

Subject: Federal Policy Update
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Dear Colleagues:

As the fall semester begins, we are providing updates on the latest federal policy developments and how they may affect Michigan State University. The landscape for higher education is shifting quickly, shaped by new executive orders, agency reorganizations, federal court decisions, and congressional appropriations debates.

MSU's ability to have lasting impact depends on stable federal partnerships and predictable funding streams. Ongoing developments carry direct consequences for our campus community — from research grants and student aid to compliance with civil rights laws.

In response, President Kevin M. Guskiewicz, Ph.D., and Provost Laura Lee McIntyre, Ph.D., recently met with Michigan's congressional delegation in Washington, D.C. to reaffirm MSU's priorities in research funding, student aid, and our land-grant mission. This outreach underscores MSU's commitment to ensuring our voice is heard during this pivotal period.

Below you'll find an overview of key federal policy developments and current events shaping MSU's work.

Federal Policy Developments

- **Judge blocks removal of Fed Governor Lisa Cook:** A federal judge in Washington, D.C., issued a temporary order on Sept. 10 preventing the White House from removing Federal Reserve Governor Lisa Cook while her lawsuit proceeds. The White House has appealed this decision.
- **Research Security Guidance:** The administration issued new guidance to colleges and universities on foreign threats to research and mitigation strategies.
- **ACE Policy Resource:** The American Council on Education (ACE) has launched a new "Higher Education & The Trump Administration" page organizing federal actions by topic.
- **OBBB:** ACE also organized a higher education community One Big Beautiful Bill (OBBB) implementation [letter](#) to the Department of Education.
- **Student Visa NPRM:** The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) proposed replacing "duration of status" for J-1 and F-1 visa holders with fixed admission periods. The proposed rule is open for comment until the end of the month.
 - MSU's International Students and Scholars Rapid Response Working Group is collaborating with university leadership, in coordination with the higher education community nationwide, to analyze the proposal and submit a comment letter.
- **Gold Standard Research Implementation:** Agencies continue to release implementation plans for the '[Restoring Gold Standard Science](#)' executive order.
- **NIH Priorities:** National Institutes of Health (NIH) Director Jayanta Bhattacharya outlined his priorities and announced another agencywide grant review.
- **Minority Biomedical Program Termination:** Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) ended the Minority Biomedical Research Support program. Physician groups sued Secretary Robert Kennedy Jr. over halted grantmaking.
- **MSU Program Cuts:** A multimillion-dollar cut to the MSU SNAP-Ed food program reflects shifts in federal funding for nutrition and exercise initiatives.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

- Recent [staff cuts](#), [resignations](#), and a [leadership dispute](#) have left the CDC in disarray.
- **Michigan Delegation Response:** Rep. Haley Stevens (D-MI) urged HHS to halt NIH cancer research cuts, citing impacts on MSU faculty. Sen. Gary Peters (D-MI) released a report alleging executive overreach.

Department of Education

- **PSLF Restrictions:** The Department of Education released a proposed rule excluding employers with a "substantial illegal purpose" from PSLF eligibility.
- **Work Study Restrictions:** New guidance bars federal work study funds from being used for partisan or nonpartisan political activity.
- **Nutrition Education:** The Department of Education and HHS urged medical schools to embed nutrition education in curricula.
- **New Regulation Agenda:** The Department of Education released its Spring 2025 Unified Agenda of upcoming proposed regulations on a range of issue areas, including civil rights enforcement, race-based discrimination, college accreditation, collegiate foreign funding and student privacy.
- **Admissions Data Collection:** The Department of Education proposed a new IPEDS admissions survey, [open for comment until Oct. 14](#).

In the Courts

- **Harvard University:** A federal judge [invalidated](#) the White House's freeze of \$2.2 billion in federal grants to Harvard University;
- **DEI Program Rulings:**
 - Federal judges blocked two administration actions to eliminate DEI programs in schools and universities.
 - The Supreme Court allowed cancellation of \$800 million in DEI-related NIH grants.
- **USDA Grants:** A federal judge ruled the USDA unlawfully terminated several grants.
- **UC Research Funding:** A federal appeals court denied the administration's attempt to withhold University of California research funds while

the case is being decided.

- [Voice of America Leadership](#): A federal judge blocked the firing of the VOA director.

Find additional updates at [MSU Government Relations](#).

Next Steps

MSU's Government Relations and university communications teams will continue to monitor developments, advocate for policies that advance our institutional priorities, and provide timely updates to faculty, staff, and campus leadership.

Best,

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