June 15, 2010

U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Include Funding for the Pell Grant Shortfall in Supplemental Appropriations

Dear Representative:

As the House of Representatives considers making supplemental appropriations for this year, we urge you to include the $5.7 billion needed to retire a recession-driven shortfall in the Pell Grant program. Pell Grants are the foundation of all federal financial aid, and the key to nearly nine million students’ and their families’ ability to afford a higher education.

If the shortfall is not covered in supplemental appropriations, low- and middle-income students will face a cut of $845 in the maximum Pell Grant award from the $5,550 Congress has promised them. A cut of this magnitude – more than 15% -- means that hundreds of thousands of students will lose their grants and millions of others will have their awards severely cut. Such a significant reduction, while our economy is still recovering, would seriously harm the ability of deserving students to finish their educations and gain the skills and knowledge necessary to fuel economic growth.

The recently enacted Health Care and Education Affordability Reconciliation Act (HCERA) established a ten-year mandatory funds account for the Pell Grant program, intended to provide annual increases in the maximum award on top of its appropriated base. As part of that legislation, a sizable portion of the existing funding shortfall was retired, but $5.7 billion is still needed in FY 2010 to pay off the remainder.

Additionally, if the current accumulated shortfall is not retired through supplemental appropriations now, the Appropriations Committees will have to pay for the shortfall out of their FY 2011 allocations before spending any additional funds in other areas. In such a tight budget year, this could force the Appropriations Committees to cut funding for other programs to preserve Pell.

As students, parents, faculty, administrators and college presidents, our members see first-hand the impact federal financial aid has on students seeking to earn their educations. Low-income students depend on Pell Grants to afford college. We ask you, on behalf of these students and our members, to include funding for the Pell Grant shortfall in the supplemental appropriations under consideration.

Sincerely,

Molly Corbett Broad
Co-Chairman

David Warren
Co-Chairman
2010 Members

AACRAO: American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
Alliance for Excellent Education
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
American Association of Community Colleges
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Council on Education
American Dental Education Association
American Federation of Teachers
American Student Association of Community Colleges
Association of American Universities
Association of Community College Trustees
Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Coalition for Higher Education Assistance Organization
College Parents of America
Columbia University
Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area
Council for Higher Education Accreditation
Council for Opportunity in Education
Council of Graduate Schools
Council of Independent Colleges
Educational Testing Service
EDUCAUSE
Georgetown University
Harvard University
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Michigan State University
NASSGAP Federal Relations Committee
National Association for College Admission Counseling
National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education
National Association of College and University Business Officers
National Association of College Stores
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs
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National College Access Network
National Council for Community and Education Partnerships
National Council of Higher Education Loan Programs, Inc.
National Education Association
National Education Organization
New York Higher Education Services Corp.
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
The California State University
The College Board
The Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising
The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
The National Collegiate Athletic Association
U.S. Public Interest Research Group
United Negro College Fund
United States Student Association
University of California
University of Maryland System
University of Michigan
University of Southern California
University of Washington
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