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## Capitol Hill Day – June 15, 2017

### Access and Affordability for College Students

The AAUP believes that accessible higher education should be a public good, not a privilege for the wealthy few. President Trump's 2018 proposed budget includes drastic cuts to programs that enable many students to be able to pay for their education. It especially impedes access for lower income students and students of color. The proposal calls for almost a 14% cut to the Department of Education. At the same time, it gives big tax breaks to the rich. We call on members of Congress to protect affordable access to higher education.

#### Protecting Public Student Loan Forgiveness

The Trump budget would end the Public Student Loan Forgiveness program, which allows those working for 10 years in public service fields, often for low pay, to have their loans forgiven. We believe that those that dedicate their careers for the public good in highly needed fields should be given additional consideration. We oppose the discontinuation of this program.

#### Protecting Graduate Students

The proposed budget includes changes to the calculations for income-driven repayment (IDR) methods for graduate students. Students taking out new graduate loans under the proposed changes could be paying their loans for up to 30 years. Over the course of the loan, a student may be paying up to 50% more than the current calculation. We believe that students taking out loans to achieve advanced degrees and pay their fair share should not be indebted for the length of a mortgage.

#### Preserving Funding for Pell Grants

Pell Grants remain as one of the most important tools available to allow low-income students to attend college. This budget hurts the Pell grant program. Although we support and are encouraged by the bipartisan support that year-round Pell grant eligibility has received, we are concerned that the budget includes raiding \$3.9 billion of the current Pell surplus and sets a dangerous precedent of taking away money from such an important program without knowing where the money will be going. The budget also fails to adjust Pell awards for inflation for the first time in years, which decreases the true value for students that depend on this program.

#### Support the College For All Act

The AAUP is proud to endorse the College for All Act, introduced by Sen. Bernie Sanders (**S.806**) and Rep. Pramila Jayapal (**H.R.1880**). The act would make four-year public college free for families making less than \$125,000 and make community college free for all. Funding would come from a Wall Street speculation tax. It would also ease student loan debts by cutting all student loan interest rates for new borrowers while also preventing the federal government from profiting off the student-loan program. It would cut down on the abuse of adjunct labor and strengthen academic freedom protections by increasing the percentage of tenured and tenure-track faculty.