Summary: FY17 Consolidated Omnibus Appropriations Bill
UT System Office of Federal Relations

On May 5, President Trump signed an omnibus spending bill (H.R. 244) funding the federal government for the remainder of fiscal year 2017. The measure provides significant increases for a number of education and research programs and rejects the deep cuts proposed in President Trump’s table of FY17 “reduction options” and FY18 budget outline. The measure additionally abides by the budget caps set in the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 while providing increases in Overseas Contingency Operations and emergency funding for some of President Trump’s priorities, including $15 billion in new funding for national defense and a $1.5 billion increase for border security. The latter increase does not include any new money for the construction of a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. Funding levels of particular relevance to the higher education, research, and healthcare communities are summarized below.

National Institutes of Health
The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is funded at $34.084 billion for FY17, a $2 billion (6.2 percent) increase including the $352 million provided through the 21st Century Cures Act (PL 114-255). The FY17 omnibus spending bill provides $750 million more for the NIH than the House appropriations bill and $8 billion more than President Trump recommended in his FY18 budget outline. The omnibus provides a general increase to all NIH Institutes and Centers as well as the following specific funding increases:

- **Precision Medicine Initiative**: $120 million over FY16
- **Alzheimer’s disease research**: $400 million over FY16
- **BRAIN Initiative**: $110 million over FY16
- **Antibiotic Resistance**: $50 million over FY16
- **Fogarty International Center**: $3 million over FY16

The measure additionally provides $333.4 million for the Institutional Development Award (IDeA) Program, $516.12 million for Clinical and Translational Science Awards, and $165 million for the National Children’s Study in FY17 and maintains the salary cap at Executive Level II.

Other Department of Health and Human Services Programs
Titles VII and VIII Health Professions Programs within the Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA) are funded at $538.695 million for FY17, a decrease of $3.2 million (0.6 percent) below FY16. Of note, the omnibus maintains $14.2 million for the Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP), which had been proposed for elimination in both the House and Senate appropriations bills last year. The bill also newly funds the Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training (BHWET) program at $50 million under Title VII rather than as a transfer to HRSA at that same level from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

The FY17 omnibus additionally includes an $800,000 or 2 percent increase for oral health training, but a $4 million (19 percent) decrease for Public Health and Preventative Medicine. All of the Title VIII Nursing programs are flat-funded at FY16 levels, as is the Title VII Scholarship for Disadvantaged Students. The omnibus also continues funding at FY16 levels for the Title VII Centers of Excellence, primary care programs, Area Health Education Centers (AHEC), and geriatric training programs.
Other HRSA funding levels of note in the FY17 omnibus include:

- **Ryan White HIV/AIDS program**: $2.32 billion, a $4 million decrease below FY16
- **Primary health care and community health clinics**: $1.49 billion, level with FY16
- **Maternal and child health programs**: $836 million, a $18.5 million increase above FY16

The **Agency for Health Research and Quality** (AHRQ) is funded at $324 million in FY17, a decrease of $10 million or 3 percent below FY16. The House appropriations bill would have cut AHRQ by $280 million. The **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration** (SAMHSA) is funded at $3.6 billion, an increase of $35 million over FY16. The FY17 omnibus additionally includes an increase of $150 million for programs that seek to prevent and treat opioid and heroin addiction. Combined with the $500 million in funding that was authorized by the **21st Century Cures Act**, the FY17 omnibus includes a total increase of $650 million for initiatives that seek to address the opioid crisis.

**Department of Education**

The FY17 omnibus provides $22.475 billion in discretionary funding for **Pell Grants**, which is the same as the FY16 enacted level. When combined with a scheduled mandatory funding increase, these discretionary funds will enable the maximum grant to increase by $105, to $5,920 for the 2017-2018 academic year. Without Congressional action, scheduled mandatory funding increases in the Pell Grant program will expire at the end of this year, resulting in level maximum awards going forward assuming discretionary funding for the program stays the same.

In a substantial victory for higher education advocates, the FY17 omnibus additionally includes authorization language reinstating year-round Pell Grants, which allow eligible students to receive an additional Pell Grant equal to up to half the level of their normal award to take additional courses outside the traditional fall and spring semesters. The change is estimated to provide one million students an additional average disbursement of $1,650. The omnibus also rescinds $1.3 billion in Pell Grant surplus funds, leaving an estimated balance of $6.2 billion for FY18.

Other Department of Education FY17 funding levels of note include the following:

- **Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants**: $733 million, level with FY16
- **Federal Work Study**: $990 million, level with FY16
- **Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need**: $28 million, a $1.2 million decrease below FY16
- **TRIO Programs**: $950 million, a $50 million increase above FY16
- **GEAR UP**: $340 million, a $17 million increase above FY16
- **International Education and Foreign Language Studies (Title VI)**: $72 million, level with FY16
- **Institute of Education Sciences**: $618 million, a $13 million decrease below FY16

The omnibus does not contain policy riders related to the definition of the credit hour or state authorization requirements. In the explanatory statement accompanying the bill, lawmakers directed the Education Department to issue guidance on year-round Pell not later than July 1, 2017 and to implement the provision “to maximize flexibility for institutions of higher education and avoid unnecessary administrative burdens while ensuring the best interests of students.” The Department is also directed to allow borrowers who are consolidating loans to choose their loan servicer and to issue servicer performance metrics to help guide borrower decisions. The explanatory statement also “encourages” the Department to provide flexibility to TRIO applicants by permitting corrected
applications. As reported by the Chronicle of Higher Education, a number of applications have recently been rejected due to relatively minor formatting issues.

**Department of Defense**
The FY17 omnibus provides $14.01 billion in funding for DoD Science and Technology programs (6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 research accounts), an increase of $760 million or 5.7 percent over FY16. Basic research (6.1), a perennial target for cuts, receives $2.28 billion in the bill, a cut of $33 million or 1.4 percent, while applied research (6.2) receives $5.3 billion, an increase of 5.8 percent. The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) is funded at $2.94 billion, an increase of $48 million or 1.7 percent over the enacted FY16 level.

**National Science Foundation**
The FY17 omnibus bill funds the National Science Foundation (NSF) at $7.472 billion, an increase of $8.7 million or 0.12 percent over the FY16 enacted level of $7.463 billion. The agreement includes $6.033 billion for Research and Related Activities, which is the same level of funding the directorate received in FY16. The bill does not include language specifying funding for individual directorates as has been previously proposed by House Republicans.

**Department of Energy**
The FY17 omnibus provides $5.39 billion for the Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Science, an increase of $41.8 million over the FY16 enacted level of $5.35 billion. The agreement also includes $5.4 billion for science research, an increase of $42 million above the FY16 enacted level. According to a summary of the omnibus from the House Appropriations Committee, this funding supports basic energy research, the development of high-performance computing systems, and research into the next generation of energy sources.

The omnibus spending bill provides $11.28 billion for energy programs within DOE, a $257 million increase above FY16, including the following funding levels of note:

- **Fossil Energy**: $668 million, a $36 million increase above FY16
- **Nuclear Energy**: $1.02 billion, a $30 million increase above FY16
- **Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy**: $2.1 billion, a $17 million increase above FY16
- **Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability**: $230 million, a $24 million increase above FY16
- **Advanced Research Projects Agency – Energy (ARPA-E)**: $306 million, a $15 million increase above FY16
- **Fusion Energy Sciences**: $330 million for research, a $7 million increase above FY16

The omnibus also includes $50 million for the U.S. contribution to the international ITER project, which represents a $65 million decrease below the FY16 level.

**National Aeronautics and Space Administration**
The FY17 omnibus provides $5.765 billion for NASA’s Science Mission Directorate, a $176 million increase over the FY16 enacted level, including $660 million for Aeronautics Research, an increase of
$20 million; $687 million for the **Space Technology Directorate**, level with FY16; and $40 million for the **Space Grant Program**, which also represents level funding.

**Other Agencies**

Other FY17 funding levels of note include the following:

- Within the **Department of Commerce**:
  - **Oceanic and Atmospheric Research**: $514 million, a $32 million increase above FY16
  - The **National Sea Grant College Program**: $63 million, a $10 million decrease below FY16
  - **Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership**: $130 million, level with FY16
  - **National Network for Manufacturing Initiative**: $25 million, level with FY16
- Within the **Department of Justice**:
  - $20 million for grants to reduce violent crimes against women on campus, level with FY16
- Within the **Department of the Interior**:
  - **National Endowment for the Humanities**: $150 million, a $2 million increase above FY16
  - **National Endowment for the Arts**: $150 million, a $2 million increase above FY16
- Within the **Environmental Protection Agency**:
  - **Office of Science and Technology**: $706 million, a $29 million decrease below FY16

Detailed summaries of the 11 appropriations bills from the House Appropriations Committee majority can be found at following links: [Agriculture](#); [Commerce-Justice-Science](#); [Defense](#); [Energy and Water](#); [Financial Services](#); [Homeland Security](#); [Interior and Environment](#); [Labor-Health and Human Services-Education](#); [Legislative Branch](#); [State-Foreign Operations](#); [Transportation-Housing and Urban Development](#). An overall summary of the FY17 omnibus from House Appropriations Committee Democrats can be found [here](#). Of note, the FY17 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill was previously signed into law last December by President Obama as part of a continuing resolution. The full text of the FY17 omnibus bill and accompanying reports can be found [here](#) and [here](#), respectively.