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CONGRESSIONAL SCHEDULE

The House is adjourned for the year, subject to the call of the chair. The Senate is in pro forma session—to keep the President from making recess appointments—and plans to return to session on November 17 for a lame-duck session. As discussed below, House leaders have not said if the House will also return for a lame-duck session after the November elections.

BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS

SHAPE AND TIMING OF ANTICIPATED SECOND STIMULUS PACKAGE REMAIN UNCLEAR  NEW

CQToday reports that House Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) are calling for Congress to consider a second economic stimulus package after the November elections to supplement the tax-rebate package enacted earlier this year. But it remains unclear how hard the two leaders will push to enact such a package before January, when there will be a new President and new Congress. The Senate plans a post-election, lame-duck session in November, but Speaker Pelosi has not committed to a lame-duck session in the House.

The publication indicates that both leaders are interested in a package of about $150 billion, focused on spending for infrastructure projects, aid for states, and low-income energy assistance, as well as an extension of unemployment benefits. Leaders have not publicly indicated whether they will consider adding funding for research and innovation at the science agencies, as the Senate did in the stimulus bill it considered last month.

The White House and congressional Republicans have opposed a large stimulus package and successfully blocked Senate approval of the bill last month. As CQToday notes, “lame-duck sessions are rarely productive and it may be a leap to expect Republicans to reverse their
opposition to the type of plan Democrats have been touting, particularly if the GOP loses a large number of seats [in the election].”

As part of an effort to build momentum for a stimulus, Speaker Pelosi held a meeting with economists on October 13 to discuss elements of a stimulus package, and she has asked House committee chairmen to hold hearings on what might be included in such a package. Her staff held a meeting on October 16 with various interest groups, including higher education, to discuss and solicit additional ideas for a package.

Last month, the House passed a $60.8-billion stimulus bill (H.R. 7110) focused on added funding for infrastructure projects, food stamps, and Medicaid, and an extension of unemployment benefits. The Senate considered a bill (S. 3604) that, as noted above, also included additional funding for science. The House measure passed by a vote of 263 to 158, but the Senate bill failed to secure the 60 votes needed for approval. President Bush threatened to veto either bill.

**OTHER CONGRESSIONAL ISSUES**

**NO AGREEMENT ON ORPHAN WORKS LEGISLATION**

Despite negotiations that lasted until the final day of the congressional session, House and Senate committee staff members were unable to reach agreement on an orphan works bill (S. 2913, H.R. 5889), pushing off consideration of the legislation to next year and a new Congress.

The bill approved by the Senate on September 26 (S. 2913) was strongly supported by universities, libraries, museums, publishers, and other groups, including the Copyright Office, which conducted the initial study on which orphan works legislation was based. The bill as passed did not include language on state sovereign immunity that posed problems for state entities, including public universities. Provisions governing qualifying searches had been modified by replacing requirements that were excessively burdensome with a search process that provided an effective balance between the interests of users and owners of copyrighted works.

In the week of negotiations that followed Senate approval of S. 2913, differences between supporters of the bill and House Intellectual Property Subcommittee Chairman Howard Berman (D-CA) could not be bridged.

Supporters are expected to reintroduce the Senate bill in the new Congress.

**OTHER**

**AAU INSTITUTIONS URGED TO PARTICIPATE IN FALL 2008 INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ENROLLMENT SURVEY**

AAU is again partnering with a group of higher education associations to conduct the annual fall survey of international student enrollment. AAU institutions are encouraged to complete the fall 2008 enrollment survey before the deadline of Friday, October 24.

Partner organizations in the survey are the American Association of Community Colleges, the American Council on Education, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, the Council of Graduate Schools, the Institute of International Education, NAFSA: Association
of International Educators, and the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges.

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