

Washington Insights & Highlights

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NEH Announces Supplemental Grant Funding for Nonprofit Organizations

On April 20, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) [announced](#) emergency relief grants for the “nonprofit humanities sector.” Funded through the CARES Act (P.L. 116-136), the NEH CARES: Cultural Organizations Grants are designed to provide emergency relief and to aid organizations, including colleges and universities, in supporting projects and retaining and hiring humanities staff during the coronavirus pandemic. Guidelines for the application are available on the NEH [website](#), along with contact information based on organization type. Awardees will be granted up to \$300,000 and will support projects from June 15, 2020 to December 31, 2020. Grant applications are due May 11, 2020.

CGS Joins Letter to Agencies on Value of International Students

On April 30, CGS joined 61 additional higher education associations on a [letter](#) sent to the Departments of Homeland Security, State, and Labor in response to the President’s recent [Presidential Proclamation](#) temporarily suspending immigration. Although the proclamation does not currently impact international students, the Secretaries have been instructed to examine the suspension of nonimmigration visas over the next 30 days. The community letter expresses the value international students bring to the United States, and highlights how international students directly contribute to economic growth and play a vital role in shaping higher education, research, and surrounding communities. The higher education community underscores the importance of the federal agencies’ roles in administering policies that advance international students’ education in the United States.

Secretary DeVos Defends Exclusion of DACA and International Students from Aid

Education Secretary Betsy DeVos [defended](#) recently released [guidance](#) that excludes Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and international students from receiving emergency grant aid through the CARES Act (P.L. 116-136). The

department has made available approximately \$6.3 billion for direct support to students during the coronavirus pandemic. Secretary DeVos noted that the CARES Act urges prioritization of U.S. students who are Title IV eligible, despite the fact that these new dollars are not allocated under Title IV. Lawmakers responded through a [letter](#) to the Secretary clarifying the intent of the CARES Act was to be far-reaching. The letter calls for a reversal of the limitation noting many DACA and international students face significant need as the pandemic continues. The Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration has created a webpage with [guidance](#) on tuition, financial aid, and other funding for undocumented students.

Student Veteran Coronavirus Response Act Signed into Law

This week, President Trump signed into law H.R. 6322, the [Student Veteran Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 \(P.L. 116-140\)](#). The legislation would minimize the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on student veterans by ensuring educational benefits will remain available to them. Given that schools and universities adopt new strategies to minimize the impact of the coronavirus disease on students, the law expands on the previously passed [S.3503](#) to provide additional flexibilities. Among the provisions, the law allows the Department of Veterans Affairs to continue providing work study allowances to student veterans even if their employment has been interrupted due to the pandemic. CGS has previously supported this legislation and signed onto a community [letter](#) before it was passed into law.

Second Chance Pell Grant Doubles in Expansion

The Department of Education doubles its Second Chance Pell Grant experiment inviting [67 additional higher education institutions](#) across the country to participate in creating more educational opportunities for incarcerated students. Introduced in 2015, the Second Chance Pell experiment offers need-based Pell Grants to persons in federal and state prisons. In a [statement](#) on April 24, the department named the new cohort of schools as programmatically and regionally diverse and equipped for distance learning, stating, "One-third [of schools] are minority-serving institutions, and...[e]ight schools plan to deliver instruction through innovative and distance delivery methods." The Department has expanded the program to achieve more efficient measuring of the experimental program to better inform congressional leaders.

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