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CONGRESSIONAL SCHEDULE

The House and Senate are out of session for the August recess and will return on Monday, September 10, following next week’s Democratic National Convention.

BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS

AAU, APLU ASK ADMINISTRATION TO SUSTAIN STUDENT AID, RESEARCH FUNDING IN FY14 BUDGET

AAU and the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities sent a letter on August 29 to Jeffrey Zients, Acting Director of the Office of Management and Budget, urging the agency to address the associations’ key budget priorities in the President’s FY14 budget.

The letter, signed by the associations’ two presidents, calls on the Administration to continue to prioritize key investments for the future, even as it seeks to reduce budget deficits, stating, “[W]e strongly urge you, as you craft the Administration’s FY 2014 budget, to uphold the President’s demonstrated commitment to invest in student financial aid and scientific research programs that will contribute to future economic growth and security.”

The letter adds, “Given their importance, we ask the Administration to maintain its strong commitment to these programs by recommending funding levels that, at a minimum, keep pace with inflation and create a pathway for sustained growth.”

The letter details a number of priorities, including: student financial aid to ensure access to higher education; support for graduate, international, and STEM (science, technology,
engineering, and mathematics) education; and support for scientific research and the National Endowment for the Humanities. It also reiterates the associations’ previous calls to work for “a major, balanced long-term deficit reduction agreement that will help provide economic stability and prevent the indiscriminate cuts of sequestration in FY2013 and beyond.”

**NDD COALITION PROVIDES SEQUESTRATION TOOLKIT, SCHEDULES NEXT MEETING**

The Nondefense Discretionary (NDD) Summit, a group of organizations that have come together to oppose further cuts in the nondefense discretionary portion of the federal budget, has issued a [grassroots toolkit](#). The toolkit site includes a video, FAQs on sequestration, a flyer, tips for social media, town hall meetings, and press events, and a sample letter to the editor and op-ed.

In addition, the coalition has set its next town hall meeting for Tuesday, September 11. It will take place 3:00-4:30 p.m. at the National Education Association’s Chanin Auditorium, 1201 16th St, NW (corner of 16th and M Streets), Washington, DC. The subject will be sequestration implementation, and the guest speakers will be Robert Gordon, Executive Associate Director, Office of Management and Budget, and Jon Carson, Director of the White House Office of Public Engagement.

**OTHER**

**APPEALS PANEL UPHOLDS FEDERAL FUNDING OF HUMAN EMBRYONIC STEM CELL RESEARCH**

A three-judge panel of the DC Circuit Court of Appeals has upheld a previous court’s ruling in favor of federal funding of human embryonic stem cell (hESC) research. The ruling, issued on August 24, is the latest in the ongoing case of Sherley v. Sebelius, in which two adult stem cell researchers have contended that NIH funding of hESC research is unlawful and should be halted. While this most recent ruling represents a victory for the research community, the panel’s ruling could be appealed to the full Court of Appeals or the U.S. Supreme Court.

**ASSOCIATIONS SUBMIT AMICUS BRIEF ON TEXAS AFFIRMATIVE ACTION CASE**

A group of 40 higher education associations, including AAU, submitted an amicus brief to the U.S. Supreme Court on August 13 addressing the affirmative action case, Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin. The brief was led by the American Council on Education (ACE).

The case involves a challenge to the University’s use of race and ethnicity in admissions decisions. The plaintiffs appealed the case to the Supreme Court after the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit upheld a lower court ruling that the University did not infringe on the civil rights of two white students who were not admitted to the University.

As described by ACE, the associations’ amicus brief focuses on two points: that the educational benefits of a diverse student body are of compelling interest to the government, and that
institutions must be allowed to make their own decisions in determining the composition of their student bodies.

**UC IRVINE SITE OF MANUFACTURING INITIATIVE’S THIRD REGIONAL WORKSHOP**

The Advanced Manufacturing National Program Office (AMNPO), in partnership with state and national organizations, is inviting interested parties to the third in a series of regional workshops to introduce and encourage public discussion of a planned National Network for Manufacturing Innovation (NNMI).

"Designing for Impact III: Workshop on Building the National Network for Manufacturing Innovation" will be held on September 27, 2012, at the Arnold and Mabel Beckman Center of the National Academies of Sciences and Engineering at the University of California, Irvine. Local hosts and co-organizers for this workshop event include the National Academy of Engineering (NAE), the National Academies' University-Industry Research Roundtable (GUIRR) and University-Industry Demonstration Partnership (UIDP), NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), and UC Irvine. **The deadline for registration is September 18 (or earlier if all space is filled).**

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