COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

California State University Federal Agenda for 2012

Presentation By

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Summary

This item contains a presentation of recommendations for the 2012 CSU Federal Agenda.

Background

In January 2011, the Board of Trustees adopted the 2011 CSU Federal Agenda, a legislative program for the system that included both policy and project priorities for the first session of the 112th Congress. Congress subsequently imposed a moratorium on congressionally directed spending for projects, or earmarking, so CSU project requests for 2011 (FY 2012) were put aside. CSU policy priorities encompassed a broad range of initiatives geared toward: Ensuring Access through Aid to Students; Preparing Students for College Success; Fostering Success for California's Diverse Population; Training Students for Today's Workforce; and Solving Problems through Applied Research. Over the past year, the CSU’s Office of Federal Relations (OFR) and system leaders worked to advance those priorities. Given the nation’s charged political climate and severe economic woes, which resulted in cuts to many areas of domestic spending, the CSU fought with some success to defend priority programs and promote targeted investments in higher education.

Preserving Pell: The CSU played a significant role in preserving the need-based Pell Grant program, the cornerstone of federal student aid. In August, President Obama signed the Budget Control Act of 2011, a complicated compromise package to raise the nation’s debt limit and reduce the deficit by cutting federal spending across a wide array of programs. Most importantly for the CSU, the bill set aside $17 billion to sustain the Pell Grant program over the next two fiscal years ($10 billion in FY 2012, $7 billion for FY 2013). These dedicated resources helped alleviate a massive funding shortfall that posed a broad threat to current levels of Pell benefits, making it possible for Congress to both maintain the maximum Pell Grant at $5,550 in FY 2012.
and limit cuts to student eligibility. It also helped reduce potential damage to other education programs that could have faced deep cuts to help prop up Pell.

This injection of new Pell funding was by no means assured. Congressional leaders on both sides of the aisle, along with Obama administration officials and national higher education associations, seriously examined options to cut down the size and scope of the Pell program. At times there appeared to be significant traction for proposals that could have been especially detrimental to CSU students, such as changing the definition of “full-time” students from the current 12 units to 15 units, which could have significantly reduced aid for thousands of CSU students. Led by Chancellor Reed, the CSU fought such proposals, making the case for full Pell preservation both within the higher education community and with policymakers on the Hill and in the Obama administration. In meetings, correspondence and briefings, Reed stressed the potentially devastating impact proposed cuts would have on working, first-generation, and underrepresented minority students, and on our nation’s ability to close the achievement gap and produce the job-ready graduates needed for future economic success.

**Key Education Department Programs:** Beyond Pell, final spending bills for the current fiscal year (FY 2012) generally provided flat funding (with a small across-the-board “haircut”) for many CSU priority programs housed in the Education Department, including aid programs like the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG) and Work-Study, and the Teacher Quality Partnership program. Among pipeline programs, GEAR UP was level-funded, while TRIO programs (e.g., Upward Bound) actually saw a $15 million increase. Aid for institutional development programs geared toward minority-serving institutions, such as those for Hispanic-serving institutions, were subjected to small cuts.

**Support for Applied Research and Workforce Training:** FY 2012 spending measures included support for a number of CSU programmatic priorities outside of the Education Department as well. For example, the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) spending bill contained $4.5 million in first time ever funding for competitive capacity building grants for non land-grant colleges of agriculture (NLGCA). Four CSU campuses are NLGCAs. In addition, the CSU lobbied successfully to maintain prior-year funding levels for USDA’s Hispanic-Serving Institutions Education Grants Program, which has benefited many CSU students over the years. In the National Science Foundation (NSF) budget, the CSU successfully sought Congressional report language instructing the agency that its proposed funding reduction for the Robert Noyce Scholarship Program, which helps train Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) teachers for underserved communities, was not warranted. The CSU also helped draft report language asking NSF to provide resources in support of professional science masters (PSM) degree programs.
Recommendations for the 2012 Federal Agenda

This past fall the OFR, in coordination with the Chancellor’s Office, set in motion the annual process designed to produce a well-honed federal agenda. In September, Chancellor Reed sent a memo to all 23 CSU presidents and senior system leaders, soliciting recommendations and outlining criteria for the system’s 2012 Federal Agenda. The solicitation emphasized that the federal agenda must be consistent with the CSU system’s core objectives, and they must contribute to system goals of preserving access, providing quality instruction, and preparing students for the workforce. While these principles have their own relevance in the federal arena, it was stressed that the federal agenda should also complement and be consistent with the system’s state program in Sacramento.

The items proposed below for inclusion in the 2012 Federal Agenda are based upon submissions received in response to the Chancellor’s solicitation, and have advanced through several levels of review, including the Executive Council, and the Chancellor and his executive leadership staff.

With the Obama administration entering its fourth year and the second session of the 112th Congress commencing, a number of policy items of significant interest to the CSU are likely to come into play. Given the current political atmosphere and the nation’s economic and fiscal situation, certain to be at issue is FY 2013 funding of a broad range of programs important to CSU students, faculty, institutions and programs, from student aid to investments in research. Another area is the ongoing if balky effort to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (currently known as “No Child Left Behind”), where teacher preparation programs and pipeline issues will be of particular interest to the CSU. While the CSU will frequently be called upon to respond to proposals made by others, such as members of Congress and the U.S. Department of Education, the following priority areas should be the subject of proactive pursuit:

- **Ensure Access through Aid to Students**: Federal financial aid programs are critical to CSU students, accounting for more than $1 billion in assistance annually. For example, more than 140,000 CSU students receive need-based Pell Grants. It will be important to maintain overall funding for the Pell program and the maximum grant at its current level. Aid programs like the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG) and Work-Study programs, along with National and Community service programs, are additional key examples of federal assistance important to the CSU.

- **Prepare Students for College Success**: The CSU is on the cutting edge of partnering with K-12 to improve student preparation, and the federal government is a vital partner. The CSU should promote robust GEAR UP and TRIO funding; resources for programs that prepare teachers, especially in underserved areas; and programs that enhance the community colleges transfer process.
• **Foster Success for California's Diverse Population**: The CSU provides more than half of all undergraduate degrees granted to California's Latino, African American and Native American students, and is a leader in transitioning veterans to the civilian workforce. The CSU should support programs and resources that assist veterans with college success, help build capacity and programs at developing, Hispanic-serving and other minority-serving institutions, and provide institutional aid to universities that educate the greatest number of Pell-eligible students.

• **Train Students for Today's Workforce**: 93,000 annual graduates drive California's economy in information technology, life sciences, agriculture, business, education, public administration, entertainment and multimedia industries. In the federal environment, the CSU should seek support for complementary initiatives, such as professional science masters (PSM) programs, teacher preparation programs like the Teacher Quality Partnership and Noyce Scholarship programs, and federal study abroad programs.

• **Solve Problems through Applied Research**: In laboratories, at field sites and through programs at the CSU, students, faculty and collaborating scientists advance California’s capacity to address key issues of significance to our state and nation. The CSU should advocate broadening the federally supported applied research base for comprehensive universities, including, for example, in the STEM fields (America COMPETES, NSF and NIH funding) and agriculture (Non-land-grant colleges of agriculture (“NLGCA”) and HSACU programs), among others.

Finally, it is recommended that the CSU continue to advocate for policies that promote philanthropy to universities and a positive climate for university advancement.

Because of the inherently shifting nature of campus, state and national priorities, the CSU federal agenda process recognizes that priorities may evolve over time. The OFR will continue to work with the campuses and system leaders to refine and develop proposals, and to assist all in working productively with their representatives in Congress and with federal agencies in the year ahead.

The following resolution is recommended for approval:

**RESOLVED**, by the Board of Trustees of the California State University, that the federal legislative program described in the Agenda Item 2 of the Committee on Governmental Relations on January 24-25, 2012 is adopted as the 2012 CSU Federal Agenda.