FY14 Budget and Shutdown Impact

As part of last week’s debt ceiling/FY2014 budget deal, a conference committee was established to develop a long-term budget solution by December 13. The committee is led by Senate Budget Committee Chair Patty Murray (D-WA) and her House counterpart Paul Ryan (R-WI). The bipartisan, bicameral group includes 29 members, with the entire Senate Budget Committee, as well as four House Republicans and three House Democrats including Rep. Nita Lowey (D-NY). The Committee is faced with difficult task, as the proposed House and Senate FY14 budgets remain $91B apart. Roll Call produced a good article on how sequestration is affecting the regular appropriations process.

Republicans want to cut spending to the $967B sequester level outlined in the Budget Control Act (BCA) and are willing to explore entitlement cuts to get there. Democrats want to replace sequestration and increase spending beyond BCA levels to $1.058T, preserving entitlements and exploring revenue options instead. If the committee cannot agree on a plan by December 13, the prospects increase for another government shutdown or a year-long continuing resolution with more sequester cuts coming in January to only defense spending.

Federal research agencies have started to post initial guidance on how grant submissions and proposal reviews will resume after the shutdown. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) released Guidance on Resumption of Extramural Activities, including rescheduled due dates for applications and a related blog post on the postponement of applications, reviews, and awards. The National Science Foundation (NSF) also posted guidance on their procedures post-shutdown as well as a message from Dr. Cora Marrett, the NSF Acting Director.

AACC's 2013 Washington Advocacy Seminar

This week, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) held their annual Washington Advocacy Seminar.

Session highlights included Committee on Education Funding Director Joel Packer (Binghamton University Alum) laying out the FY14 budget picture for education programs and Liz Clark (former SUNY Director of Federal Relations and Binghamton University Alum) on effective advocacy and lobbying efforts. Administration staff Ajita Talwalker, White House Domestic Policy Council and Jeff Appel, Department of Ed discussed President Obama’s new college affordability plan, which included a spirited dialogue on the challenges facing community colleges and the impact of the potential rating system on the sector.

A luncheon discussion was held with Jeff Selingo, author of College (Un)bound: The Future of Higher Education and What it Means for Students College Unbound. Selingo offered a compelling look at higher education, envisioning a fundamental shift in how degrees are awarded — not on the basis of credit hours but on competency demonstrated.
Attached is a copy of AACC’s Federal Legislative Priorities for fall 2013:

- Strong Commitment to the Pell Grant Program
- Improve HEA Programs through Reauthorization
- Reauthorize the Workforce Investment Act (WIA)
- Pass DREAM Act legislation

NSF Workshop in Rochester, NY on November 8

The National Science Foundation will be holding a one day workshop designed for researchers and educators with little or minimal experience in applying for funding. The workshop will provide an overview of the Foundation, its mission, priorities, and budget. It will cover the NSF proposal and merit review process and NSF programs that cut across disciplines.

The workshop is being hosted by the University of Rochester in partnership with Rep. Slaughter (D-NY) and RIT. It will be held at the RIT Inn and Conference Center, 5257 West Henrietta Road, Henrietta, New York. There is a registration fee of $30.00 for this workshop. You can register on the NSF web site at http://www.nsf.gov/events/event_summ.jsp?cntn_id=129146&org=NSF.

Registration is limited, so please register by Friday, November 1, 2013.

Immigration Reform

President Obama on Thursday gave a speech on immigration reform, imploring House Republicans not to wait until next year to take up immigration legislation.

The House has 19 days in session before the end of 2013, with House Republican leadership indicating no plans to vote on legislation before the end the year. Several piecemeal immigration bills have already been approved by House committees and Republicans are still working on a bill — tentatively called the KIDS Act — similar to the DREAM Act provision granting legal status to young people brought to the country illegally. For immigration advocates the best-case scenario may be to pass as many bills as possible and then get into a formal conference with the Senate on its bipartisan bill.