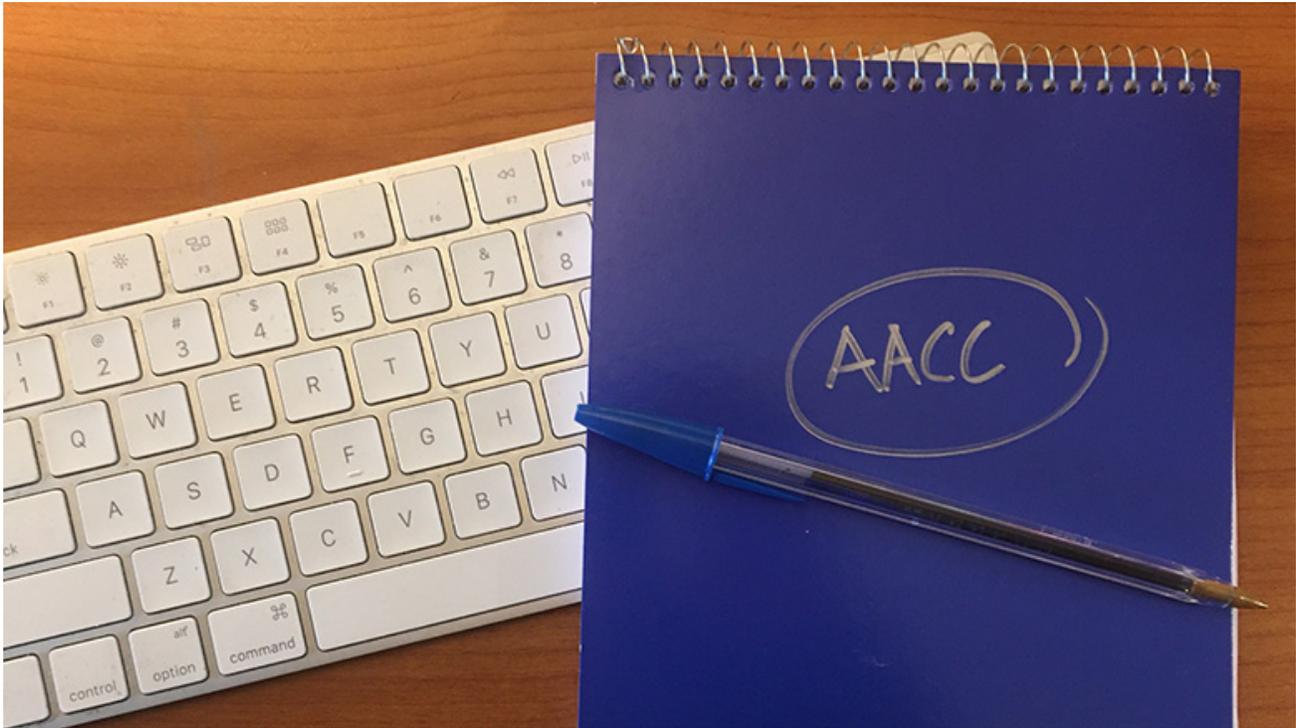


Reporter's notebook



BY MATTHEW DEMBICKI APRIL 10, 2021

- **AACC/ACCT seek \$50B for upgrades to college facilities**
- **Kudos to Goldwater scholars**

AACC/ACCT seek \$50B for upgrades to college facilities

The two national organizations representing community college leaders are asking Congress to include \$50 billion in any future recovery legislation to help the nation's community colleges with maintenance and repairs of their facilities.

The **American Association of Community Colleges** (AACC) and Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) noted in an April 9 letter to congressional leaders that public two-year colleges have an estimated \$60 billion in deferred maintenance, needed renovations and upgrades.

“Projects funded through this proposal would include advanced manufacturing sites, libraries, nanotechnology laboratories, nursing facilities, and smart classroom structures,” the letter said. “Investment would not only improve instruction on our campuses; it would directly benefit the local community, which often participates in college offerings and provide a boost to local economic activity.”

The letter addresses mainly President Biden’s plan to invest in the **nation’s infrastructure**, which will require a skilled workforce. The American Jobs Plan would include \$12 billion for upgrading two-year colleges’ facilities and technology. It also proposes \$100 billion for workforce development, including \$48 billion to build the capacity of existing workforce development systems.

AACC and ACCT said the workforce development plan should mirror the successful **Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training grant program**, which provided \$1.9 billion in grants over four years to community colleges, resulting in 300,000 earned postsecondary credentials and 2,700 new or redesigned postsecondary programs.

The associations also again encouraged lawmakers to extend Pell Grant eligibility for quality, short-term programs — as the bipartisan **JOBS Act** (S.864, H.R. 2037) would do — that will help workers quickly prepare for jobs as the economy heats up.

AACC and ACCT also noted the critical importance of strengthening the nation’s broadband system, which has been critical in delivering higher education during the pandemic as most postsecondary education institutions shifted to online learning.

“Community college educators and students have witnessed these shortcomings for years but are now experiencing this deficiency even more acutely,” said the associations, which support the Jobs Plan’s proposal to invest \$100 billion to expand high-speed broadband. “Now is the moment to realize the bold step envisioned in the President’s plan.”

Kudos to Goldwater scholars

Amalia Abraham Martin, who arrived in the U.S. from Cuba just five years ago, is trying to decide what to do after she graduates next month from **Miami Dade College** (MDC): attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Princeton University or Johns Hopkins University.

Whichever she chooses, the 20-year-old plans to pursue a career as a doctor and researcher specializing in oncology.

“It inspires me to see people getting better,” said Abraham Martin, a volunteer researcher at the University of Miami who decided to pursue a medical career after her mother was diagnosed with cancer in 2018.

In addition to her academic work, Abraham Martin serves as vice president of the Beta Beta Beta Biological Honor Society and is website designer for the MDC Padrón Campus’ award-winning literary magazine Urbana. She also helps raise funds for the cancer nonprofit Sebastian Strong.

So it should come as no surprise that Abraham Martin is among four community college students who this year will receive a **Barry Goldwater Scholarship**, the most prestigious endowment for undergraduates pursuing research careers in natural sciences, mathematics and engineering in the country.

“I still can’t believe I got this scholarship,” Abraham Martin said. “I applied last fall but never thought I was going to get it. I had to check the website a few times to make sure.”

Across the country in California, another Goldwater scholar, Sophia Barber of **Pasadena City College**, plans to earn her doctorate in neuroscience to work on preventative measures and treatments for Alzheimer’s disease. She is currently a research assistant at California State University, Northridge.

A student from a Michigan community college and one from a New York community college also received the high honor.

The Barry Goldwater Scholarship and Excellence in Education Foundation this year increased the number of Goldwater scholarships it has awarded for the 2021-2022 academic year to 410 college students. More than 5,000 college sophomores and juniors applied for the scholarship.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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