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Texas Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (TASFAA)

Federal Recommendations

The Texas Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (TASFAA) advances student access to higher education by providing professional development for its diverse members, advocating for informed public policies, and facilitating forums on financial aid topics. TASFAA represents over 133 colleges and universities and has over 2,200 members that support students working to achieve their dream of postsecondary education. TASFAA members are at the front lines of access and success for students across Texas and work to act as strong fiduciaries of the federal government's investment in Title IV financial aid programs.

TASFAA has three continued priorities as Congress evaluates the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. They are:

- **Increase Pell**
The Pell Grant has served as the cornerstone of financial aid for students from low-income backgrounds since 1972. Unfortunately, the purchasing power of the Pell Grant has continuously declined since the mid-1970's. At its peak (75-76) the maximum Pell award was worth more than three-fourths of the average cost of attendance. Today, it's worth less than 30%. The result is either low-income students taking out more loans, or not attending college at all. Doubling the Pell Grant over a period of ten years will close the ever-increasing equity gap for these students and ensure that the financial aid program continues to serve its original purpose to provide access to higher education for *all* students.
- **Standardize Financial Aid Offer Elements and Terms**
Research shows that common practices for communicating financial aid offers are problematic in many ways, including using confusing and conflicting terms, variable bottom line calculations, failure to differentiate between types of aid, especially between those that do and do not require the student to pay money back, and so forth. These inconsistencies cause real confusion which could lead students to make costly decisions, including getting into debt when they did not intend to do so. TASFAA supports standardizing core elements and terminology on aid notifications and communications, including using consumer-tested terms and definitions, an itemized COA, aid broken down by type, and explanatory notes about each type of aid.
- **Eliminate Student Loan Origination Fees**
Student loan origination fees serve as a leftover artifact of the Family Federal Education Loan (FFEL) Program under which loans have not been originated since 2010. These fees, labeled as a "student loan tax" by advocacy groups, reduce the individuals loan amount and require repayment with associated interest. According to NASFAA, the average undergraduate borrower will pay an estimated \$294 in origination fees and associated interest and the average graduate student will pay about \$1,174 (assuming standard repayment plans).

If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact TASFAA President Robert Merino at president@tasfaa.org