



FY 2011 Appropriations Request of the Student Aid Alliance

Without the partnership between the federal government, states, institutions and families, millions of students would not be able to go to college. In our FY 2011 appropriations request, we call on Congress to continue its bipartisan support of the federal student aid programs – which combine grant, work-study, and loan programs to enable low-income students to succeed. Since the onset of the economic downturn two years ago, college enrollment has surged, and federal student aid applications have increased by almost 20 percent. We believe these appropriated student aid programs are critical to the access, persistence and completion of college degrees by low-income students.

The Student Aid Alliance is a coalition of organizations representing students, parents, colleges and universities, and others, who believe that all qualified students should be able to go to college, regardless of their financial resources.

The Pell Grant Maximum should be \$5,710. Congress should meet the president's request of raising the Pell Grant maximum to \$5,710, a \$160 increase over the current level. This amount represents an appropriated base, plus a mandatory add-on. The economic downturn has resulted in increased enrollment in higher education, and increased eligibility for federal aid, with the number of Pell Grant recipients increasing by one million students in two years. At \$5,710, the Pell Grant will assist nearly 400,000 more students than last year, and over a million more than FY 2009.

LEAP should not be eliminated, as proposed by the president's budget, but rather, increased to \$200 million. This federal-state partnership program has been the foundation of state-matched grants since 1972, generating more than one billion dollars for about one million students each year. The Grants for Access and Persistence (GAP) component of LEAP will allow states to create robust partnerships with institutions of higher education, businesses, and philanthropic organizations to provide low-income students with the additional need-based grants; early intervention; and early assurance of aid eligibility that equals success. GAP can play a critical part in meeting the president's 2020 goal of increased college graduation in the United States.

SEOG funding should be increased to \$1 billion. The Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG) program provides up to an additional \$4,000 in grant assistance to Pell Grant recipients in order of need. SEOG expands college options for these students. By law, colleges and universities match one-to-three the federal SEOG funds, and often far exceed this matching level, multiplying the federal investment in low-income students.

Federal Work Study funding should be increased by \$300 million. The House jobs bill proposes to provide an additional \$300 million for the Federal Work Study program, because it has proven to be an efficient program, and effective investment to keep students employed and in college, rather than dropping out and getting in unemployment lines. The stimulus funds provided for FWS in 2009,

provided jobs for an additional 162,000 students, who would have otherwise had to borrow more to stay in school.

Perkins Loan Capital should be funded at \$300 million; Perkins Loan Cancellations should be fully funded at \$125 million. While Congress deliberates legislation restructuring the Perkins Loans program, we ask appropriators to increase funding for capital contributions to the authorized level of \$300 million. This will allow institutions to continue to provide loans to low-income students before any new structure is in effect in 2012. Institutions continue to front loan cancellations for qualifying borrowers in public service jobs that should be repaid by the federal government, as statute requires.

TRIO funding should be increased to \$1 billion to prevent the loss of 200 Upward Bound programs, an unfunded mandate in Talent Search, and the continued stagnation of other TRIO programs. Without the inclusion of \$57 million in additional discretionary funding, about 200 Upward Bound programs will be lost in academic year 2011-2012. Meanwhile, Talent Search programs will need \$35.8 million to enable just 15% of its students to receive services to support successful completion of rigorous secondary curricula, as mandated by HEOA. Finally, an additional \$57.2 million will allow for the restoration and expansion of the remaining TRIO programs (Educational Opportunity Centers, Student Support Services, Veterans Upward Bound, Upward Bound Math-Science, and McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement), which will be critical to meeting the Administration's stated goal of emerging first in the world for college completion by 2020.

GEAR UP should be funded at \$400 million. GEAR UP provides early college awareness activities, tutoring, mentoring, academic preparation, and college scholarships to improve access to higher education for low-income students. This partnership program requires cooperation among K-12 schools, colleges, state higher education entities, businesses, and community-based organizations. By leveraging private matching resources to supplement the federal investment, GEAR UP significantly increases the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in college.

Graduate level programs should be increased to \$126 million. Supporting the need-based graduate education programs that will create the next generation of scholars, faculty, and experts in a wide spectrum of fields will help address pressing national issues and the challenges of our economic downturn. Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need should be funded at \$40 million. The Jacob K. Javits Fellowship program should be funded at \$16 million. McNair Postsecondary Achievement, a TRIO program, should be funded at \$50 million. The Thurgood Marshall Legal Educational Opportunity Program should be funded at \$5 million and the new Patsy T. Mink program should be funded at \$15 million.

