



Howdy, Aggies!

While our students are away for Spring Break, we would like to catch you up on legislative issues emanating from Washington, D.C. Last month, the U.S. House of Representatives released committee assignments, and we offer our congratulations to the three Aggies on their selections to important groups within the legislative body. Tuesday, the Trump Administration released their budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2020. (Read the entire proposal [here](#)). As with every administration's annual budget, this proposal will go through the committee, mark-up, authorization, and appropriations process in both chambers of Congress. In addition, the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee announced several hearings that will take place in the near future, including much anticipated discussion about reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA).

In this edition of the newsletter, you will also find an interesting Forbes article about the current state - and potential future - of higher education in America.

Last, but definitely not least, State Rep. Brad Buckley '89, DVM gives us insight into his time at Texas A&M, and in his new role as a state representative for District 54 (Killeen).

Thanks & gig 'em.

Dave Fujimoto '17

Director of Strategic Engagement

Aggies in the 116th Congress

We would like to take a moment to acknowledge and congratulate the following Aggie representatives on their U.S. House committee assignments:

Louie Gohmert '75

- House Committee on Natural Resources
- House Committee on the Judiciary

Bill Flores '76

- House Committee on the Budget
- House Committee on Energy and Commerce

Will Hurd '99

- House Committee on Appropriations
- House Committee on Intelligence

To view the full list of House of Representative committee assignments, click [here](#).

POLITICO: Trump Budget Proposal Seeks Expansion of Pell Grants

By Michael Stratford (POLITICO)

03/11/2019 12:30 PM EDT

President Donald Trump's budget proposal for the 2020 fiscal year again seeks to expand Pell grants for short-term training while also cutting a range of other student aid programs.

The proposal unveiled today seeks \$62 billion for the Education Department, a 12 percent reduction compared to current funding, which expires Sept. 30. That figure includes a \$1.4 billion cancellation of the surplus in the Pell Grant program.

Without the Pell cancellations, Trump's budget would decrease Education Department spending by \$7.1 billion or 10 percent.

The Trump administration's budget again proposes allowing students to use Pell Grants for "high-quality, short-term training" programs. The expansion of Pell would cost \$416 million over the next decade according to the administration. It would be paid for through a reallocation of mandatory spending on the program.

Trump's budget again proposes a range of cuts to student aid that Congress has rejected over the past two years. For instance, the administration seeks to cut by more than half the funding for the Federal Work Study program. The budget would cut spending on the program from \$1.1 billion to \$500 million.

The budget would reduce spending on Federal TRIO programs, which help low-income student prepare for and enroll in college. The budget seeks \$950 million for the program, down from the current nearly \$1.1 billion.

The administration again is proposing to eliminate the interest rate subsidy on some federal student loans, Public Service Loan Forgiveness and Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants.

In addition, the budget requests \$1.8 billion for student loan servicing, a \$133 million increase from the current year. The funding would support the Trump administration's "NextGen" plan to overhaul how the federal government collects federal student loans.



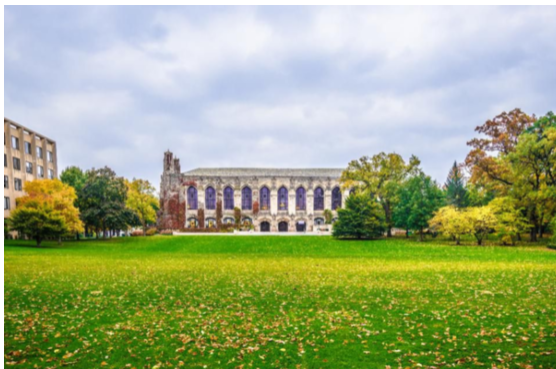
Higher-Education Law Before 2020?

"Senator Lamar Alexander, a Republican of Tennessee, confirmed that he hopes to get the Higher Education Act reauthorized within the next year. Doing so could cement his legacy as a bipartisan

dealmaker as chairman of the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

"At the top of Alexander's list is his long-term goal of simplifying the Free Application for Federal Student Aid by paring the number of questions a student must answer from 108 to 25 or fewer."

Read more from The Chronicle of Higher Education [here](#).



Is This Higher Education's Golden Age, Gilded Age, Or Beginning Of A Gentle Decline?

"There are some early signs of decline. Total higher education enrollments have been falling for the past seven years, an unprecedented historical event during a period of peace (more or less) and prosperity. While America still dominates world rankings of universities, its share of the top 100 or so schools is beginning to decline, as is the proportion of American Nobel Prize winners. Public support is ebbing somewhat, with inflation-adjusted expenditures by state governments lower on a per student basis than a decade or more ago. The press is talking more about non-collegiate paths to vocational success, such things as attending burgeoning coding academies or training in high demand blue collar skills such as welding."

To find out more about the future of higher education from Forbes, click [here](#).

Aggie Spotlight:
Rep. Brad Buckley
'89, DVM

Q: Please provide some short biographical data about where you grew up and what led you to attend Texas A&M.

A: I was born and raised in rural Bell County, graduated from C.E. Ellison High School in Killeen and always dreamed of becoming a veterinarian. My desire to practice veterinary medicine led me to Texas A&M.



Q: What activities did you participate in during your time at Texas A&M? How did these activities, and your unique Aggie experience, prepare you for your career and time in public office?

A: Saddle and Sirloin and eventually serving as an officer of my veterinary class highlighted to me the need to participate in activities that valued service and accomplishing goals for the common good.

Q: Describe your post-college career and your decision to enter public service. What role do the Aggie Values play in your life & career?

A: After graduating and beginning my career as a veterinarian, I began to become involved in my local community. From the chamber of commerce to non-profit boards, my experience at Texas A&M continued to drive me to serve. Eventually I was elected twice to the Killeen ISD Board of Trustees and this launched me on the path to eventually run for higher office

Q: What are the biggest challenges you think you will face as an elected official? What are your biggest individual or group accomplishments prior to serving in the state legislature?

A: The biggest challenge facing me as an elected official is balancing my service in the Texas Legislature with my family commitments and my service to my clients and patients as a veterinarian. My greatest accomplishment prior to serving in the Texas Legislature is marrying my wife, Susan, and raising three Aggies that are leading lives of success and service.

Q: What are your views of the role of the state in higher education?

A: The State of Texas must continue to support higher education because a highly skilled, well-trained workforce is crucial if our economy is to remain the best in the nation. The dollars invested in higher education easily return a tremendous ROI for our state and its citizens.

Q: What is your favorite memory from your time at Texas A&M?

A: My favorite memory of Texas A&M University is the lifelong bonds created between myself and my veterinary classmates. The rigorous curriculum and everyone pulling together for a common goal forged friendships I have to this day. Texas A&M University and being a proud former student continues to bless

my life and my family's life in so many ways. Being able to share the rich traditions of Aggieland with my kids has been extra special.

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