



UC DAVIS FEDERAL RELATIONS UPDATE
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Congress has adjourned for the year and will begin the 114th Congress on January 6, 2015. Before leaving town, Congress **passed the “CRomnibus,”** a spending bill that funds most of the federal government through September 30, 2015. The Department of Homeland Security is only funded through February 2015 in order for Congressional Republicans to address President Obama’s immigration executive order early next year. The bill included modest increases scientific research, including:

- National Institutes of Health received \$30.1 billion, an increase of \$150 million;
- National Science Foundation received \$7.3 billion, an increase of \$172 million;
- Department of Agriculture’s Agriculture and Food Research Initiative received \$325 million, which is \$9 million more than in FY2014; and
- Department of Energy Office of Science received level-funding at \$5.071 billion.

Department of Education programs also had some small increases, such as:

- Pell grants were awarded \$22.5 billion and the maximum award was increased by \$100 to \$5,830;
- Federal work study was increased by \$15 million; and
- TRIO programs received an additional \$1.5 million.

In late November, President Obama issued an **executive order on immigration**, which will impact higher education in several ways. The executive order will lift the age limitation on the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, which has allowed individuals brought to the U.S. illegally as young children to avoid deportation if they are under 30 and have enrolled in college or served in the military. Such students will still be ineligible for federal student aid. For international students earning science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) degrees from U.S. universities, the executive order will expand the Optional Practical Training program, which provides international students with temporary work authorization for 12 to 29 months after graduation. The Department of Homeland Security is also finalizing rules to authorize employment for spouses of certain H-1B visa holders if the visa-holding spouse has applied for lawful permanent resident status.

Congress also passed a number of **tax extenders** that were set to expire at the end of the year, including the deduction for tuition and fees, IRA charitable rollover, and research and development tax credit. The package allows the benefits to be claimed for 2014 taxes only.

Questions or need assistance

If you have questions, need additional information about any of the above items, or would like assistance in connecting with senior federal officials, please let me know. I can be reached at gabanks@ucdavis.edu or at 530-752-9795.