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## FEDERAL AFFAIRS

### FY 2020 Federal Budget

The President's budget, submitted to Congress in February, continues the Administration's focus on reducing funding for student aid and biomedical research. For all intents and purposes, as all spending bills are originated in the House of Representatives, this legislation is dead on arrival. It does tell you, however, the priorities of this Administration going forward with the (hopeful) reauthorization of the Higher Education Act.

The White House is requesting a five percent cut across federal agencies, except for the Department of Defense, as part of its budget plan for FY 2020, which begins October 1, 2019. The president also has asked for \$8.6 billion for a border wall, and an additional \$3.6 billion in military construction dollars to pay back funds that the administration hopes will be spent this year on the wall. He redirected that money by executive authority after a negotiated bill to fund the remainder of FY 2019 was approved in January. (After a majority in the House and Senate rejected this executive authority, the President's veto was not overridden. This order is still going through the court system.)

The president's annual budget request is not an actual accounting of how Congress eventually will fund the government in any given year. Instead, it's best to think of the president's proposal as a statement of political priorities. President Trump has proposed deep spending cuts on both domestic programs and entitlement programs like Medicare and Social Security in his two previous budget requests, and each time Congress has ignored them. Lawmakers actually provided increases to student financial aid and a substantial increase for research funding in the last two years.

Among the requests for FY 2020, the president's budget includes the following:

- Cuts funding at the Department of Education by 12 percent overall.
- Cuts nearly \$5 billion in funding for the National Institutes of Health.
- Cuts funding for the National Science Foundation by \$700 million.
- Reduces overall Pell Grant funding by \$2 billion.
- Eliminates the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants.
- Cuts over \$207 billion over ten years from student loan programs through changes such as the elimination of Public Service Loan Forgiveness and the elimination of subsidized loans for low-income students.
- Proposes to make short-term training programs eligible for Pell Grants.
- Consolidates the Titles III and V Minority-Serving Institutions programs into a single, formula grant program.
- Makes significant changes to the structure of the TRIO and GEAR-UP programs and cuts funding by \$470 million.

The proposed cuts come just as Congress needs to decide whether to lift spending caps put into place by law in 2011. Unless Congress acts to raise them this year (also known as the sequester), the non-discretionary spending cap—which covered the Department of Education and research programs funded by other agencies would fall 9 percent, to \$542 billion.

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The debate on spending and budget caps complicated further by negotiations to raise the debt ceiling, which kicked back in on March 2. Through fiscal maneuvering, the federal government can stay solvent until about September, but that is when the debate over how much funding to approve for FY 2020 and whether to extend the debt ceiling may come to a head.

### Congressional Black Caucus Comes to Wayne State University

On March 29, 2019, Congresswoman Brenda Lawrence led a delegation of several members of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) to Detroit, Michigan. This is the first of several “talking sessions” the CBC will have, nationwide, regarding a wide array of issues. This one focused on the issue of women regarding the judicial, economic, academic and legislative systems, with a key emphasis on millennial women.

In attendance were the Chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus, Rep. Karen Bass (D-CA); Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX); Rep. Joyce Beatty (D-OH); Rep. Val Butler Demings (D-FL); Rep. Robin Kelly (D-IL) and Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-MN). A morning session was held at Wayne State, followed by a luncheon and a two-hour town hall meeting. During the town hall meeting, Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-MI) gave remarks. Rep. Lawrence was very impressed with how the team worked to make everything come together, and promised to hold similar events at Wayne State University in the future.

### HEA Reauthorization

The Higher Education Act (HEA), first signed into law in 1965, is supposed to be renewed every five years. The last reauthorization, however, was in 2008, enacted through a bill known as the Higher Education Opportunity Act.

The HEA is the single most important piece of legislation overseeing the relationship between the federal government, colleges and universities, and students. It authorizes various federal aid programs within the Department of Education that support students pursuing a postsecondary education, including grant programs that support efforts to expand and increase access for low-income and first-generation students, such as Pell Grants. The HEA also includes rules and regulations that higher education institutions must comply with to be eligible for Title IV federal student aid programs, including the Clery Act, which requires annual campus crime reports; rules governing the accreditation process; and financial responsibility requirements.

With Sen. Lamar Alexander’s (R-TN) announcement in December 2018 that he will not seek reelection in 2020, speculation is that Congress might step up efforts to pass a reauthorization bill this year. Senator Alexander chairs the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) and has been a commanding voice on higher education issues since first being elected in 2003. He also served as Secretary of Education under President George H. W. Bush, as well as president of the University of Tennessee. On the House side, Rep. Bobby Scott (D-VA) is the Chairman of the Education and Labor Committee. If we do not see a draft of a bill by Memorial Day, in all likelihood, nothing will be accomplished along the line of comprehensive HEA reform as both parties are gearing up for a Presidential re-election.

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## STATE RELATIONS

### Legislation

We are monitoring the following pieces of legislation introduced during the current session:

- *SJR E* - seeks to amend the Michigan Constitution to require that meetings (not just “formal sessions”) of the public university governing boards are open to the public.
- *HJR F* - seeks to amend the Michigan Constitution and eliminate School Aid Fund utilization for higher education.
- *Mortuary Science Legislative Fix* – Sen. Stephanie Chang has agreed to introduce a bill to seek a change to state law needed for our Mortuary Science program.
- *Sexual Assault Legislation*:
  - *HB 4380* – Creates a higher education sexual assault prevention, advocacy and resource officer in the Michigan Department of Civil Rights
  - *HB 4381* – Creates the sexual assault response improvement plan and grant act
  - *HB 4383* – Prohibits using position of authority to prevent reporting of certain crimes to the university Title IX coordinator

## COMMUNITY RELATIONS

On March 29, 2019, the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) in Washington DC held an all-day event at Wayne State in the McGregor Memorial Conference Center. The event was titled **Congressional Black Caucus Economic Security: Elevating Women out of Poverty through Education, Entrepreneurship, and Equal Access**. Congresswoman Brenda Lawrence, Michigan’s 14<sup>th</sup> Congressional District and Second Vice Chair of the CBC, served as the host for this conference. The Detroit conference was the first stop in a series of six states across the country. The agenda for the conference consisted of the following:

- A panel discussion on the The State of Black Women: The New Face of Poverty in Today’s Economy.
- A luncheon and panel discussion of Young, Gifted, and Black Millennial Women Take Their Seat at the Table
- The State of Black America Community Town Hall

The following members of the CBC were in attendance:

- Congresswomen Brenda Lawrence,
- Congresswoman Karen Bass California’s 37<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, and Chair of the CBC,
- Congresswoman Joyce Beatty, Ohio’s 3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District,
- Congresswoman Val Demings, Florida’s 10<sup>th</sup> Congressional District,
- Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, 18<sup>th</sup> Congressional District of Texas,
- Congresswoman Robin Kelly, 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District of Illinois,
- Congresswoman Ilhan Omar, 5<sup>th</sup> Minnesota’s 5<sup>th</sup> Congressional District.

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President Wilson brought greetings on the behalf of Wayne State University during the luncheon. WSU students also attended the luncheon and panel discussion. More than 150 people attended the State of Black American Community Town Hall meeting. Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib Michigan's 13h Congressional District brought welcoming remarks during the Town Hall meeting.

## **OUTREACH AND ADVOCACY**

### WSU Warrior Day

On Tuesday, March 19, we took two faculty members and 25 students, many from the Honors College, to Lansing for our 3rd annual Warrior Day. Students met with their legislators to advocate for increased state funding for the university. The main points that we conveyed were:

- 1) We support Governor Whitmer's FY2020 budget proposal for a 3% increase in higher education funding and
- 2) Restore Wayne State's funding to the FY2011 level which would require a \$11.8 million payment

In addition to meetings with legislators, Kelley Cawthorne organized a number of speakers to address our group, including:

- Senator Marshall Bullock II, Senate District 4, Detroit;
- Representative Sherry Gay-Dagnogo, Chair, Detroit Caucus;
- Senator Kim LaSata, Chair, Appropriations Subcommittee on Universities and Community Colleges;
- Lt. Governor Garlin Gilchrist; and
- Greg Bird, Director of Legislative Affairs, Governor Whitmer.

In the morning, students were introduced on the Senate Floor by Sen. Adam Hollier and briefly toured the capitol, including the Governor's ceremonial office.

Students were encouraged to follow up with their legislators with thank you notes and a number of students shared action items with our office from legislators including requests for additional information and tours of campus.

Photos from the day can be found

here: <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.2297904347125129&type=1&l=797f0a0c9d>

### Press conference with Congressman Andy Levin

On Thursday, March 21, Michelle Luck, Associate Director of Business & Fund Management with WSU's Office of Student Financial Aid, sat down with Congressman Andy Levin to discuss the importance of federally subsidized student financial aid. This was initially scheduled as a press conference at FernCare free health clinic in Ferndale; however, press was not in attendance. Congressman Levin streamed the discussion via his FaceBook Live account. Michelle explained the history and policy behind federally subsidized student financial aid and gave examples of why this funding is so important for WSU students.