

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
GRADUATE-PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS

Legislative Letters

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Updates in Higher Education

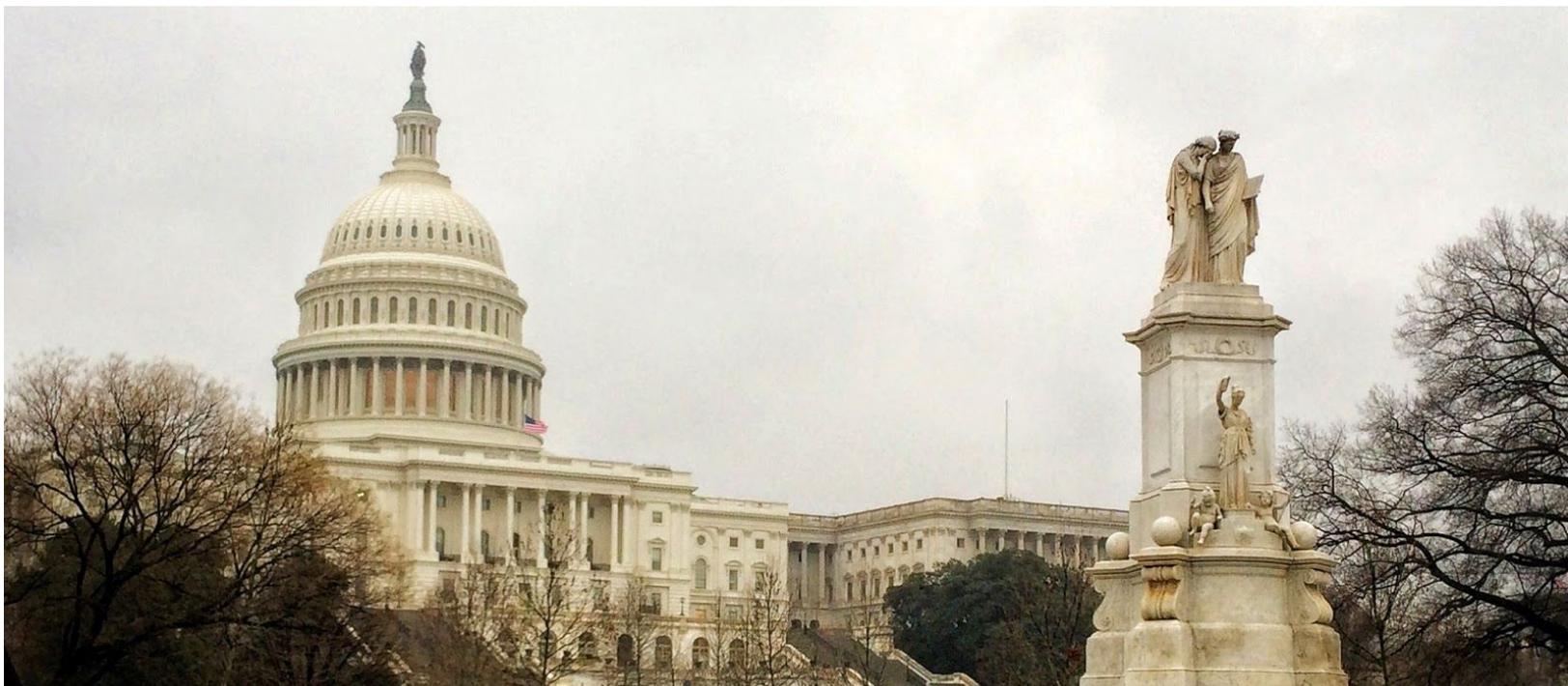


Image Credit: Kaylynne Glover, "The Capitol"

Money from the CARES Act begins to be distributed to colleges and universities, though many do not think it is enough and ask Congress to include more in the coronavirus stimulus. Meanwhile, the question of when the new Title IX regulations should be released continues. President Trump has nominated a new inspector general for the Department of Education. People are beginning to speculate that the chance of the Higher Education Authorization being passed by the end of the year is unlikely. And graduate students are still waiting to see if the funding clocks stop or if they will be at a disadvantage when the pandemic is over.

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THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

CARES Act Money Distribution to Higher Education Institutes

On April 10th, Secretary Betsy DeVos began [distributing the \\$6.28 billion of the \\$14 billion to higher education institutions](#) provided by the CARES Act. Each institution will receive an amount based on the complex formula Congress put in place. In order to make the most of the money. Secretary DeVos is recommending that colleges and universities spend the same amount of the maximum Pell Grant (\$6,195) for each student. The Department of Education is requiring the colleges and universities to guarantee they will use the money as intended before they can acquire it. This money should be used to provide [cash grants to students](#) for expenses caused by COVID-19's impact.

Title IX

Two civil liberties groups (Speech First and Independent Women's Law Center) have asked the Education Department to release the [new Title IX regulations](#), even though many institutions that would be affected are currently closed due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Several Congressional members and attorney generals have asked DeVos to delay the final rule, because it would place more of a burden on institutions during this crisis.

WHITE HOUSE AND OTHER AGENCIES

On April 6th, President Donald Trump nominated [Andrew De Mello](#), a Justice Department tax attorney, to the Senate to be confirmed as the Education Department's inspector general. If confirmed, De Mello would oversee the department distribute the more than \$30 billion to educational institutions.

THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

LEGISLATION

More Money for Higher Education

As Congress begins its planning for a fourth coronavirus bill, [education groups are asking for more money](#). The Association of American Universities, Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, and the American Council on Education have asked Congress for an additional \$46.6 billion for higher education institutions and their students because the current money will not cover all the expenses. This is not including the [lost revenue](#) such as the \$11.6 from closing auxiliary services like resident halls and cafeterias. Research and medical universities are also asking for a separate \$26 billion in

federal aid. Colleges and universities are preparing for more financial distress than they had during the Great Recession.

Higher Education Authorization

Many, including Senator Lamar Alexander [R-TN], have fading hopes for a [Higher Education Authorization](#) (HEA) being passed by the end of the year. While this was a major focus for Alexander and Patty Murray [D-WA], the Chair and Ranking Member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pension committee, at the beginning of the year, the COVID-19 pandemic has shifted attention. Many people who work on the Hill have stated that they have not heard mention of the HEA for several weeks, making it unlikely that the bill will be passed by the end of the year. Murray will continue working on the bill into the next term, but she will have the added challenge of a new Republican leader on the committee since Alexander will be stepping down at the end of 2020.

APPROPRIATIONS AND FUNDING

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GRADUATE SCHOOL AND CAMPUS CLIMATE

Last month, it was quickly decided across the country that the tenure-clocks would stop until the end of the COVID-19 crisis since it would unfairly impact professors' careers otherwise. However, no similar actions have been for [graduate students](#) and their funding around the country. This is a major concern for students, because not being allowed access to their labs, classrooms, and libraries impacts their road to their degrees. Many departments want to help their students, but they have limited resources and options. A few universities, like University of Oregon have hiring freezes for the 6-18 months that includes graduate assistants, though most universities have not included graduate assistants in their freezes.

REPORTS AND RELEVANT READS

The State of Higher Education

[Government cannot forget about higher education amid this crisis](#)

[The Urgency of Reforming Federal Student Aid Policy](#)

REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

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