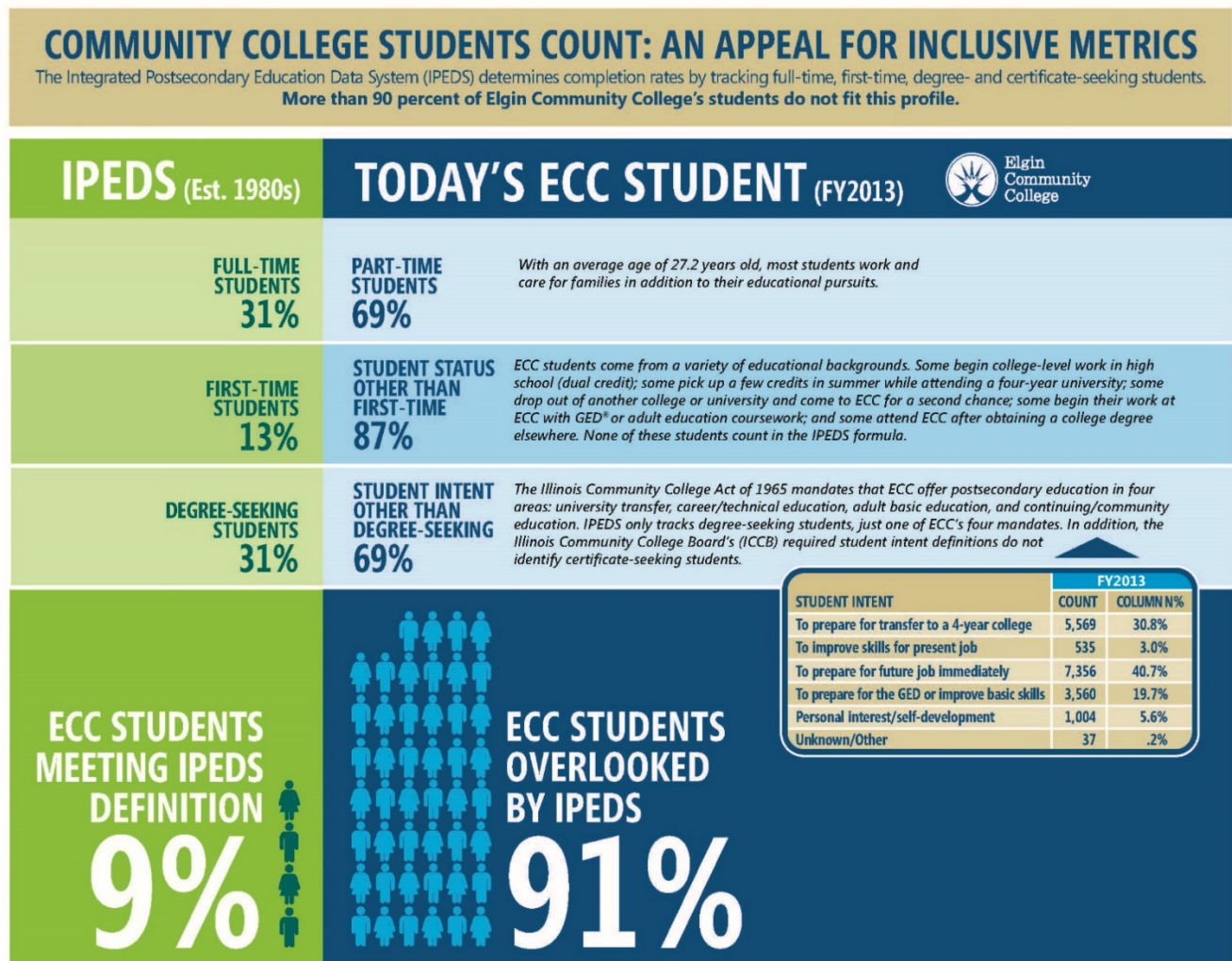
Preparing Materials

- ACCT's federal funds worksheet (located on pages 10-11) is a great resource to share with your member of Congress. Ask your financial aid office to assist in filling it out and provide a copy to your guests during or after the meeting.

- **Members of Congress and their staffs appreciate brevity**; a brief but substantive summary about your college is more likely to be referred to than a lengthy document that includes the college catalog, numerous program brochures, and financial reports.

- Below is an example of a handout that Elgin Community College provided to federally elected officials during a prior NLS. Note the emphasis on quantitative information, which makes a particularly strong case without an overabundance of paper.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS COUNT: AN APPEAL FOR INCLUSIVE METRICS

The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) determines completion rates by tracking full-time, first-time, degree- and certificate-seeking students. **More than 90 percent of Elgin Community College's students do not fit this profile.**

IPEDS (Est. 1980s) — **TODAY'S ECC STUDENT** (FY2013) — Elgin Community College

| FULL-TIME STUDENTS **31%** | PART-TIME STUDENTS **69%** | With an average age of 27.2 years old, most students work and care for families in addition to their educational pursuits. |

| FIRST-TIME STUDENTS **13%** | STUDENT STATUS OTHER THAN FIRST-TIME **87%** | ECC students come from a variety of educational backgrounds. Some begin college-level work in high school (dual credit); some pick up a few credits in summer while attending a four-year university; some drop out of another college or university and come to ECC for a second chance; some begin their work at ECC with GED* or adult education coursework; and some attend ECC after obtaining a college degree elsewhere. None of these students count in the IPEDS formula. |

| DEGREE-SEEKING STUDENTS **31%** | STUDENT INTENT OTHER THAN DEGREE-SEEKING **69%** | The Illinois Community College Act of 1965 mandates that ECC offer postsecondary education in four areas: university transfer, career/technical education, adult basic education, and continuing/community education. IPEDS only tracks degree-seeking students, just one of ECC's four mandates. In addition, the Illinois Community College Board's (ICCB) required student intent definitions do not identify certificate-seeking students. |

	FY2013	
STUDENT INTENT	COUNT	COLUMN N%
To prepare for transfer to a 4-year college	5,569	30.8%
To improve skills for present job	535	3.0%
To prepare for future job immediately	7,356	40.7%
To prepare for the GED or improve basic skills	3,560	19.7%
Personal interest/self-development	1,004	5.6%
Unknown/Other	37	.2%

ECC STUDENTS MEETING IPEDS DEFINITION 9%

ECC STUDENTS OVERLOOKED BY IPEDS 91%

NLS Schedule at a Glance

(This is a preliminary schedule. Meeting times and sessions are subject to change.)

Monday, February 8

10:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.	Welcome and Opening Remarks
10:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.	General Session featuring Amy Walters
12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Session on Lay of the Land on Capitol Hill
1:15 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.	Community College Priorities Session
3:00 p.m. – 5:45 p.m.	Policy Focus Sessions
6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.	Reception

Tuesday, February 9

10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	Session on Economic Data and Trends
11:45 a.m. – 12:45 a.m.	Guest Speakers from the Administration
1:15 p.m. – 2:15 p.m.	Guest Speakers from Congress
2:45 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.	Policy Focus Session
4:15 p.m. – 5:15 p.m.	Guest Speakers from Congress
5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.	Reception
Morning & Afternoon	Virtual Meetings with House, Senate and Executive Offices

Wednesday, February 10

10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	Policy Focus Session
11:45 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.	Guest Speakers from Congress
1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.	Closing Session
Morning & Afternoon	Additional Virtual Meetings with House, Senate and Executive Offices

Impact of Federal Education Dollars on Your Campus

When completed, this form will demonstrate how federal student aid funds and other federal funds are currently at work on your campus. Members of Congress, state legislators, local government officials, and members of the press find this information valuable as they analyze the impact of the many policy changes currently being considered by Congress. Contact your college's student financial aid and/or business office to assist you in completing this form.

Even if you are unable to complete all the categories listed on this form, Members of Congress and their staffs will find any information you are able to provide them useful when considering the impact of program funding on their districts.

Name of college: _____

Federal Pell Grant Summary

Award Year	Number of Recipients	Average grant per student	Total grant dollars disbursed
2019-2020		$	$
2018-2019		$	$
2017-2018		$	$

Other Federal Programs

1. Number of Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG) recipients	
2. Total Federal SEOG funds awarded	
3. Number of students participating in Federal Work-Study program	
4. Total Federal Work-Study program funds awarded	
5. Number of Federal Direct loan recipients	
6. Average loan amount per recipient	
7. Total Federal Direct loan funds disbursed (subsidized and unsubsidized)	
8. TRIO funds (if applicable)	
9. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act funds received in current budget	
10. Title III-A (Strengthening Institutions) Grants funds (if applicable)	
11. Minority Serving Institutions and HBCU Grant funds (if applicable)	
12. Strengthening Community College Training Grants (if applicable)	

CARES Act Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF), Governors Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEERF), and Coronavirus Relief Fund (Treasury Department)

1. Number of HEERF student emergency grant recipients	
2. Average amount of HEERF student emergency grants	
3. Total HEERF student emergency grant funds	
4. HEERF institutional portion of funds	
5. HEERF Title III & V funds (if applicable)	
6. HEERF Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) funds (if applicable)	
7. Total GEERF funds (if applicable)	
8. Total Coronavirus Relief Fund allocation (if applicable)	
9. Total funding received from CARES Act	

Federal Dollars Assisting Students and the Institution (sum of total Pell Grant dollars disbursed in 2019 – 2020, plus lines 2, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12, plus total CARES Act funding)	

Key Terms and Definitions for the Federal Funds Worksheet

Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act: Perkins Act programs are intended to enhance educational opportunities for all career and technical education students at public secondary and postsecondary schools. Funds are disseminated to states, which in turn allocate funds by formula to secondary and postsecondary schools. Funds that are directed to public secondary and two-year postsecondary schools are used for program improvement, including equipment, curriculum development, and professional development.

Direct Loan (DL) Program: The DL program helps make low-interest, variable rate loans available to students and their families to pay for the costs of attending postsecondary institutions. Direct loans are those provided directly through the federal government. The federal government pays the loan interest for students with demonstrated need while they are in school and during grace and deferment periods.

Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (FSEOG): The FSEOG program provides an additional source of grant aid for exceptionally needy students. Supplemental Grant recipients use these funds in combination with other types of grant, loan and work-study aid to meet their total educational expenses. Any academically qualified student may apply for aid to complete a certificate or degree program. Priority for FSEOG awards are Pell Grant recipients. The federal share of the award under the program cannot exceed 75 percent; the remaining 25 percent of the award must be contributed by the participating institution. The grants range from a minimum of $100 to a maximum annual award of $4,000.

Pell Grant: The Pell Grant program is a needs-based program and grants are awarded to eligible undergraduate students who have not yet earned a bachelor's degree. For many students, Pell Grants provide a foundation of financial aid to which other aid may be added. To determine eligibility for a Pell Grant, the U.S. Department of Education uses a formula established by Congress. This formula evaluates financial information a student supplies, the cost of attendance at their institution, full- or part-time status, and whether the student attends for a full academic year or less. The maximum award for the current award year (2020-21) is $6,345. More than 2 million community colleges students receive Pell Grants annually.

Strengthening Institutions and Minority Serving Institutions (MSI) Grants: MSIs are colleges and universities serving a large percentage of minority students, including: Hispanic-Serving Institutions; Asian American and Native Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions; Native American-Serving Institutions; Predominately Black Institutions; American Indian Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities; Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions; and Alaska Native-Serving Institutions. Most of the funds for these programs are formula based for institutions certified by the Department of Education. Title III, Part A - Strengthening Institution grants are competitive grants for institutions with relatively limited resources and serving a high percentage of needy students.

TRIO: TRIO is a compilation of five programs that provide direct outreach and student support services to high school, college, and university students. The programs are designed to encourage individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds to enroll in and complete college. By law, at least two-thirds of the students served by TRIO programs must be the first in their family to attend college.

Federal Work-Study (FWS): The FWS program leverages resources from schools and the private sector to provide opportunities for students to earn money to pay for college. The program is also designed to encourage students receiving federal financial aid to participate in community service. In addition to providing self-help assistance to students, Federal Work-Study funds help support partnerships between the federal government, postsecondary schools, students, and communities.

The Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grants (SCCTG) Program – The SCCTG program aims to build the capacity of community colleges to collaborate with employers and the public workforce development system to meet local and regional labor market demand for a skilled workforce. These competitive grant funds can also build the capacity of community colleges to address challenges associated with the COVID-19 health crisis by expanding online learning capabilities and migrating services to a virtual environment.

Education Stabilization Fund (ESF): On March 27, 2020, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was signed into law. Included in the act was the ESF, which is composed of three emergency relief funds: (1) a Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEERF), (2) an Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund, and (3) a Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF). The ESF has a total funding level of $30.75 billion and is administered by the U.S. Department of Education (ED). These funds are to remain available through September 30, 2021.

Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF): The CARES Act authorized $14 billion for the HEERF. The majority (90%) of HEERF funds were allocated to colleges using a formula based 75% on their Pell full-time equivalent (FTE) students and 25% on non-Pell FTE students. At least 50% of HEERF funds received by an institution were required to be allocated to students in the form of emergency grants. A portion (7.5%) of HEERF funds were made available to institutions of higher education (IHEs) that are eligible to participate in programs for minority serving institutions (MSIs) and Title III-A (Strengthening Institutions Program). The remaining 2.5% of HEERF funds were made available to IHEs through the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education Program (FIPSE). Grants under the MSI and FIPSE programs can be used for emergency financial aid grants to students, to cover costs associated with changes to the delivery of instruction due to the coronavirus emergency, and to defray institutional expenses.

Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEERF): The CARES Act authorized $3 billion for the GEERF. GEERF funds have been awarded to governors based on each state's share of individuals ages 5 through 24 and each state's share of children counted under Section 1124(c) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Each governor may choose to use the grants in the following ways: (1) providing emergency funds to local educational agencies (LEAs), (2) providing emergency funds to institutions of higher education (IHEs)serving students within the state, and (3) providing emergency funds to any other IHE, LEA, or education related entity within the state.

Coronavirus Relief Fund: The CARES Act established a $150 billion funding stream known as the Coronavirus Relief Fund. Resources from the Fund are distributed by the Department of Treasury to states and certain local government, including the District of Columbia and U.S. Territories (consisting of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands); and Tribal governments. Coronavirus Relief Fund allocations may be used to cover costs that: 1) are necessary expenditures incurred due to (COVID–19); 2) were not accounted for in a state or locality's most recent budget; and 3) were incurred during the period that begins on March 1, 2020, and ends on December 30, 2020.

Community College Priorities - Preview

NLS attendees will receive the 'green sheet' – a summary of federal legislative priorities for community colleges – just prior to the start of the NLS. Attendees are encouraged to use the green sheet as a handout during meetings on Capitol Hill.

The months of December, January, and February are particularly active on Capitol Hill. Many pending issues may be resolved before the NLS, and additional issues and proposals may emerge. To ensure that our priorities are timely and relevant, ACCT and AACC finalize the green sheet in the days leading up to the NLS.

To assist attendees in preparing for NLS, ACCT and AACC have provided an overview of several topics that are likely to be included as priorities during February's NLS. We recommend utilizing the priorities below to develop your advocacy plan for the NLS, recognizing that the specific priorities to be suggested by ACCT and AACC will differ from these to some extent.

REAUTHORIZE THE HIGHER EDUCATION ACT (HEA)

SHORT-TERM PELL GRANTS

Community colleges offer many short-term, high quality workforce programs that do not currently qualify for Pell Grants because they are less than two-thirds of a year in length (or 600 clock hours) and/or 15 weeks. Eligibility for shorter-term programs should be established, with appropriate safeguards.

- Short-term training programs offer opportunities for students to quickly increase their skill level and earning potential. Program cost remains a barrier for many low-income students.
- Lowering the threshold for Pell Grant eligibility to 150 clock hours will enable more individuals to access training programs for jobs in high-need fields.
- Community college workforce training programs are subjected to ongoing scrutiny and quality control measures by a variety of public and private parties.

INCREASE THE PELL GRANT MAXIMUM AWARD

Through the reauthorization of HEA, Congress should boost the maximum grant and provide annual inflationary increases to the maximum award using mandatory funding.

- Pell Grants assist low-income students with tuition and fees and all other college expenses.
- Increasing the maximum award helps diminish the cost of attendance for low-income students, while also reducing their need to borrow.

SECOND CHANCE PELL GRANTS

Scores of community and technical colleges partner with correctional institutions to offer postsecondary programs for incarcerated individuals. However, for more than 20 years, incarcerated individuals who have been

prohibited from using Pell Grants to cover tuition, fees, and course materials. Congress should overturn the ban on Pell for incarcerated individuals.

- Investing in postsecondary programs in correctional facilities has reduced prison expenditures, recidivism, and unemployment among formerly incarcerated individuals. It is a prudent and far-sighted investment.

SUPPORT STATE INVESTMENTS IN LOWERING THE COST OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Congress should create a federal-state partnership to dramatically enhance college affordability or create tuition-free community college. The federal investment should require states to increase their support of postsecondary education.

- The impact on college affordability of increased federal need-based student aid is limited if states subsequently disinvest in higher education.
- Tuition matters for low-income students. In the fall of 2020, the average cost of attendance for a full-time student at a two-year public institution was $12,850, including $3,770 in tuition and fees. A maximum Pell Grant covers only half of that full cost of attendance.

INVEST IN EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

SUPPORT STUDENT ACCESS AND SUCCESS

Increase the Pell Grant maximum award while protecting the program's reserve fund. Funding increases should also be provided for the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG), Federal Work-Study, TRIO, GEAR UP, and Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) programs.

STRENGTHEN UNDER-RESOURCED INSTITUTIONS

Increase funding for institutional aid programs, including: Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), Title III-A Strengthening Institutions program; Strengthening Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs); Tribal Colleges; and other programs serving traditionally underrepresented populations.

BOLSTER JOB TRAINING AND CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Enhance funding for Perkins Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, Adult Basic and Literacy Education State Grants, state grants under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), and the National Science Foundation's Advanced Technological Education (ATE) program. Congress should also provide dedicated community college funding to expand job training programs in in-demand industries.

SUPPORT DREAMERS

ESTABLISH A PATH TO CITIZENSHIP FOR DREAMERS

Enact the Dream Act to provide Dreamers with the opportunity to obtain Permanent Legal status. The Dream Act provides a path to citizenship for undocumented young people, including the thousands of students currently enrolled in the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. These individuals were brought to the U.S. as minors and frequently have no ties to the countries from which they came. The Dream Act is needed to enable them to reach their full potential.

Tips for a Successful Virtual Meeting

Considering the ongoing pandemic, meetings with federal policymakers and their staff members that are scheduled in conjunction with ACCT's 2021 National Legislative Summit will be held virtually. As you prepare for your meetings, below are some helpful tips:

★ **Take a detail-oriented approach to scheduling virtual meetings:** There are many different platforms that can be used to hold virtual meetings, including Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, and conference lines. When scheduling meetings with offices, be sure to ask which platform they prefer and ensure call-in or log-in information is shared with all attendees prior to the meeting. Testing the call-in number or link ahead of time will also help avoid mix-ups or technical difficulties on the day of the meeting.

★ **Have a plan for the structure of the meeting:** Coordinate with others before the meeting to determine who will start the meeting, lead introductions, close the meeting, etc. You will probably also want to establish the topics each attendee will speak about and in what order to help keep the meeting on track and ensure every attendee plays a role.

★ **Be on time, flexible, friendly, and brief**: Log-in or call-in early and be willing to wait. **Meeting with staff can be as productive as seeing the Member personally**. *Flexibility* is important because Members' schedules get re-prioritized at a moment's notice. Stick to the issues and the facts, and don't unduly extend the meeting. Congressional staff are friendly and open to meeting with visitors from the state or district they represent.

★ **Have college specific information on hand to share:** Institution specific information, including student demographics, enrollment trends, and examples of existing partnerships with outside stakeholders will help inform policy decisions made by Members of Congress. To further familiarize your representative or senator with your college, you can offer to facilitate a virtual tour of your campus (if feasible).

★ **Ask about your Member's priorities**: As with any good relationship, it is important to have give and take. Ask your Member what his or her priorities are—doing so presents an excellent opportunity to find out more about his or her interests and agenda. This discussion may also yield other opportunities to work together on additional issues.

★ **Ask for support**: Your representative, your senator, or their staff should be able to give you an indication of the member's level of support for community college priorities. It is appropriate for you to ask their position.

★ **ACCT and AACC**: Remind Members and their staff that ACCT and AACC are two national associations that represent community college trustees and CEOs, respectively, and are

headquartered in Washington, D.C. They are available and always willing to provide information on community college issues.

★ **Virtual Photo Op:** If you are using a video platform to meet with your representative, senator, or their staff, ask if you can take a picture of the screen during the meeting. If you are not using a video platform, you can either recycle a picture from previous years or find a photo from your college or community that captures the spirit of the meeting. You can use the photo to thank the Member and their staff on social media or to accompany a news release for your local newspaper. This will help communicate that you are working on behalf of your community and yield positive publicity for your college.

★ **Exchange Follow Up Information and Share Leave Behind Materials**: Towards the end of the meeting, ask the staffer for their email address and let them know to expect a follow up email. The email should include contact information for all meeting attendees as well as any leave behinds you would like to share (especially a one-sheet overview of your college). Remember to start the email with a thank you!

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NLS Pre-Departure Check List

☐ Appointment information – date, time, platform, and names, e-mail addresses, and numbers of staff with whom you have spoken.

☐ Know your community – be able to explain briefly and clearly the needs of the community, how your community is changing, and how the college is responding to these changes.

☐ One-page profile/summary of your community college.

☐ Legislator background information.

☐ Completed federal funds worksheet that shows the impact federal dollars have at your college and for your students.

☐ Record of issues on which you have previously contacted the legislator.

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Keep the Momentum Going After the Meeting is Over

Send Thank-You Emails

★ A thank-you email is not only polite, but also provides an opportunity to follow up on key topics discussed during the meeting. Send an email to both the member of Congress (you can send it to the Scheduler to pass on to the Member) and to participating staff. It can be a useful reminder for your congressional offices to follow up on further conversations, research, or commitments made during your meeting.

Promote the Visit

★ Utilize social media or a press release to publicize the visit. When quoting members of Congress, work with their press offices to first gain approval.

Maintain Contact

★ Often the communication ends when the meeting is over. Keep the relationships going by engaging with staff regarding campus activities. This could include forwarding a campus newsletter or newspaper article to a relevant staff member.

★ Make sure your Representatives and their staff members know that you are an informational resource. You now have a staff contact in that office. Make good use of it!