



Lumina[™]
FOUNDATION

PELL GRANT

BUILDING BLOCK OF STUDENT- BASED AID

DOCUMENTARY FILM SERIES

Looking Back to Move
Forward: A History of
Federal Student Aid



VIEWING GUIDE



LET'S LOOK BACK TO MOVE FORWARD

In *A History of Federal Student Aid*, a documentary series produced by Lumina Foundation and the Institute for Higher Education Policy, key policymakers, their staff and education researchers provide insight into the evolution of federal student aid through their first-hand experiences with the policymaking process. This short film on the history of Pell Grants is one in a series of several that illuminates past seminal moments and offers instructive lessons and building blocks to guide newer policy innovations.



FILM SYNOPSIS

Pell Grant: Building Block of Student-Based Aid chronicles the history of the program from its bipartisan legislative origins through its various selected subsequent iterations. This 14-minute film documents several key changes to the Pell Grant program including efforts to broaden and limit student eligibility, ebbs and flows in funding, increases in the maximum award levels, and the creation of supplemental programs for Pell recipients.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Originally known as the Basic Educational Opportunity Grant (BEOG), the Pell Grant program was established in the 1972 reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA) as the result of bipartisan effort steered by Senator Claiborne Pell (D-RI) and Senator Jacob K. Javits (R-NY). This landmark program shifted the federal financial aid system from institutions awarding federal grant dollars to the federal government awarding grants directly to students. This allowed full- and part-time students the flexibility to use the grants at any eligible postsecondary institution including public, private and vocational colleges.^{1,2}

Prior to the Pell Grant, the aid went to institutions to give to students. With the Pell Grant, the dynamic changed.

David Evans



Congress largely funds the Pell Grant program through the annual appropriations process, although legislators also provide some funding through other mechanisms.^{3,4} Because the appropriations process takes place well before the start of an academic year, funding decisions are made based on estimates that approximate program costs. Costs are calculated using an expected number of recipients and their expected grant sizes—largely determined by the maximum award for that year.⁵ This estimation process typically leaves the Pell Grant program either underfunded (known as a “shortfall”) or overfunded (known as a “surplus”) in a given year. During a shortfall, the U.S. Department of Education borrows from future years’ funding, and Congress must provide sufficient funds to

cover that deficit in the next spending cycle. When the program experiences a surplus, the U.S. Department of Education is able to use the money to fund grants the following year, pending Congressional action.

Policymakers have debated the balance between managing program costs and maintaining or expanding college access since the late 1970s. As a way to make Pell funding palatable and strengthen its political base, Congress voted to expand eligibility to middle-income students through the 1978 Middle Income Student Assistance Act (MISAA). MISAA dramatically increased access by providing Pell Grants to 2.7 million students in 1980, up from 1.9 million in 1977.⁶ Although the legislation was repealed in 1981 to decrease program costs,

Congress made moves to expand student eligibility again in the 1986 HEA reauthorization by making technical changes to the formula that determines a student's financial need.⁷

Driven by both environmental and policy changes, Pell Grant program expenditures increased by 158 percent (see figure 1) between 2006 and 2011.⁸ College enrollment increased, and more students became eligible for more money due to the economic downturn that impacted students' ability to pay for college. At the same time, legislative changes increased the maximum award substantially, expanded student

eligibility through changes to the needs analysis formula, and created supplemental Pell Grant programs, contributing to the increase in program costs.⁹

Beginning with the 2007 College Cost Reduction and Access Act (CCRAA), Congress has directed supplemental funds to the program through mandatory budgets and supplementary spending legislation.¹⁰ These funds were used to maintain or increase the maximum award, expand student eligibility, and account for funding shortfalls from prior years. Subsequently, Congress has rolled back some of these expansions and imple-



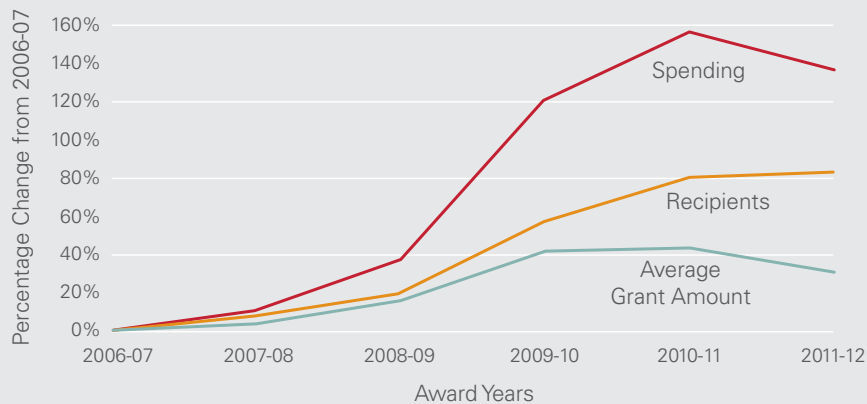
The CCRAA really was born out of, I think, increasing anxiety, interest, and need for addressing affordability and a federal strategy around how to support our neediest students.

Hon. Margaret Spellings

mented cost-saving strategies including eliminating year-round Pell Grants, tightening student eligibility measures, and decreasing the total number of semesters a student may receive a grant.¹¹

The Pell Grant remains the foundation of the federal student aid system, but it now covers the smallest percentage of costs at public and private four-year colleges and universities since the program's creation, despite recent increases in the maximum award (see figure 2). The program is ever-evolving, as policymakers continue to debate its structure, funding, and eligibility rules. Nevertheless, experts agree that the Pell Grant program has been instrumental in making college more affordable and accessible for low- and moderate-income students.

FIGURE 1:
Pell Grant Program Growth Since 2006-07 (2012 Dollars)

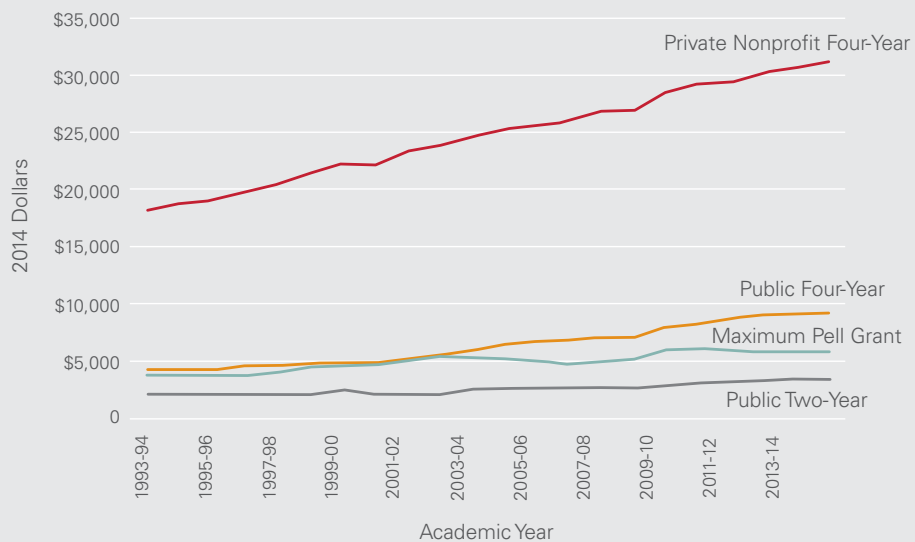


Source: Congressional Budget Office based on Data from the U.S. Department of Education https://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/44448_PellGrants_9-5-13.pdf

And we decided that it was more important to maintain the size of the award so students could access resources that would keep up with inflation as opposed to maintaining the year-round Pell program. And that would allow us to save literally billions of dollars. Again, not an easy decision, but the weighing and balancing of the kinds of decisions that we had to make at that time.

Melody Barnes

FIGURE 2:
Maximum Pell Grant and Published Tuition and Fees at Public and Private Nonprofit Four-Year and Public Two-Year Institutions, 1994-95 to 2014-15 (2014 Dollars)



Source: The College Board, Trends in Student Aid 2014, Figure 23 based on data from the Federal Pell Grant Program End-of-Year Report, 2012-13; unpublished data from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education; and The College Board, Trends in College Pricing 2014.

PELL GRANT PROGRAM KEY FACTS

Common Name	Pell Grant
Former Name	Basic Educational Opportunity Grant (BEOG)
Created	1972
Overview	The cornerstone of the federal student financial aid system, the Pell Grant is a need-based grant awarded to eligible students who may use the funds at any eligible institution.
Eligibility	Available to undergraduate students from low- and moderate-income families. Amount received is mostly dependent on a student's financial need and full- or part-time status. While there is no statutory income cap, nearly 75 percent of recipients had an annual family income below \$30,000 in 2012-2013. ¹²
Major Shifts	Shifts over the years include expanding eligibility to middle-income students and changing eligibility requirements as the program faced shortfalls and as more Americans became eligible for Pell.
Maximum Grant (2014-2015)	\$5,730
Maximum Limit	Students can receive the Pell Grant for no more than 12 semesters. ^{13,14}

PELL GRANT PROGRAM TIMELINE

1972

HEA Reauthorization

- » Created the Basic Educational Opportunity Grant (BEOG, later renamed the Pell Grant).¹⁵ The award amount was not to exceed 50 percent of the actual cost of attendance at the institution of enrollment.¹⁶
- » Expanded Title IV eligibility to include for-profit institutions.¹⁷

1973

First year of BEOG

- » BEOG began with \$47.52 million¹⁸ to the freshman class of 1973 (i.e., 170,000 students).¹⁹

1976

HEA Reauthorization

- » Adjusted eligibility criteria.²⁰

1978

Middle Income Student Assistance Act (MISAA)

- » Expanded student eligibility by limiting the rate at which parental discretionary income was assessed in the needs analysis formula.²¹

1980

HEA Reauthorization

- » BEOG renamed Pell Grants after Senator Claiborne Pell (D-RI).²²

1981

Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act

- » Repealed many provisions in the 1980 HEA Reauthorization, including MISAA.

1986

HEA Reauthorization

- » Codified the needs analysis formula in statute to limit the Executive Branch's involvement.²³

1990

Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act

- » Eliminated student aid eligibility at high default schools.²⁴

1992

HEA Reauthorization

- » Changed definition of an independent student.^{25,26}

1994

Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act

- » Eliminated Pell Grants for prisoners.²⁷

2005

Higher Education Reconciliation Act

(HERA, part of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005)

- » Created two grant programs for Pell-eligible students – the Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG) and National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent (SMART) Grant.²⁸

2007

College Cost Reduction and Access Act (CCRAA)

- » Redirected savings from the federal loan program to the Pell Grant.²⁹
- » Provided mandatory spending add-ons through 2017. Mandatory add-ons increased Pell maximum award, but only for students who qualified for the maximum discretionary award.³⁰
- » Eliminated the tuition sensitivity provision.³¹
- » Changed Pell eligibility by increasing the amount and types of income excluded from the formula.³²

2008

Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA)

- » Authorized year-round Pell Grants.³³
- » Eligibility limited to 18 full-time semesters or equivalent.³⁴
- » Set new minimum award: Students must qualify for at least five percent of the maximum Pell Grant in order to receive an award. Students qualifying for five to 10 percent of the maximum grant will receive 10 percent.³⁵

2009

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA, known as the economic stimulus bill)

- » Provided additional funding to the Pell Grant program.³⁶

2010

Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act (HCERA)

- » Savings from the elimination of the federally-guaranteed student loan program (known as FFELP) were redirected to the Pell Grant program.³⁷
- » Provided mandatory add-ons to all Pell recipients and indexed the maximum Pell Grant to the Consumer Price Index for five years.³⁸

Last year for ACG and SMART grant awards. HERA of 2005 only provided funding through the end of academic year 2010-2011.³⁹

2011

Budget Control Act (BCA)

- » Provided additional funding to the Pell Grant program by eliminating subsidized federal loans for graduate students and Direct Loan repayment incentives. Money was used to backfill a funding shortfall.⁴⁰

Department of Defense and Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act

- » Provided additional funding to the Pell Grant program. Money was used to backfill a funding shortfall.⁴¹
- » Eliminated summer Pell.^{42, 43}

2012

Consolidated Appropriations Act

- » Provided additional funding to the Pell Grant program by making temporary changes to the federal loan program.⁴⁴ Money was used to backfill funding shortfall.⁴⁵
- » Pell lifetime eligibility reduced to 12 semesters.⁴⁶
- » Set new minimum award: Students must now qualify for at least 10 percent of the maximum Pell Grant in order to receive an award.⁴⁷

FEATURED EXPERTS⁴⁸

Melody Barnes

Director, White House Domestic Policy Council, 2009-2012

Sandy Baum

Independent Consultant, College Board, 2004-2013

David Bergeron

Senior Staff, U.S. Department of Education, 1978-2013

Kristin Conklin

Senior Advisor to the Undersecretary, U.S. Department of Education, 2006-2007

David Evans

Professional Staff, U.S. Senate Health Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, 1978-1996

Brian Fitzgerald

Staff Director, Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, 1988-2005

Sarah Flanagan

Professional Staff, U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, 1987-1993

Rick Jerue

Professional Staff, U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, 1976-1981; U.S. House Education and Labor Committee, 1988-1995

David Longanecker

Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education, U.S. Department of Education, 1993-1999

Dallas Martin

President, National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, 1987-2007

Frank Mensel

Congressional Liaison, American Association of Community Colleges, 1968-1992

Jamie Merisotis

Executive Director, National Commission on Responsibilities for Financing Postsecondary Education, 1991-1993

Thomas Parker

Co-Founder and President, The Education Resources Institute, 1981-2001

Bob Shireman

Deputy Undersecretary, U.S. Department of Education, 2009-2010

Margaret Spellings

U.S. Secretary of Education, 2005-2009

Tom Wolanin

Professional Staff, U.S. House Education and Labor Committee, 1975-1981, 1985-1987, 1991-1993; Senior Staff, U.S. Department of Education, 1993-1996

FOOTNOTES

¹ The 1972 HEA reauthorization made part-time students eligible for federal financial aid and expanded Title IV eligibility to career and vocational education and trade schools.

² Education Amendments of 1972. (PL. 92-318). United States statutes at large, 86 Stat. 248. 131(b)(1). Retrieved from <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-86/pdf/STATUTE-86-Pg235.pdf>

Gladieux, L. E. (1995, October). Federal student aid policy: A History and an assessment. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/offices/OPE/PPI/FinPostSecEd/gladieux.html>

³ White House (2014). Budget concepts and budget process, 176. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/budget/fy2013/assets/concepts.pdf>

⁴ Historically, Congress would authorize maximum Pell Grant awards in the Higher Education Act and then appropriate funds in the annual appropriations process, but rarely did the appropriated amount meet the authorized level. Although a major policy conversation throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, this distinction was eliminated in the 2010 Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act (SAFRA) – the higher education provision of the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act (HCERA) – which indexed the maximum award to inflation and identified mandatory funding.

⁵ White House (2014). Budget concepts and budget process, 176. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/budget/fy2013/assets/concepts.pdf>

⁶ FinAid. (2014). Pell Grants historical figures. Retrieved from <http://www.finaid.org/educators/pellgrant.phtml>

⁷ Cook, B. J., & King, J. E. (2007, June). 2007 status report on the Pell Grant Program, 10-11. Washington, DC: American Council on Education. Retrieved from <http://www.usc.edu/dept/cheпа/IDApays/publications/2007%20status%20of%20the%20pell%20grant.pdf>

⁸ Congress of the United States, Congressional Budget Office. (2013, September). The Federal Pell Grant Program: Recent growth and policy options, 1. Washington, DC: Congress of the United States. Retrieved from https://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/44448_pell-grants_9-5-13.pdf

⁹ Mahan, S. M. (2011, April 13). Federal Pell Grant Program of the Higher Education Act: Background, recent changes, and current legislative issues. Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service. Retrieved from <http://www.nasfaa.org/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=4985>

¹⁰ Supplemental funds were authorized through the 2007 College Cost Reduction and Access Act (CCRAA), 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), 2010 Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act (HCERA), 2011 Department of Defense and Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011 Budget

Control Act (BCA), and 2012 Consolidated Appropriations Act.

¹¹ Department of Defense and Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011. (PL. 112-10). United States statutes at large, 125 Stat. 169. Sec. 1860. Retrieved from <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-112publ10/pdf/PLAW-112publ10.pdf>

¹² U.S. Department of Education. (2014). 2012-2013 Federal Pell Grant Program end-of-year report. [Table 2A]. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/finaid/prof/resources/data/pell-2012-13/pell-eyoy-2012-13.html>

¹³ Prior to 2012, students could receive the Pell Grant for up to 18 semesters.

¹⁴ Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2012. (PL. 112-74). United States statutes at large, 125 Stat. 1100. Sec. 309(a)(2)(A). Retrieved from <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-112publ74/pdf/PLAW-112publ74.pdf>

¹⁵ Education Amendments of 1972. (PL. 92-318). United States statutes at large, 86 Stat. 248. 131(b)(1). Retrieved from <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-86/pdf/STATUTE-86-Pg235.pdf>

¹⁶ Education Amendments of 1972. (PL. 92-318). United States statutes at large, 86 Stat. 248. Sec. 131(b)(1). Retrieved from <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-86/pdf/STATUTE-86-Pg235.pdf>

¹⁷ The 1972 HEA reauthorization expanded Title IV eligibility to career and vocational education and trade schools.

Gladieux, L. E. (1995, October). Federal student aid policy: A history and an assessment. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/offices/OPE/PPI/FinPostSecEd/gladieux.html>

¹⁸ The Pell Institute. (2013, June). Reflections on Pell, 40. Washington, DC: The Pell Institute. Retrieved from http://www.pellinstitute.org/downloads/publications-Reflections_on_Pell_June_2013.pdf

¹⁹ Baime, D. S., & Mullin, C. M. (2011). Promoting educational opportunity: The Pell Grant Program at community colleges. Retrieved from http://www.aacc.nche.edu/Publications/Briefs/Documents/PolicyBrief_Pell%20Grant.pdf

²⁰ Education Amendments of 1976. (PL. 94-482). United States statutes at large, 90 Stat. 2092. Sec. 121(d). Retrieved from <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-90/pdf/STATUTE-90-Pg2081.pdf>

²¹ Middle Income Student Assistance Act. (PL. 95-566). United States statutes at large, 92 Stat. 2403. Sec. 2(a). Retrieved from <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-92/pdf/STATUTE-92-Pg2402.pdf>

²² Education Amendments of 1980. (PL. 96-374). United States statutes at large, 94 Stat. 1401. Sec. 402(a). Retrieved from <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-94/pdf/STATUTE-94-Pg1367.pdf>

²³ Higher Education Amendments of 1986. (PL. 99-498).

United States statutes at large, 100 Stat. 1472. Sec. 479. Retrieved from <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-100/pdf/STATUTE-100-Pg1268.pdf>

²⁴ Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990. (PL. 101-508). United States statutes at large, 104 Stat. 1388-26. Sec. 3004(a). Retrieved from <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-104/pdf/STATUTE-104-Pg1388.pdf>

²⁵ Prior to 1992, students could be considered independent if they were not claimed as an exemption on their parents' income tax return for two years. Students also had to provide evidence of self-support. Starting in 1992, students could claim independence by meeting at least one of today's criteria (e.g., 24 years of age or older, orphan, veteran, married, etc.).

²⁶ FinAid. (2014). What can you do if your parents refuse to help? Retrieved from <http://www.finaid.org/otheraid/parentsrefuse.phtml>

²⁷ Kenneth, M. (2004). College courses in prison. Encyclopedia of Prisons & Correctional Facilities. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. Retrieved from <http://www.sagepub.com/hanserintro/study/materials/reference/ref15.2.pdf>

²⁸ Deficit Reduction Act of 2005. (PL. 109-171). United States statutes at large, 120 Stat. 155. Sec. 8003. Retrieved from <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-120/pdf/STATUTE-120-Pg4.pdf>

²⁹ College Cost Reduction and Access Act. (PL. 110-84). United States statutes at large, 121 Stat. 784. Sec. 102. Retrieved from <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-110publ84/pdf/PLAW-110publ84.pdf>

³⁰ College Cost Reduction and Access Act. (PL. 110-84). United States statutes at large, 121 Stat. 784. Sec. 102. Retrieved from <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-110publ84/pdf/PLAW-110publ84.pdf>

³¹ College Cost Reduction and Access Act. (PL. 110-84). United States statutes at large, 121 Stat. 784. Sec. 101. Retrieved from <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-110publ84/pdf/PLAW-110publ84.pdf>

³² Kantrowitz, M. (2011, December 22). Summary of student financial aid cuts in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2012, 1. Retrieved from <http://www.finaid.org/educators/20111216fy2012aidcuts.pdf>

³³ Higher Education Opportunity Act. (PL. 110-315). United States statutes at large, 122 Stat. 3188. Sec. 401(a)(2)(D). Retrieved from <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-110publ315/pdf/PLAW-110publ315.pdf>

³⁴ Higher Education Opportunity Act. (PL. 110-315). United States Statutes at Large, 122 Stat. 3189. Sec. 401(b). Retrieved from <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-110publ315/pdf/PLAW-110publ315.pdf>

³⁵ McArdle, S., & McCullough, C. (2008). Federal Student Aid. Federal Pell grant, academic competitiveness grant, and national SMART grant programs update [PowerPoint slides]. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from <http://ifap.ed.gov/presentations/attachments/071408NASFAA062508ACG-SMART1.pdf>

³⁶ American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. (PL. 111-5). United States statutes at large, 123 Stat. 190. Sec. 806. Retrieved from <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-111publ5/pdf/PLAW-111publ5.pdf>

³⁷ Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010. (PL. 111-152). United States statutes at large, 124 Stat. 1072. Sec. 2101(a)(2)(C). Retrieved from <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-111publ152/pdf/PLAW-111publ152.pdf>

³⁸ Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010. (PL. 111-152). United States statutes at large, 124 Stat. 1072. Sec. 2101(a)(2)(C). Retrieved from <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-111publ152/pdf/PLAW-111publ152.pdf>

³⁹ U.S. Department of Education. (2011). Academic competitiveness grants and smart grants overview, 3-4. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/budget12/justifications/q-acg.pdf>

⁴⁰ Budget Control Act of 2011. (PL. 112-25). United States statutes at large, 125 Stat. 266. Sec. 501-502. Retrieved from <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-125/pdf/STATUTE-125-Pg240.pdf>

⁴¹ Department of Defense and Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act of 2011. (PL. 112-10). United States statutes at large, 125 Stat. 169. Sec. 1860(a)(3)(A). Retrieved from <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-125/pdf/STATUTE-125-Pg38.pdf>

⁴² National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators. (2011). Year-round Pell after the continuing resolution. Retrieved from http://www.nasfaa.org/advocacy/budget-2011/cr/Year-Round_Pell_After_the_Continuing_Resolution.aspx

⁴³ Congressional Research Service. Summary: Public Law No: 112-10. Sec. 1860. Retrieved from <https://www.congress.gov/bill/112th-congress/house-bill/1473>

⁴⁴ New America Foundation. (2014, September 23). Background and analysis: Federal Pell Grant Program. Retrieved from <http://febp.newamerica.net/background-analysis/federal-pell-grant-program>

⁴⁵ Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2012. (PL. 112-74). United States statutes at large, 125 Stat. 1103. Sec. 309(f). Retrieved from <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-112publ74/pdf/PLAW-112publ74.pdf>

⁴⁶ Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2012. (PL. 112-74). United States statutes at large, 125 Stat. 1100. Sec. 309(a)(2)(A). Retrieved from <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-112publ74/pdf/PLAW-112publ74.pdf>

⁴⁷ Kantrowitz, M. (2011, December 22). Summary of student financial aid cuts in the consolidated appropriations act of 2012, 1. Retrieved from <http://www.finaid.org/educators/20111216fy2012aidcuts.pdf>

⁴⁸ Affiliations of documentary cast members correspond to the policy period discussed in the film.

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