

Director's Letter

Howdy, Aggies!

The Association and the University appreciate your continued interest in the Advocacy program. Your understanding and support of higher education-related legislation - and its impact on Texas A&M - is a key component of our success. Over the past month, we have welcomed over 180 former students into the program and we look forward to their contributions going forward.

At the state level, incumbents and challengers have completed the primary process and are gearing up for the general elections in November. The majority of interim committees have completed their work and reported their findings - including those committees which explored higher education issues in Texas. In addition, our partners in Government Relations reported that Texas A&M is in the process of finalizing Legislative Appropriations Request to the Texas Legislature. The LAR contains the university's funding priorities for the 86th legislative session. The latest Texas A&M GR update is also enclosed in this newsletter.

At the federal level, Democrats have introduced their bill to reauthorize the Higher Education Act called the AIM Higher Act. This comes almost a year after the Republican proposal, which is known as the PROSPER Act. Neither bill is expected to pass this Congress, and both proposals demonstrate the stark differences of both parties on how to "fix" higher education.

2018 has also seen its share of national polling and reports on higher education in America. Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce recent report made several predictions about the job market in 2020. The key takeaway for universities is the post-secondary skills required to successfully compete in the fastest growing fields for the jobs of the future. Columbia University also released a report about the issue of colleges and universities creating not only private or individual good, but "public" good in their local communities and states.

Lastly, the Public Higher Education Legislative Advocacy Program Conference was recently held at Georgia Tech. After being welcomed by Georgia Tech president "Bud" Peterson '85 (a former vice chancellor at Texas A&M), 80 peers from flagship universities across the U.S. shared best practices in legislative advocacy. Our goal is to use that knowledge to improve the Texas A&M Advocacy program, and better support our constituents.

Thanks and gig 'em,

Dave Fujimoto '17
 Director of Strategic Engagement

Follow Us On Social Media!

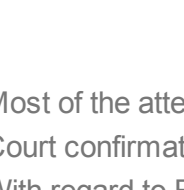


State Interim Committee Update

The Joint Interim Committee on Higher Education Formula Funding held a series of hearings in Austin during the month of

March. Formula funding is a very important issue because it largely determines the amount of funds provided to Texas A&M through direct appropriations from the state Legislature. This committee heard testimony from a series of experts, including members of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, as well as chancellors and presidents from all of Texas's major public universities. Two former students also served on this committee – Tent Ashby '95 (co-chair) and John Raney '69. In April, the committee members delivered their report to Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick. While formula funding will continue to be debated in the upcoming session, the interim committee made the following recommendations:

- The Legislature should continue to study, develop, and implement an outcomes-based funding system for institutions.
 - a. The Legislature, university systems, and independent universities should continue working together through the interim to develop legislation that establishes an outcomes-based formula.
 - b. When developing an outcomes-based system, the state's goals and objectives for higher education institutions should be considered in order to align formula funding with the 60x30 Plan.
 - c. The Legislature should take into highest consideration the unique missions, goals, priorities, and student populations of each institution when developing this system. Formula changes cannot be one-size-fits-all.
 - d. A clear implementation timeline for an outcomes-based funding system should be established.
- The Legislature should categorize non-formula support and establish a timeline for each category and criteria.
- Non-formula support items should be examined in a goal-oriented and structured approach that considers state goals and objectives.
- For every new non-formula support item, the institution requesting the item should provide the Legislature with an analysis on the return on investment and a specific plan for how the institution will assume the responsibility by the set timeline.



GOVERNMENT RELATIONS TEXAS A & M UNIVERSITY

Federal Relations Update

Most of the attention in D.C. right now is consumed by the upcoming U.S. Supreme Court confirmation process, which may not be finalized until September or October. With regard to FY 2019 appropriations, we continue to engage with Congress to support Texas A&M priorities, and as appropriations bills are passed into law, we will circle back to include a detailed funding breakdown.

Congress is working to pass some of the less controversial spending bills prior to the upcoming August Recess. The first "mini-bus" package including three of the 12 spending bills -- including Energy-Water, Military Construction-Veterans' Affairs and the Legislative Branch -- will be negotiated in conference committee in short order. With all the attention turned toward the Supreme Court, it is likely the fiscal year will end on September 30 with a continuing resolution for any unpassed appropriations bills.

One other item of interest is the implementation of the "Forever GI Bill." The bill was signed into law last summer, however, there have been some major hangups with VA certification and disbursement of housing allowance affecting our students. American Public Land Grant Universities is gathering a Working Group of campus experts and government relations officers to address this pressing issue, and Texas A&M was sought out to participate. We will continue to engage and report back on next steps.

State Relations Update

While the 86th Legislative Session does not begin for another five months, appropriation activities are underway. In June, the Legislative Budget Board released the Legislative Appropriation Request instructions for institutions of higher education. Offices across campus and the A&M System are coordinating to compile and submit Texas A&M's request by the August deadline.

Even with the bump up in the [revenue estimate](#) (\$2.8B) by the Texas Comptroller, as we head into the 86th Session, it looks like it is still shaping up to be a fiscally tight session.

It is always difficult to predict what will happen during a legislative session, but this will be an especially interesting one considering the uncertainty surrounding the seat for the Texas House Speaker. Stay tuned!

Competing Bills for Higher Education

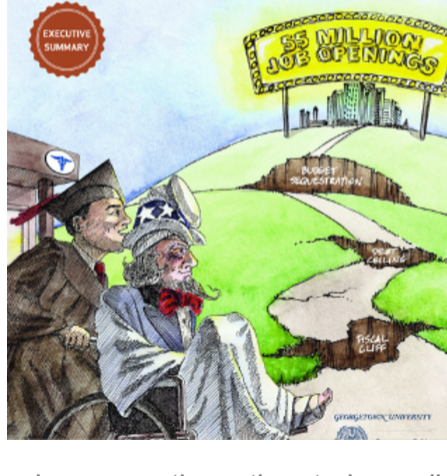
Over the past year, Republicans and Democrats have agreed that an update to the Higher Education Act is long overdue. The



Republican-sponsored PROSPER Act has been debated and dissected for over a year by members of congress, universities and colleges, along with national-level higher education advocacy groups. In late July, the Democrats formally introduced their version of legislation intended to address their party's and constituents' concerns with the costs and accessibility of higher education. The Democratic-sponsored bill is titled the AIM Higher Act.

The two different bills both introduce several changes within the same programs or policy areas, including FASFA, colleges accountability, and enhancing access for more financially vulnerable students. However, there are vast differences in the methodology of changes, and the groups of students who would or could benefit from the proposed changes.

The Chronicle of Higher Education provides a comparison of the two bills [here](#).



What Does America's Economy of the Future Mean for Colleges and Universities?

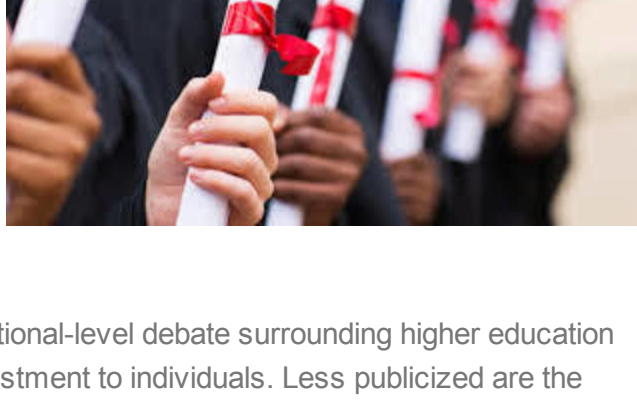
Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce recently released a study titled *Recovery: Job Growth and Education Requirements through 2020*. Using modeling and some

basic assumptions, the study predicts the state of the American economy in just a few short years. More specifically, it predicts vital labor market information such as: what fields are expected to create the most jobs, the education requirements necessary to gain employment in the U.S., and the skills most coveted by employers.

Recovery 2020 predicted that the US economy is expected to create 55 million job openings by 2020 - as baby boomers begin to retire. In addition, STEM, healthcare, and community services are the three fastest growing "occupational clusters." Furthermore, by 2020 65% of all jobs will require postsecondary education, including those in the fastest growing fields. Finally, the study concluded that employers will be looking for cognitive skills such as active listening, leadership, analytics, and an ability to communicate effectively from their future employees.

This report, and others like it, help inform colleges and universities - as well as current and future students - about the job market in the very near future. It should help stakeholders make more informed decisions surrounding the way in which postsecondary education plays a role in future employment. For the entire Executive Summary of the Georgetown report, please click [here](#).

America's Views on Higher Education: Public or Private Good?



A significant portion of the national-level debate surrounding higher education focuses on the return on investment to individuals. Less publicized are the contributions that colleges and universities make to society broadly through research, economic development, discovery, etc. In other words, its contributions that serve the public and community at large. It is not surprising to find that many Americans do not put much stock in the "public good" arguments that serve as a rationale for continued government funding of research and higher education.

A recent study completed by Columbia University's Teachers College is the latest entry in a string of public opinion polls that have reflected the lingering doubts about the perceived value of higher education. In some surprising news, this poll reflected that there is still a small majority of Americans who indicated that college is a good investment, and that both colleges and universities benefit both society and individual graduates. In addition, this majority supports continued government funding for higher education - even if it means tradeoffs in other areas.

To continue reading the results of the Columbia University study, please click [here](#).

Become An Advocate!

The Texas A&M Advocacy Network is one of the many programs supported by donors to The Association of Former Students.

[Make a gift today.](#)