



6/26/17

Dear Congressional Leaders,

The Higher Education Associations Sustainability Consortium (HEASC) is a network of higher education associations with a commitment to advancing sustainability within higher education. Our associations' membership includes nearly 80% of U.S. colleges and universities. We are extremely concerned about the proposed FY 2018 budget. We urge that you reject the current budget as proposed. The impacts of the budget would:

- Minimize both the quality of education and research opportunities for students
- Undercut our ability to cost-effectively manage our campus operations
- Diminish opportunities for students and the workforce

We encourage creating a budget that increases opportunities and resources for students, prospective students, and the greater campus so that students are equipped with the critical skills necessary to contribute to an economy that is both innovative, globally competitive, and robust while also solving our most pressing environmental challenges.

The federal budget for the upcoming year, released on May 23, proposed drastic cuts to a number of instrumental government agencies. Significant cuts to the Department of Energy, Department of Transportation, Department of Education, and Department of Agriculture, to name a few, threaten the state of funding for key programs that promote health, clean technology and sustainability. Several of the departments mentioned are set to receive their lowest budget since the 1980's.¹ Specifically, the Department of Energy cuts focus on limiting energy efficiency and cost effective renewable energies, gutting the building and vehicle technologies, advanced manufacturing, the energy division of the Advanced Research Projects Agency, and federal energy management programs. The budget proposal also completely eliminates the state energy and weatherization assistance programs.² Key organizations, including the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, are facing budget cuts of up to 30%, which could damage basic programs that ensure necessities such as tap water quality and hazardous waste cleanup.³⁴ The EPA is set to take the hardest hit under this budget, receiving cuts to regulatory programs that serve the Great Lakes, Chesapeake Bay

¹ McGill, A. (2017, March 16). Measuring Trump's Budget Against Past Spending. Retrieved June 07, 2017, from <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/03/the-concrete-cost-of-trump-military-budget/518193/>

² FY 2018 Federal Energy Efficiency Programs - Presidential Budget Request. Retrieved June 08, 2017, from http://www.ase.org/sites/ase.org/files/resources/Media%20browser/ee_funding_chart_fy2018_presidential_request_2.0.pdf

³ Calvert, S., and Connors, W., (2017, March 17.) U.S. News: Proposed EPA Cuts Spark Opposition. Retrieved June 08, 2017, from <http://search.proquest.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/docview/1878043361/abstract/CC3214E570E649F4PQ/1?accountid=14667>

⁴ Tabuchi, H. (2017, April 10). What's at Stake in Trump's Proposed E.P.A. Cuts. Retrieved June 07, 2017, from https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/10/climate/trump-epa-budget-cuts.html?_r=1

and other carefully protected regions, and energy efficiency initiatives (including its signature and very successful Energy STAR program ⁵) that help our campuses and communities be less wasteful and build stronger economies and more jobs.

Research Opportunities

HEASC is specifically interested in addressing the numerous and harmful effects that these budget cuts will have on higher education - not solely by the cuts proposed to the Education Department, but through the removal of funding opportunities, research programs and other avenues that allow our colleges and universities to excel in their research and curricular programs. The Department of Energy Office of Science alone supports research at over 300 universities ⁶ and many of those schools will have a difficult time continuing to pursue their projects. Such research projects contribute to our society's knowledge base with evidence-based data and tackle issues on a technical, social and environmental level that are not necessarily the target of the larger research organizations, as well as potentially giving students valuable hands-on experience and possibly funding towards their education. Key student research programs, including the Science to Achieve Results (STAR) and U.S. Global Change programs, are at risk. ⁷

Campus Operations

We also aim to address the impact that these cuts may have on campus operations. Since campuses are large, energy-intensive operations, it is vital to have information available that can allow institutions to procure equipment and materials to consume energy economically and efficiently, without placing undue burden on students and taxpayers. Programs such as Energy STAR, which is at risk of being eliminated entirely, provide critical information that empowers higher education facility managers, homeowners, businesses owners, and everyday citizens, to make common sense decisions that help them save energy, save money, and improve their overall quality of life. If campuses no longer had access to the valuable information on what is most energy efficient and cost effective, the economy and higher education would needlessly suffer.

Prospective Student Opportunities

Additional cuts are aimed at National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities, and independent agencies like the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and the Appalachian Regional Commission; programs that provide assistance, internships or other forms of support to qualified students and support programs at both the K-12 and higher education levels. Cuts are also proposed to a number of programs for low-income students; prominent among these cuts are the college-preparatory program Gear Up, aimed at helping middle and high school students and their families prepare for college, and the Supplementary Educational Opportunity Grant, aimed at helping low income students make ends meet through their college career. ⁸ At a time when a 4-year college education is becoming harder and harder to achieve for low-income students and families, the added difficulties brought on by these cuts could leave

⁵ (2017, May 23). Alliance To Save Energy Calls For Congress To Reject Budget Proposal. Retrieved June 07, 2017, from <http://www.ase.org/news/alliance-save-energy-calls-congress-reject-budget-proposal>

⁶ (2017, March 16). NIH, DOE Office of Science face deep cuts in Trump's first budget. Retrieved June 08, 2017, from, <http://www.sciencemag.org/news/2017/03/nih-doe-office-science-face-deep-cuts-trumps-first-budget>

⁷ Cornwall, W. (2017, March 3). Trump plan for 40% cut could cause EPA science office 'to implode,' official warns. Retrieved June 07, 2017, from <http://www.sciencemag.org/news/2017/03/trump-plan-40-cut-could-cause-epa-science-office-implode-official-warns>

⁸ (2017, March 16). What Trump's Budget Outline Would Mean for Higher Ed. Retrieved June 08, 2017, from, <http://www.chronicle.com/article/What-Trump-s-Budget-Outline/239511>

many of these students out rather than helping them to meet the financial demands of higher education.⁹ Fewer opportunities for low-income students threaten workforce readiness and regional and national economic health.¹⁰

These concerns are widely shared. According to the Association of American Universities President Mary Sue Coleman:

“This proposal would lead to a U.S. innovation deficit, as it comes at a time when China and other economic competitors continue their investment surge in research and higher education. For decades, federal investments in these areas have paid enormous dividends in medical advancements, new technologies, and enhanced national security, and helped to produce high-wage American jobs and the most talented workforce in the world. Now is not the time to turn our backs on what has made America the greatest and most advanced economy in the world.”¹¹

In addition, over 170 higher education organizations have sent a multi-organization letter to Congress urging them to reject the current proposal cuts to science, stressing similar concerns. Among the many points made in their letter is that research and development have contributed to economic prosperity and the growth of private and public sector jobs, and that proposed budget cuts would mean creating a deficit in the long-term competitiveness of American innovation.¹²

We thank you for hearing our concerns, and urge you to join these other institutions in taking action.

Sincerely,

The Higher Education Associations Sustainability Consortium (signatory members listed below)

American Association of State Colleges & Universities (AASCU)

APPA - Leadership in Educational Facilities

Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE)

Association of College and University Housing Officers – International (ACUHO-I)

Campus Safety, Health, and Environmental Management Association (CSHEMA)

College Student Educators International (ACPA)

Council for Christian Colleges & Universities (CCCU)

Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities (HACU)

National Association of College & University Business Officers (NACUBO)

National Association of Educational Procurement (NAEP)

National Association of Independent Colleges & Universities (NAICU)

NIRSA: Leaders in Collegiate Recreation

⁹ Abdul-Alim, J., (2017, March 16). Higher Ed Leaders Lambaste Federal Budget Proposal. Retrieved June 07, 2017, from, <http://diverseeducation.com/article/93844/>

¹⁰ Finley-Brook, M., and Holloman, E. (2016, Sept.). Empowering Energy Justice. Retrieved June 08, 2017, from, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5036759/>

¹¹ (2017, March 16). AAU Statement on Administration's FY18 Budget Proposal. Retrieved June 08, 2017, from, <https://www.aau.edu/newsroom/press-releases/aau-statement-administrations-fy18-budget-proposal-0>

¹² [Letter to Congressional Leaders]. (2017, May 24). Retrieved June 08, 2017, from, <https://www.aau.edu/sites/default/files/Multi-organization-Letter-FY-2018-Research-Budget.pdf>