Washington DC Update:
Building a New Political Reality

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What Is Changing?

- U.S. Department of Education Gets Organized
- 115th Congress Convenes
- Congressional Budget Process Begins
- Higher Education Act Reauthorization Looms
The Changing Department of Education

- Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos
  - Contentious hearing
  - Historic confirmation vote
    - VP Pence broke Senate tie
  - Single issue focus in prior roles

- New Postsecondary Education Policy Team
  - Will assemble new agenda and agree on new priorities
  - Future of FSA to be determined
Department of Education

- Federal-wide Focus on Regulatory Relief
  - President Trump says no new regulations, unless two regs are rescinded
  - Review of recently issued regulations and guidance
  - Every agency to form “Regulatory Reform Task Force”
  - Gainful Employment, State Authorization, Borrower Defense Against Repayment will all get scrutiny
Department of Education

- PASFAA working to identify rulemaking and guidance that should be reviewed, e.g.:
  - R2T4
  - 150% rule
  - What else??

- Pace of Rulemaking and Guidance Could Slow for a While

- Jeff Baker retiring
Higher Education Policy

- White House Higher Education Task Force
  - Jerry Falwell, Jr, President of Liberty University to lead
  - Focus on institutional issues
  - Falwell has cited “overregulation and micromanagement of higher education“
  - Senate Democrats express concern about potential conflicts of interest on Task Force
    - Worry about diluting federal mandates
Meanwhile, at the U.S. Capitol…

- Virginia Foxx (R, NC) New Chair of House Committee on Education and the Workforce
  - Brett Guthrie (R, TN) Chair of Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Development
  - 3 PA Members on Higher Education Subcommittee
    - Thompson, Barletta, Smucker
And, in the Senate...

- Sen. Lamar Alexander (R, TN) remains as Chair of Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee
  - Sen. Patty Murray (D, WA) remains as Ranking Member
  - Sen. Bob Casey (D, PA) remains on committee
- Republicans with Slim, Two-vote Majority in Senate
  - Lingering “ill-will” from DeVos confirmation?
  - Sen. Enzi request to audit all student loan data
The Federal Budget

- FY 2017 Appropriations Still Unfinished
  - Continuing Resolution expires April 28
  - Negotiations still to come
  - Year-round Pell could be part of final package

- FY 2018 Budget
  - President releases “skinny” budget this week
  - “Top line” numbers, few details expected
    - $54 billion increase in defense spending, with corresponding reduction in domestic discretionary spending
    - Elimination of “duplicative or non-performing” programs
    - Approximately $20 billion in reductions expected to be proposed for the Labor, HHS, ED Appropriations Bill
The Federal Budget

• Budget Reconciliation Could be Coming
  ➢ FY 2017 – Affordable Care Act
  ➢ FY 2018 – Tax Reform?
    ▪ Longer-term budget agreement?
    ▪ Broader budget cuts?
    ▪ Entitlement reform?
    ▪ Stealing thunder from reauthorization?
Higher Education Act Reauthorization

• The Process Begins Again
  ➢ House E&W Committee has held a hearing
    ▪ Will likely work on smaller bills
    ▪ Try to combine them into a full reauthorization
    ▪ May start with non-controversial measures
  ➢ Senate will take time to get started
    ▪ More likely to assemble a comprehensive reauthorization bill
    ▪ Can Senators Alexander and Murray reach agreement?
  ➢ Will White House transmit recommendations?
Key Reauthorization Issues

- Simplification
  - FAFSA simplification
  - One loan, one grant, one work
  - Fewer repayment options
    - Streamlined renewal for IDR
  - Combining federal data sources for students and families
Key Reauthorization Issues

- Evaluating Program Effectiveness
- Legislated Regulatory Reform
- Enhanced Loan Counseling
  - FAA discretion to limit borrowing for certain students
- Role of Accreditors
- Future of Gainful Employment Rules
- Skin in the game
- Loan limits, interest rates
- Reconfiguring Pell Grants
- Promoting Retention
Reauthorization

- Fiscal Constraints
  - At risk:
    - Subsidized loans
    - Public Service Loan Forgiveness
    - Grad PLUS
    - Perkins Loans
    - SEOG
    - New initiatives
Building Your Case

- Think Broadly
  - Rare time where both the legislative and regulatory sides are being reviewed
  - What are the big ideas?
  - What is getting in the way of implementing student aid policy?
- Work with PASFAA Leadership and the Government Relations Committee
- Be Part of Building a Bright Future