

A night photograph of the United States Capitol building, illuminated with warm yellow lights. The building's dome is a prominent feature, and its reflection is visible in the water in the foreground. Large trees are in front of the building, and a statue is visible on the right. A dark blue diagonal shape covers the bottom left corner of the image, containing the text.

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS HIGHLIGHTS

COUNCIL FOR CHRISTIAN COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES



WHO WE ARE

The Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) is a higher education association representing over 170 institutions around the world, including 130+ in the United States. CCCU institutions are accredited, comprehensive colleges and universities whose missions are Christ-centered and rooted in the historic Christian faith. The CCCU's mission is to advance the cause of Christian higher education and to help our institutions transform lives by faithfully relating scholarship and service to biblical truth. As the leading voice for Christian higher education, we provide a unified platform to highlight the contributions of our institutions and students to the common good.

CCCU DEMOGRAPHICS

10M+	Alumni
95,000	Faculty and staff employed globally
605,000	Total students enrolled globally
170+	Colleges and universities

“The question to ask about education is not ‘What can I do with it?’ That is the wrong question... The right question is rather ‘What can it do to me?’”

— Arthur Holmes, *The Idea of a Christian College*

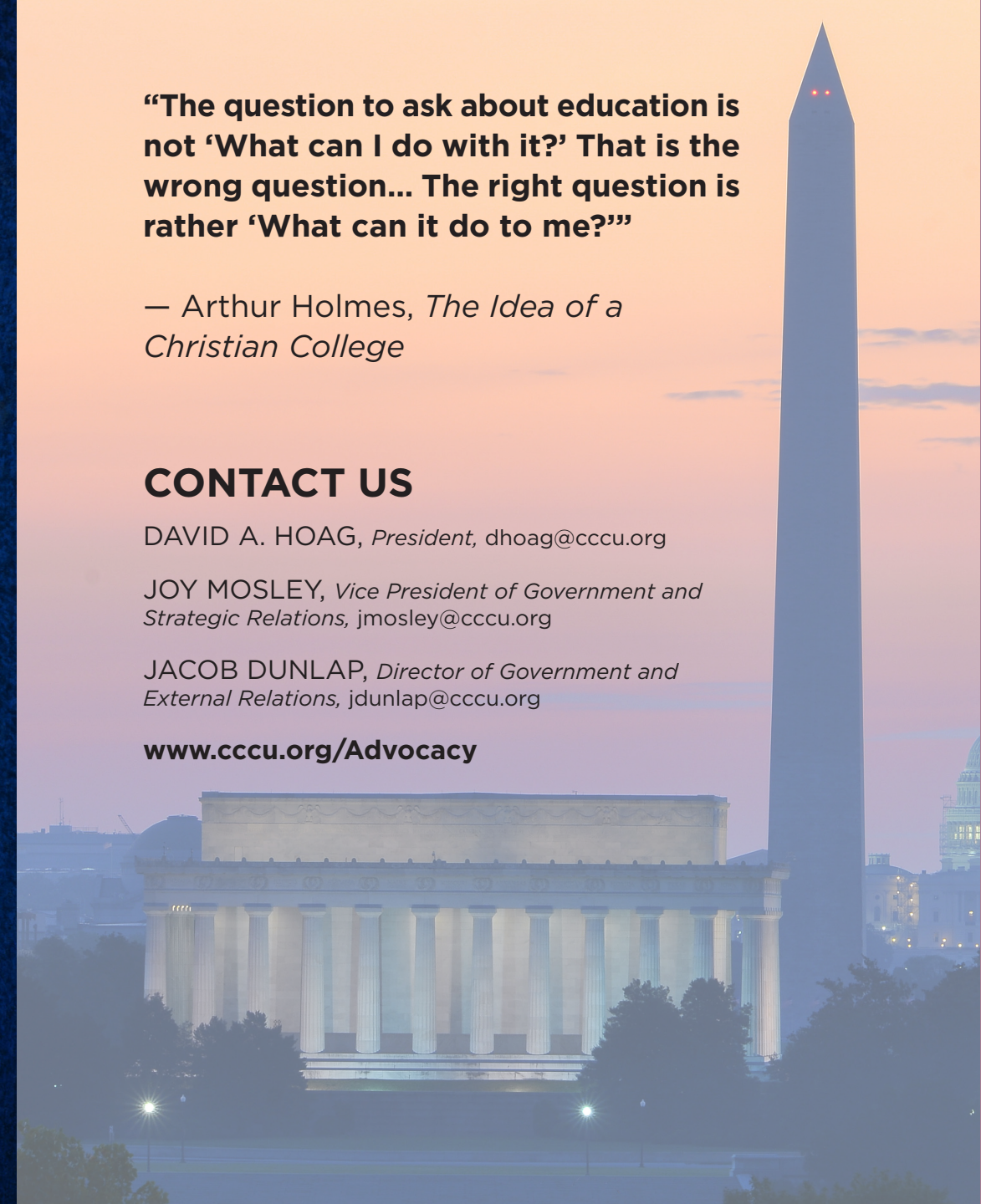
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www.cccu.org/Advocacy



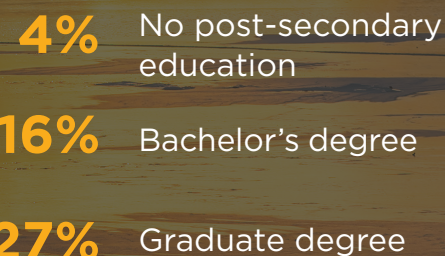
Americans with bachelor's degrees and higher are much more likely to participate in civic life, including volunteering, joining organizations, and voting.

VALUE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education focuses on the holistic and transformative development of individuals, going beyond specialized job training. A college education equips students with critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving skills applicable across various professions, fostering adaptable and well-informed citizens who contribute to a vibrant democracy. While job readiness is crucial, a narrow focus on immediate employment overlooks the long-term benefits of a liberal arts education. We ask Congress to consider the wide-ranging impact of higher education in addition to the financial benefits. **Please resist legislation and push back on regulations that view higher education primarily through an economic lens.**



PARTICIPATED IN
SERVICE OR CIVIC
ORGANIZATION



PARTICIPATED IN SPORTS OR
RECREATION
ORGANIZATION



SOURCE: <https://www.nacubo.org/Advocacy/State-of-Higher-Education/More-is-Possible>

When identifying strong job candidates, at least three-quarters of employers are looking for evidence of the following “very important” skills:

- ✓ Oral and written communication
- ✓ Critical and creative thinking
- ✓ Complex problem-solving
- ✓ Teamwork and the ability to work with diverse groups
- ✓ Digital literacy and data analysis

SOURCE: <https://dgm81phhv63.cloudfront.net/content/user-photos/Research/PDFs/AACU-2023-Employer-Report.pdf>



Employers highly value holistic education

Top skill employers would like colleges and universities to place more emphasis on to improve college students' preparedness:

Critical Thinking

DISTINCTIVES OF CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

Christian higher education unites academic goals with Christian faith, seeking to instruct the mind, form character, and foster the soul. This integration of faith and learning provides a holistic education, **preparing students to engage in the world not just with knowledge, but with wisdom and understanding.** CCCU institutions are committed to developing students who make a difference as redemptive voices for the common good. Our graduates recognize that no matter their vocation, they can labor in pursuit of true human flourishing for their communities, their countries, and the world.



CCCU STATS

38%

First-generation students

1 in 3

Pell Grant recipients

87%

Students who stated that on their campus, they were challenged to think about issues from a Christian perspective.

85%

Students who stated they learned to think critically and analytically.

SOURCE: National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), NSSE 2023 Consortium
Coordinator Report: Council for Christian Colleges and Universities

DISTINCTIVES OF CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

89%

Students who had high-quality interactions with faculty*

89%

Students who rate their entire educational experience as positive*

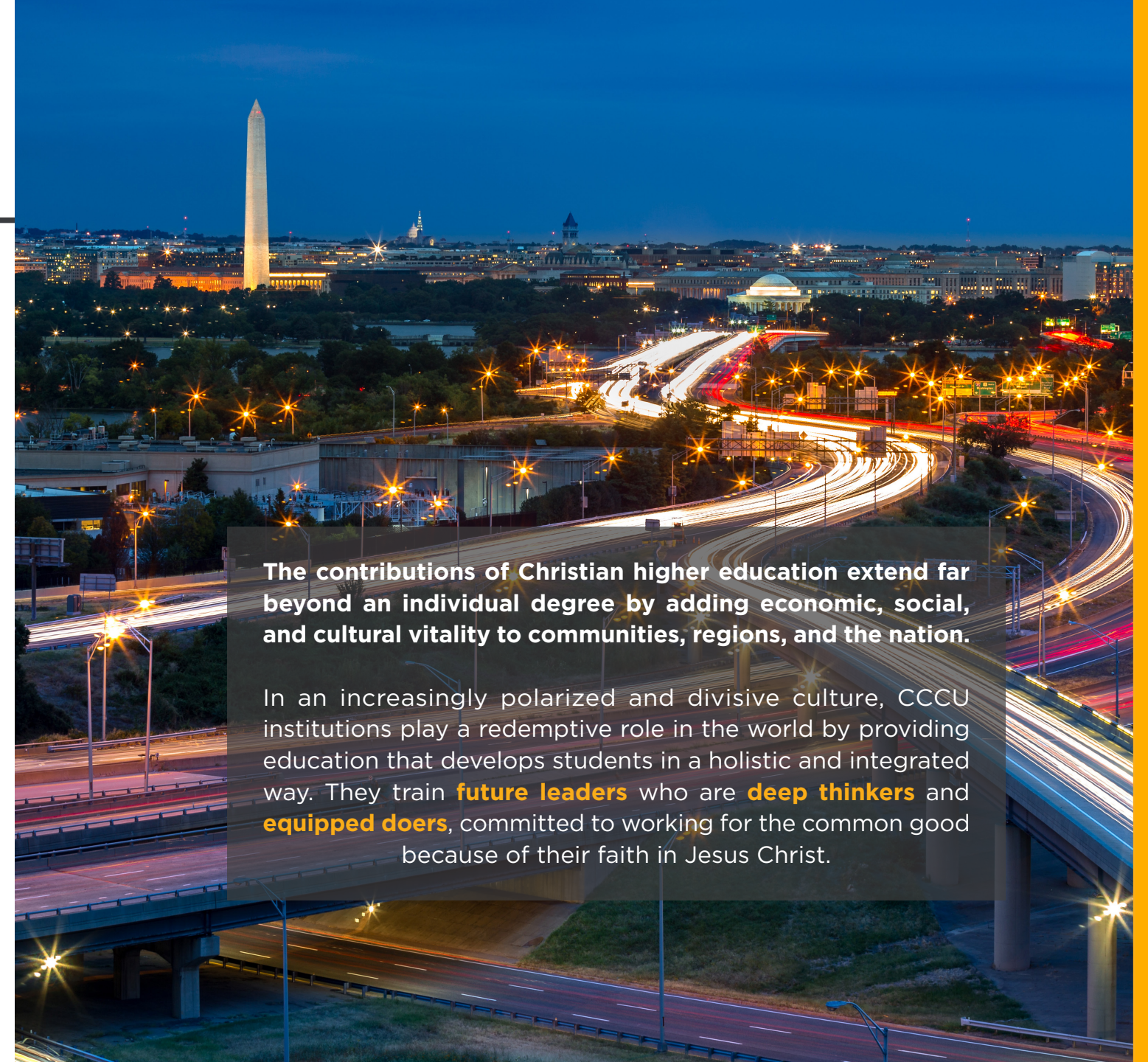
88%

Students who stated that they feel comfortable being themselves at their institution*

82%

Students experiencing intellectual growth during college*

*SOURCE: National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), NSSE 2023 Frequencies and Statistical Comparisons: Council for Christian Colleges and Universities



The contributions of Christian higher education extend far beyond an individual degree by adding economic, social, and cultural vitality to communities, regions, and the nation.

In an increasingly polarized and divisive culture, CCCU institutions play a redemptive role in the world by providing education that develops students in a holistic and integrated way. They train **future leaders** who are **deep thinkers** and **equipped doers**, committed to working for the common good because of their faith in Jesus Christ.

The CCCU supports charitable giving at all levels for all individuals

For every \$1 in federal grant money a student receives, CCCU institutions provide \$5 in institutional financial aid, and a significant percentage of that crucial institutional aid comes from charitable donations. We encourage legislation that would create a universal charitable giving deduction.

13% of donors provide **88%** of charitable giving. We want to increase this to ensure lower-to-middle income and younger donors have an incentive to give.*

The current deduction is only available to those who itemize, which is about **10%** of taxpayers.*

53% of respondents indicated they would give to charity if they were able to claim a deduction for their giving.*

Restoring the charitable deduction for non-itemizers is an evidence-based solution

During the pandemic, the temporary charitable deduction for non-itemizers brought a significant increase of small donations, contributing \$10.9 billion from over 42 million taxpayers.**

*SOURCE: <https://charitablegivingcoalition.org/2023/11/cgc-sends-sign-on-letter-in-support-of-the-charitable-act-on-giving-tuesday/>

**SOURCE: <https://charitablegivingcoalition.org/2024/12/on-giving-tuesday-charitable-giving-coalition-calls-on-congress-to-restore-charitable-deduction-for-non-itemizers/>

The CCCU supports expansion of Section 127

Section 127 allows employers to provide their employees with up to \$5,250 of tax-free educational assistance per year. **We support legislation that would increase the maximum benefit and allow this assistance to be applied to student loan repayments.**

57% of employers offer tuition assistance as a benefit to their employees, and **40%** of those employers are likely to expand this assistance if there was an increase to the annual limit.*

39% of employees would use an education assistance program if they must pay taxes on amounts above \$5,250. However, with a higher limit, **73%** of employees would utilize this tax benefit. **

*SOURCE: <https://www.shrm.org/content/dam/en/shrm/research/2024-talent-trends-research-overall-findings.pdf>

**SOURCE: Instride

Pell Grant

Pell is the cornerstone of need-based aid for higher education, and the CCCU supports increasing the Pell Grant. One in three CCCU students receives a Pell Grant, and over 50% of CCCU students come from families that make less than \$50,000 per year. Increasing the grant would put more money in the hands of the students and make it possible for more low-income students to have access to high-quality education.

Pell has widespread support:

82% of all voters support expanding Pell*

77% of Republicans*

91% of Democrats*

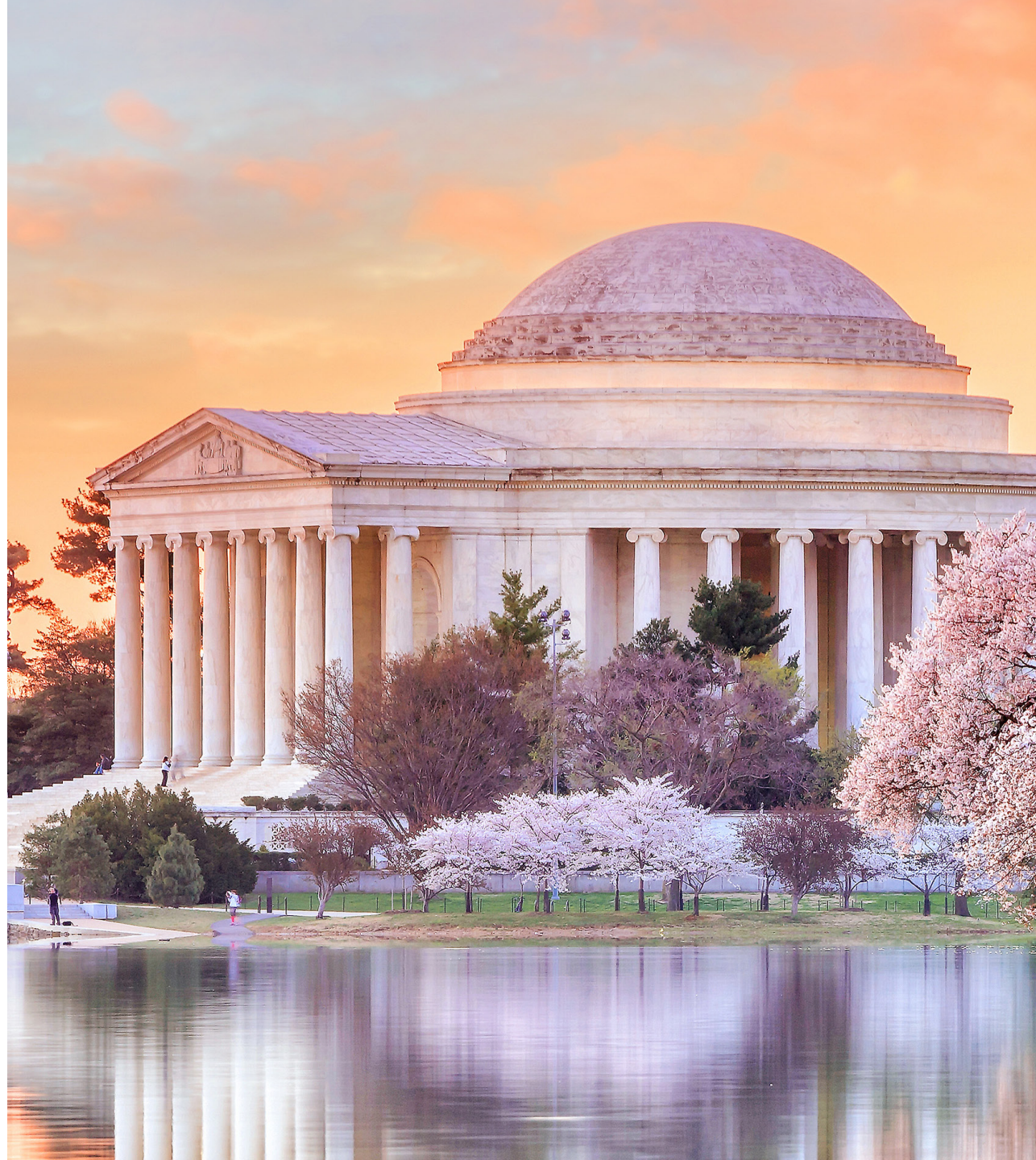
Federal Work-Study and SEOG

We ask Congress to prioritize funding for federal work-study, SEOG, and other need-based aid in budget appropriations.

71% of employers indicated they would be “much more” likely to consider a job candidate with a job or work-study experience.**

*SOURCE: <https://doublepell.org/resource/national-survey-shows-strong-bipartisan-support-for-the-federal-pell-grant-program/>

**SOURCE: <https://dgm81phvh63.cloudfront.net/content/user-photos/Research/PDFs/AACU-2023-Employer-Report.pdf>



There is a growing belief in Congress that colleges and universities lack sufficient “skin in the game” when it comes to funding, leading to proposals that penalize institutions based on the earnings of their graduates. CCCU schools already demonstrate a steadfast commitment to cost-sharing through generous institutional aid and strong student support.

PERCENT OF STUDENTS RECEIVING INSTITUTIONAL AID

94% CCCU students*

78% Private nonprofits*

57% Public 4-year*

For every \$1 in federal grant money a student receives, CCCU institutions provide \$5 in institutional financial aid.*

CCCU students serve significantly more in fields that prioritize societal benefits rather than earnings, such as counseling, mental health, family service, and community service.

12.7% CCCU students**

4.2% All 4-year institutions**

The CCCU opposes policies that negatively impact institutions when their graduates choose to serve their communities. Instead, we support a student-centered approach that provides cost-sharing grants to students that will reduce net price and promote college completion.

*SOURCE: Bethel University, IPEDS 2023

**SOURCE: <https://www.cccu.org/economic-impact/>



The CCCU believes that religious freedom is essential to the common good and supports robust religious protections of beliefs and practices for all faith traditions.

We ask Congress to oppose legislation that carves out the protections established in the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

We urge Congress to protect religious higher education by ensuring that all accreditors, including programmatic accreditors, must respect the religious mission of institutions and not use their religious mission as a negative factor.

We fight for the rights of religion, association, and speech, which ensure CCCU institutions can teach as well as maintain policies that are consistent with their religious beliefs and convictions while participating fully within the public square.

We work to ensure that institutions adhering to biblical principles are protected in areas such as federal funding, hiring, and Title IX.

We partner with a broad coalition of religious traditions and denominations to support principled pluralism.



Our institutions work in a wide variety of ways to follow the biblical commands to care for the marginalized and vulnerable — including those who want to pursue higher education but are in the United States illegally through no fault or decision of their own. **We support legislation that would provide a permanent solution for Dreamers.**

The American system of higher education provides unprecedented freedom to attend religious institutions, and CCCU schools attract many international students who want to study at a Christian university. **We support an efficient, effective visa process and a welcoming stance for international students who want to study in the U.S.**



International students at U.S. colleges & universities contribute \$43.8 billion to the economy & support over 378,175 jobs.

SOURCE: <https://www.nafsa.org/sites/default/files/media/document/EconValue2024.pdf>



CCCU institutions enroll over 10,000 students annually on student visas.

SOURCE: IPEDS 2023



Over 400,000 Dreamers have enrolled in higher education institutions.

SOURCE: <https://www.presidentialalliance.org/reflections-on-the-state-of-the-union-address-dreamers-success-is-our-countrys-success/>



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