

September 30, 2025

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Room S-230, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Room H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Room S-221, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Room H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Thune, Speaker Johnson, and Minority Leaders Schumer and Jeffries:

On behalf of the American Council on Education and the undersigned higher education associations, I write to urge Congress to ensure that all funds allocated for fiscal year (FY) 2026 be spent by the administration as intended, which may require detailed legislative language and other procedural safeguards. The ultimate goal should be to provide stability, certainty, and transparency as the Office of Management and Budget apportions funds and agencies implement programmatic funding levels approved by Congress. We appreciate the bipartisan support for students in higher education and hope that Congress can reach an agreement to keep the government open without any lapse in funding.

This year, colleges and universities across the country have struggled to navigate the ongoing uncertainty around the availability and distribution of FY 2025 funds, which has harmed institutional efficiency as well as the quality of the academic experience for students. Agencies have been slow to distribute funds, leaving institutions anxiously waiting for communication on the status of funding for new grants and contracts. Some institutions have had expected continuation grant funds halted mid-project and have often been unable to receive a clear answer as to why. Congress must put an end to these chaotic administrative processes.

In recent months, many members of Congress have exerted enormous effort to support institutions in their states and districts that have been negatively impacted by the uncertain availability of FY 2025 funds. In the best cases, members have been forced to do even more work by weighing in to help restore funding and encourage the timely disbursement of new grants. However, even with this support, billions of dollars appropriated by Congress for FY 2025 remain in limbo. Some agencies, such as the Department of Education, have terminated FY 2025 funding for programs identified in law to repurpose the funding to other programs without congressional approval. These unprecedented actions have significantly impacted students and families as the programs designed to serve them have been subjected to unanticipated disruptions and even elimination through no fault of their own. Further withholding of federal investments in higher education approved by Congress will result in reduced funding for workforce development programs; decreased enrollment of graduate and postdoctoral students; and weaken the support many students need to succeed in college.

As FY 2026 approaches, higher education leaders continue to work with appropriators to address key priorities and how they align with the goals of Congress. However, the continued uncertainty surrounding the availability of FY 2025 funds partially overshadows this process and dramatically complicates planning.

We therefore urge Congress to ensure that all FY 2026 appropriations bills contain legislative language mandating that the administration allocate funds as directed by Congress. We further hope that the finalization of the FY 2026 appropriations process proceeds expeditiously and urge swift and final passage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ted Mitchell".

Ted Mitchell
President

AACTE: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
Achieving the Dream
ACPA-College Student Educators International
American Association of Colleges and Universities
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine
American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
American Association of Community Colleges
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Association of University Professors
American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges
American College Health Association
American Council of Learned Societies
American Council on Education
American Dental Education Association
American Psychological Association
Associated Colleges of the Midwest
Association for Institutional Research
Association of American Law Schools
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of American Universities
Association of Community College Trustees
Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges
Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities
Association of Independent Colleges & Universities in Massachusetts
Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Pennsylvania
Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Rhode Island
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Association of Research Libraries
Association of Schools Advancing Health Professions
Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health
College and University Professional Association for Human Resources
Complete College America
Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges
Council for Christian Colleges and Universities
Council for Opportunity in Education

Council of Graduate Schools
Council of Independent Colleges
Council on Social Work Education
EDUCAUSE
Great Lakes Colleges Association
Higher Education Loan Coalition
Higher Learning Commission
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
Independent Colleges of Indiana
Independent Colleges of Washington
Michigan Independent Colleges and Universities
NAFSA: Association of International Educators
NASPA-Student Affairs in Higher Education
National Association for College Admission Counseling
National Association of College and University Business Officers
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators
National Council for Community and Education Partnerships
New England Commission of Higher Education
North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities
Phi Beta Kappa Society
State Higher Education Executive Officers Association
UPCEA
Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities

Cc:

The Honorable Susan Collins, Chair, Senate Committee on Appropriations
The Honorable Patty Murray, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Appropriations
The Honorable Tom Cole, Chairman, House Committee on Appropriations
The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member, House Committee on Appropriations