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Faculty speak out: Congress takes up debate over cuts to student financial aid at a devastating moment

The Campaign for the Future of Higher Education held a national meeting last weekend in Michigan, where it discussed action plans to save the nation's system of higher education for future generations.

CFHE adopted the following statement on federal student financial aid:

Demand for college is at an all-time high and student debt has reached a devastating one trillion dollars. Despite this, Congress is debating whether to cut student aid.

This kind of cut would further close off college access, particularly for lower income students and students of color, the growth demographic of traditional age students.

Proposals to reduce eligibility and the size of Pell Grants and to increase interest rates on student loans, if adapted, would be a tragic and short-sighted slamming of the door on our nation's future.

We need a strong Pell Grant program that does not reduce either eligibility or the size of the grant. We also need the lowest possible interest rates on federally subsidized student loans.

This is not the time to curtail the prospects for students to attend colleges and universities.

We need a national discussion about how to ensure that higher education is affordable, available and accessible to everyone who can benefit from it.

About CFHE: CFHE injects the faculty voice into the national discussion over our country's higher education policies. That discussion has been dominated by executives and consultants, with far too little participation by the people who are in the classrooms with the millions of students whose success will determine the future of America.

The project is supported by 59 local and national organizations, including allies of higher education and college and university faculty organizations across the U.S. Its "virtual" think tank brings together faculty experts to speak out on issues challenging our nation's system of post-secondary education.

View information about CFHE and its think tank reports at <http://futureofhighered.org/>

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