

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
GRADUATE-PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS

Legislative Letters

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Updates in Higher Education



Image Credit: Kaylynne Glover, "The Capitol"

Congress is in recess, but that doesn't mean nothing is happening. The Department of Education has agreed to investigate trans students being allowed to compete in sports, scientists and analysts in federal agencies continue to leave for speaking out about climate change, and the final rules for the Public Charge guidelines and Endangered Species Act have been published. Legislation has been introduced on student loan transparency and food insecurity while the appropriations committees prepare their numbers (and we're expecting really low numbers for education from the Senate). A lawsuit has been filed against Utah State University for failing to protect a doctoral student from harassment that led to her suicide, and several rulings have been made regarding Title IX and the rights of the accused - the very issue holding up the HEA reauthorization. There's also a lot of reports and relevant reads, including updates on universities banning students from bringing food to their theses defenses and protests over student fees (featuring our own Jon Bomar). And don't forget to register for [this fall's Advocacy Summit and Legislative Action Days!](#)

Kaylynne Glover, NAGPS Director of Legislative Affairs, legislative@nagps.org

2019 ADVOCACY SUMMIT *and* LEGISLATIVE ACTION DAYS

Our fall event is almost upon us, and we are working hard to prepare an amazing event for you. Our fall LAD will be from September 27th through October 1st at the [Hyatt Regency Crystal City](#), and we have an amazing [lineup](#) of sessions and speakers. We're also preparing in-depth training documents, expanding on our previous primers (on [Congress](#) and [Legislative Advocacy](#)) to include the Funding Process, Research Funding, the Main Players in Congress, and a full graduate education Legislative Docket. And we're already beginning work on a dozen different leave-behinds on a variety of topics which will help you and your team customize your pitches to your school's needs.

Don't delay - [Register today!](#)

FAARM Framework for Accountability in Academic Research and Mentoring

Research advisors in the United States must be effective teachers, trainers, and mentors to their graduate students and must take an active role in graduate student success and health.

The Project on the Framework for Accountability in Academic Research and Mentoring (FAARM) is a collaborative effort by graduate students, graduate student organizations (GSOs), and allies to propose measures that federal research funding agencies and other stakeholders in academic research can take to incentivize good training and mentorship practices by federally-funded primary investigators (PIs).

We propose a set of reforms that will address key aspects of this crisis:

- Routine data collection on grad student health and success.
- A standardized addendum for research funding applications asking about the training, mentorship, and professional development practices employed by the PI.
- Develop best practices in graduate student advising and celebrate success.
- Incorporate measures of effectiveness in skills training, mentorship, and job placement in the evaluation processes by which tenure track faculty secure tenure.
- And much more! Contact Daniel Curtis <oneforlogic@gmail.com> or the FAARM Team Primary Contact <faarmteam@gmail.com> to join the project!

THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Transgender Sports Policies Investigation

The conservative organization, Alliance Defending Freedom, [filed a complaint with the Department of Education \(ED\)](#) on behalf of three female track athletes. The complaint claims that the Connecticut Interscholastic Athlete Conference allows “boys who are male in every biological and physiological respect” to compete against girls. The Education Department has agreed to investigate.

As a note, in our last edition, we included a recent [report](#) that revealed that the [ED is failing to respond to LGBTQ discrimination complaints](#).

Student Loan Company CEO Lobbied Against Student Loan Oversight by States

The CEO of Navient, a student loan company contracted with the Department of Education that manages [approximately 25% of all US student loans](#), personally lobbied the ED to keep states from regulating student loan companies. [Jack Remondi contacted the top aide for Secretary Betsy DeVos in September 2017](#) to personally urge that the ED prohibit states from policing student loan companies, a move the Department made in March of 2018.

THE WHITE HOUSE AND OTHER AGENCIES

The Treatment of Climate Science

Dr. Lewis Ziska, a top climate change scientist who has worked in the Agriculture Department at the USDA for over 20 years, [has left over the administration’s treatment of climate science](#), the latest government official to do so. Others include an [intelligence analyst at the State Department](#) and an employee at the [National Park Service](#). Dr. Ziska resigned after the administration attempted to bury a study he published last year that found that [rice is losing nutrients due to increased atmospheric carbon dioxide](#).

Overhaul of the Endangered Species Act

[The final rule change for the Endangered Species Act \(ESA\) is being finalized](#), as announced in a joint statement by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries). The final rule reduces regulations in a way that the administration claims will increase efficiency but preserve wildlife protections. Among the changes are allowing government officials to attach public cost to listing a species on the endangered species list as well as allowing the government to disregard climate change.

IMMIGRATION AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENT CONCERNS

Public Charge Rule

[The final “Public Charge” rule has been published](#) and will go into effect on October 15th. [This rule will prohibit immigrants who may be likely to use certain public benefits from obtaining permanent resident status.](#) In the past, this rule has specifically been interpreted in a way that prohibits long-term or primary dependence on the government, but the rule change would expand this to include short-term benefits as well as socioeconomic factors deemed risk factors. It would also add additional requirements for nonimmigrant students, particularly those requesting an extension of stay or change of status, requiring them to provide evidence that they have not and are not likely to need any prohibited public services. This rule change is expected to further decrease international student enrollment as it may deter foreign students from applying to US institutions.

Concerns over Intellectual Espionage

International scholars and students, particularly those from China, face increased surveillance and scrutiny as concerns over theft of intellectual property which [U.S. intelligence officials have warned is a serious threat to national security.](#) [A 2018 Department of Justice report revealed that over 90% of economic espionage cases involved China,](#) and as a result, many research institutions are [re-evaluating their foreign scholar and student policies.](#) However, others [warn that these efforts may cross the line](#) from seeking reasonable protections to surveillance and will affect long-term research progress. Many, [including the APLU,](#) are calling for strong partnerships between research institutions, federal intelligence, and security agencies in order to ensure research openness and security.

THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

LEGISLATION

Budget

Now that the Budget committees has finished the spending cap deal, [Senate Budget Chairman Mike Enzi \(R-WY\) is proposing changes to the budgetary process:](#) (1) shift the timeline from an annual budget to a biennial budget, set the first year of a new congressional session; (2) hold authorizing committees responsible for fiscal decisions; (3) increase transparency of estimating methods within the Congressional Budget Office (CBO); and (4) increase efficiency on budget voting on the chamber floor.

Appropriations

Congress is officially in recess, but legislators are still working behind the scenes on the appropriations bills that are due October 1st. The combined Labor-HHS-Education and Defense bills are expected to be first up for vote, hopefully early in September. Rumor has it that the Appropriations

Chairman Richard Shelby (R-AL) has already divided the total funds into the 12 separate funding bills and that the funding for Labor-HHS-Education will be somewhere around \$3 billion, with around \$2 billion going to fight the opioid epidemic, leaving relatively little extra for education. If that's the case, however, it will likely be difficult to reach an agreement between the House and Senate, as the House had planned for a \$11.8 billion increase.

Education Legislation

We're still waiting on the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee to finish negotiations over the Higher Education Act (HEA) reauthorization. The reason for the delay hasn't changed: [how exactly should colleges handle sexual misconduct, specifically the rights of the accused](#). Ranking Member Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) is unwilling to support any proposal that would potentially re-traumatize victims, but many Republicans are insistent on allowing cross-examination.

Congress is out of session, but the student loan crisis is still keeping legislators busy. The [Student Loan Disclosure Transparency Act](#) was introduced in the House by a bipartisan group of representatives and is sponsored by Rep. Donna Shalala (D-FL) and Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-FL). This act would require borrowers to receive a monthly loan disclosure statement itemizing the financial impact of that loan, including projected payments, interest, and total cost expected cost.

The bicameral [College Student Hunger Act of 2019](#), sponsored by Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) and Rep. Al Lawson Jr. (D-FL), seeks to expand SNAP eligibility for students, specifically those who qualify for Pell Grants and those who do not contribute to their family income; it also allows students with meal plans to access SNAP benefits. The bill is supported by many higher education advocacy organizations.

HEARINGS AND OVERSIGHT

Student Loan Documents

Leaders of three House committees are demanding documents from the Department of Education and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) related to their [management of student loan servicing companies](#). The committees - Education and Labor, Financial Services, and Oversight - are particularly interested in documents regarding the information-sharing agreements between the two departments that were cancelled as well as those related to state efforts to interfere with student loan records and companies. They have also requested payment and application processing policy documents as well as communication records from the three major companies that work with the ED

THE JUDICIAL BRANCH

THE SUPREME COURT

Potential Title IX Case

[The Supreme Court may end up reviewing a Title IX case after split rulings from two separate federal appeals courts](#) - rulings that mirror the disagreements between conservative and liberal lawmakers. The case involves a former student at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst who was suspended after being accused of assaulting his girlfriend. The Sixth Circuit ruled that cross-examination of the accuser must be allowed by either the accused or their representative and [is the position held by the Department of Education](#); the First Circuit ruled that cross-examination could come from a panel of officials and student representatives, which was the case at Amherst.

LITIGATION

Academic Bullying and Suicide of Doctoral Student at Utah State University

The boyfriend of a now-deceased doctoral student at Utah State University is suing the university on her behalf. [Jerusha Sanjeevi, a doctoral student in clinical psychology, committed suicide in 2017 after being the victim of verbal abuse and racial discrimination by another graduate student in her research lab](#), Tamara Barrett. Barrett and their academic advisor, Michelle Tehee, were reportedly friends, and Barrett received special treatment from Tehee, prioritizing her for the research assignments and awards. The lawsuit alleges that when Sanjeevi reported the behavior, the university failed to respond adequately.

Dartmouth College and Title IX

[Dartmouth College has settled a sexual harassment lawsuit that involved three former professors and nine former and current students](#). The settlement pays out \$14 million for the students who were subject to a toxic and hostile environment from these three professors.

Gender Discrimination and Title IX

[A federal court has ruled that the Gloucester County School Board violated a student's constitutional rights](#). The student, Gavin Grimm, had initially been allowed to use the boys' restrooms when he first began transitioning, but the school changed its policy after a parent complained. [This ruling affirms a previous court decision that expands protection from sex-based discrimination to include gender](#).

IN RELATED NEWS...

CAMPUS CLIMATE

Graduate Student Fees and Food Insecurity

Graduate students are beginning to push back through strikes on protests on the often exorbitant fees they are required to pay. These fees, ranging between \$1,000 and \$4,000, frequently come as a surprise. Many graduate students accept appointments that include tuition waivers that they anticipate will cover the fees as well. And while students do receive stipends, these are often below the living wage and are rarely enough to cover these fees, moreover leave them with financial stability. Students on college campuses have exceptionally [high levels of food insecurity](#), with an estimated 41% of university and 48% of two-year college students being food insecure. That graduate students [have to rely on food banks to survive](#), then is unsurprising, and these added fees only make the situation worse. [NAGPS Director of Employment Concerns, Jon Bomar, spoke to the Washington Post](#) about the impact of these fees.

Catered Thesis and Dissertation Committee Meetings

Some schools have begun to implement policies that [prohibit students from bringing food or drinks to thesis or dissertation meetings](#). For many students, this is a very real obligation, and failing to do so can bring consequences that put their research and degree progress in jeopardy. These culturally-enforced expectations are rarely codified formally, but they add additional pressure in meetings where the student faces intense scrutiny, and expecting students - the only ones in the room who are not earning a living wage - to ensure that their committee members are comfortable is inappropriate.

Academic Bullying

Academic bullying is real and, combined with a poor work-life balance and high levels of financial insecurity, contributes to the growing graduate student mental health crisis. Students face a wide range of inappropriate behaviors including verbal abuse, racial discrimination, and sexual harassment that make degree completion exceptionally difficult. In the wake of a [lawsuit against Utah State University](#) for failing to protect Ph.D. student Jerusha Sanjeevi from repeated bullying, [others are beginning to draw attention to the excessive bullying persistent in academia](#).

RELEVANT READS

Diversity, Inclusion, and Social Justice

[Study: Talking About Mental Health Reduces Stigma Among Students](#)

[International Students Report Worries About Gun Violence](#)

[Higher ed groups push back on calls to monitor Chinese students and scholars](#)

[Concerns About Monitoring of Chinese Students and Scholars](#)

[The Impact of Whiteness on Higher Education Hiring](#)

[The odds are stacked against black, Latino students going to grad school. Here are some solutions](#)
[Dispute Over Minority Affairs, Collapse of a Student Senate](#)
[An Assist for DACA Students](#)
[Several judges accuse American Bar Association of hiding controversy on campus sex rules](#)
[N-Word at the New School](#)
[Sorry, Not Sorry](#) (Professor and student protests)
[Her list gives a lift to minority students in STEM](#)
[Educational tools for Latino students to find success](#)

Career Advice

[Picking Up the Pieces](#) (Manuscript rejection)
[Academics need to apply their own research to transform higher education sector](#)
[Abstract 'Spin'](#)
[Notes on Cynicism](#)
[Mastering Out](#)
[The Self-Aware Leader](#)
[Here's how to foster engagement and improve elearning](#)
[The Weaponization of Academic Citation - Learning Why, Not How](#) (teaching citation use)

The State of Higher Education

[Graduate Students Are Increasingly Shouldering The Country's Student Debt](#)
[The Presumption of Good Faith in Campus Conversation](#)
[Future Trends in Global Higher Education: The impact of the internet of things, artificial intelligence](#)
[Higher Ed Innovation Already Happened](#)
[Summer Reading: How emerging technology is reshaping higher ed](#)
[How to Navigate an Academic Conference](#)
[Study: College Presidents Prioritizing Student Mental Health](#)
[Grad Students Should Consider Administrative Work](#)
[Which Public Schools Burden Students with the Most Debt](#)
[The role of graduate students in higher education institutions](#)
[2019 Student Loan Study Shows Numbers Are Still Massive, And Still On The Rise](#)
[Defending Science Through Its Values](#)
[Pearson Hack Exposes Thousands of Students' Data](#)
[How Higher Ed Is and Is Not Changing](#)

Higher Education Policy

[National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020: House and Senate Proposals](#)
[Moody's Maintains Negative Outlook for Higher Ed](#)
[The Global Evidence Against Free College](#)
[The Benefits of Employer-Provided Education](#)
[The Search for a Moderate Solution to Debt Relief](#)
[Viewpoint: Affordable, accessible public higher ed is critical to our economy](#)
[Turning Point for Student Loans](#) (student loans and debt)
[Bipartisan Push for Student Loan Transparency](#)
[We Must Have Both](#) (Research security and open access)

REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

[A Unified Welfare Analysis of Government Policies, Working Paper, Hendren and Sprung-Keyser.](#) e conduct a comparative welfare analysis of 133 historical policy changes over the past half-century in the United States, focusing on policies in social insurance, education and job training, taxes and cash transfers, and in-kind transfers. For each policy, we use existing causal estimates to calculate both the benefit that each policy provides its recipients (measured as their willingness to pay) and the policy's net cost, inclusive of long-term impacts on the government's budget. We divide the willingness to pay by the net cost to the government to form each policy's Marginal Value of Public Funds, or its "MVPF". Comparing MVPFs across policies provides a unified method of assessing their impact on social welfare. Our results suggest that direct investments in low-income children's health and education have historically had the highest MVPFs, on average exceeding 5. Many such policies have paid for themselves as governments recouped the cost of their initial expenditures through additional taxes collected and reduced transfers. We find large MVPFs for education and health policies amongst children of all ages, rather than observing diminishing marginal returns throughout childhood. We find smaller MVPFs for policies targeting adults, generally between 0.5 and 2. Expenditures on adults have exceeded this MVPF range in particular if they induced large spillovers on children. We relate our estimates to existing theories of optimal government policy and we discuss how the MVPF provides lessons for the design of future research.

[Climate Change and Land, IPCC.](#) An IPCC special report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems.

[Indicators of Higher Education Equity in the United States - 2019 Report, The Pell Institute & PennAHEAD.](#) This 2019 Indicators Report and the earlier reports compile historical statistical data from the nationally representative government statistics including the Census Bureau household studies and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)-sponsored high school and college longitudinal studies which track college entrance and completion by family income, socioeconomic status, and race/ethnicity. The 2018 and 2019 Indicator reports also include data on state variation in related statistics.

[Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education, ACE.](#) This report examines data across 11 chapters that provide a foundation from which the higher education community and its many stakeholders can draw insights, raise new questions, and make the case for why race and ethnicity still matter in American higher education.

[Trust and Mistrust in Americans' Views of Scientific Experts, Pew Research.](#) More Americans have confidence in scientists, but there are political divides over the role of scientific experts in policy issues.

[FSA Quarterly Report on Federal Student Aid Programs, Department of Education.](#) Today, Federal Student Aid released a series of updates to the quarterly application, disbursement, and portfolio reports on its FSA Data Center to include data through March 31, 2019. As part of this release, servicer performance allocation metrics for the period beginning March 1, 2019, were also refreshed. Federal

Student Aid proactively posts these reports in support of open government initiatives to help ensure consistency, increase transparency, and establish self-service opportunities for stakeholders.

[The 2019 Long-Term Budget Outlook in 23 Slides, CBO](#). This presentation summarizes the findings of CBO's recent report The 2019 Long-Term Budget Outlook. CBO has also provided a narrated presentation highlighting the key aspects of the agency's extended baseline projections.

[Sequestration Update Report: August 2019, CBO](#). In a report required by law, CBO provides estimates of the caps on discretionary funding for each fiscal year through 2021. CBO concludes that the discretionary appropriations provided to date for 2019 do not exceed the caps for this year.

[Monthly Budget Review for July 2019, CBO](#). The federal budget deficit was \$867 billion for the first 10 months of fiscal year 2019, CBO estimates, \$184 billion more than the deficit recorded during the same period last year. Revenues were \$92 billion higher and outlays were \$276 billion higher than in the same period in fiscal year 2018.

[The Impact of Various Levels of Federal Debt on GNP and GNP per Capita, CBO](#). In a letter to Congressman Steve Womack, CBO provides additional information about its extended baseline projections and three alternative scenarios from The 2019 Long-Term Budget Outlook. Specifically, CBO provides estimates of gross national product (GNP) and GNP per capita in all four cases.

Want to let us know how we can improve? [Give us feedback!](#)