This week, members of Congress debated a range of topics including student aid policy and FY15 appropriations for the Departments of Agriculture, Defense, Energy and Transportation as well as for the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

On Monday, President Obama issued a memorandum aimed at easing student borrowers’ debt loads.

On Wednesday, the Bank on Students Emergency Loan Refinancing Act failed to garner enough votes to proceed towards passage in the Senate.

Congressional hearings included the following:

- June 10 House Judiciary Subcommittee on Courts, Intellectual Property and the Internet hearing on music licensing under Title 17;
- June 11 Senate Indian Affairs Committee hearing entitled “Indian Education Series: Examining Higher Education for American Indian Students” and
- June 12 House Science, Space, and Technology Subcommittee on Oversight and Subcommittee on Research and Technology joint hearing entitled “Reducing the Administrative Workload for Federally Funded Research.”

Last Friday, MSU Reproductive Physiology Professor Jim Ireland was the featured speaker at a Capitol Hill briefing on optimizing the benefits of enhanced utilization of farm animals for federally-funded research in human medicine and animal agriculture.

On Tuesday, MSU Ecosystem Science Professor Phil Robertson participated in a Capitol Hill briefing on the National Science Foundation (NSF) program, the Long Term Ecological Research Network. This program captures long-term observational and experimental data to improve scientific understanding of how ecosystems are structured and function.
Timothy O’Leary, acting chief research and development officer (CRADO) for the Department of Veterans Affairs, has been named CRADO.

NASA has named Gavin Schmidt, deputy director of the Goddard Institute for Space Studies, as the Institute’s director.

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**AGRICULTURE**

**CONGRESS WANTS TO SAVE HONEYBEES BY BANNING SOME PESTICIDES**
By Anna Giaritelli, *Roll Call*, June 6, 2014

They’re small and operate behind the scenes, but they’re critical to agriculture — and Congress is starting to notice. Honeybees are responsible for pollinating everything from apple orchards to vegetable patches, contributing as much as $30 billion a year to U.S. agriculture. About a third of U.S. crop production relies on bees for pollination. But these workhorses of agriculture are dying at unsustainable rates, triggering concerns in farming circles and beyond. Bees are considered an indicator species, and their decline signals broader systemic problems, environmental scientists say. Over the past five years, roughly a third of commercial bee colonies in the United States have died each winter, according to Department of Agriculture surveys. And while the most recent survey offered some good news — with only about 23 percent of bee colonies dying over the winter — critics say that number is questionable, because just more than 20 percent of beekeepers responded. These over-winter die-offs have been exacerbated by, or may be related to, the puzzling syndrome known as Colony Collapse Disorder, in which bees leave their hives and never return. The disorder first captured
lawmakers’ attention in 2007, prompting three subcommittee hearings in 2007 and 2008. Since then, congressional interest in the topic has waned — until recently.

ATHLETICS

NCAA ON THE DEFENSIVE
By Caitlin Emma, Politico’s Morning Education, June 9, 2014

A class-action lawsuit that could transform collegiate athletics goes to trial today in federal court in Oakland, Calif. Former college athletes, led by onetime UCLA basketball star Ed O’Bannon, are suing the NCAA for allegedly violating antitrust laws. At issue: The league's requirement that top football and basketball players effectively sign over the rights to use their names and images for commercial purposes. The players contend this practice violates the Sherman Antitrust Act because it allows the NCAA to effectively monopolize the market for their likenesses - and blocks them from getting fair value by selling their images to the highest bidder. The NCAA responds that players get plenty in return - namely, their college scholarships - and argue that the restriction is necessary to protect competition in college sports and its philosophy of "amateurism."

* This is the complete news article.

BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

NIH REPORT WARNS OF LOOMING SHORTAGE OF PHYSICIAN-SCIENTISTS
By Jocelyn Kaiser, ScienceInsider, June 9, 2014

Many observers believe that the United States is churning out too many new Ph.D. biomedical researchers, creating a hypercompetitive, unhealthy environment...But a new report from an advisory panel to the director of the NIH paints a different picture for physician-scientists: There may not be enough of them to replace those preparing to retire.

GETTING TO KNOW PCORI: FROM APPLICATION TO CLOSEOUT -- A WORKSHOP FOR SPONSORED PROJECT ADMINISTRATORS
PCORI June Newsletter, June 11, 2014

The Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) is hosting a FREE two-day workshop to provide sponsored project administrators with tools and guidance for developing responsive funding applications. [The workshop will be held July 24-25 in Washington, D.C.]
MENTORSHIP MATTERS FOR THE BIOMEDICAL WORKFORCE
By Sally Rockey, Rock Talk, June 6, 2014

As scientists, we have the opportunity to make new discoveries that contribute to fundamental knowledge and improve people’s health and quality of life through our research. But we also influence lives by fostering the careers of the less experienced investigators with whom we interact on a daily basis. We shape their professional development by mentoring them on how to be productive researchers who contribute to both science and the community... the NIH launched several new programs and policy changes to further enhance training of future scientists

LAWMAKERS STRIKE BIPARTISAN PACT TO RENEW AUTISM PROGRAMS
By Melissa Attias, CQ.com, June 9, 2014

Lawmakers have reached a bipartisan, bicameral agreement on a five-year reauthorization of federal autism programs, boosting the package’s chances of clearing Congress before central provisions of the Combating Autism Act sunset at the end of September. New Jersey Democrat Robert Menendez and Wyoming Republican Michael B. Enzi plan to introduce the compromise legislation in the Senate on Monday, according to a Senate source involved in the negotiations, while the House Energy and Commerce Committee is expected amend the current bill (HR 4631) to report out the new language at a Tuesday markup. The agreement builds off of a substitute amendment that the Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee incorporated into the House bill, introduced by New Jersey Republican Christopher H. Smith and Pennsylvania Democrat Mike Doyle, at its markup late last month. A copy of the bill language provided to CQ Roll Call that represents what is expected to be introduced Monday incorporates two key changes from the subcommittee-approved text. The legislation would change the name of the legislation from the Combating Autism Reauthorization Act of 2014, which references the name of the original 2006 law (PL 109-416), to the Autism Collaboration, Accountability, Research, Education and Support Act of 2014, or the Autism CARES Act of 2014. The name change addresses concerns in the autism community that the 2006 title was unnecessarily hostile, shifting the tone to be more supportive of individuals with autism spectrum disorder and their families. The language also would move a report to Congress from the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to the Department of Health and Human Services and focus its scope on young adults with autism spectrum disorder and the transition from school-based services to services available to adults. The report’s requirements include forward-looking responsibilities that are not typical for GAO, such as providing proposals to improve outcomes for those making the transition. Other changes from the House subcommittee-approved text include adjusting the terms of non-federal members of the Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee from two years to four years and no longer limiting them to two terms. In addition, the expected compromise maintains a provision included in the subcommittee text that would require the HHS secretary to designate an official already within the department to oversee national autism spectrum disorder research, services and support activities. It also keeps a requirement that a progress report submitted to Congress on activities related to autism spectrum disorder and other developmental disabilities be posted on the department’s website. And it includes provisions designed to prevent unnecessary duplication after the GAO released a
report in November that said 84 percent of federally funded autism research projects “had the potential to be duplicative.” According to a March estimate from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), one in 68 children has been identified with autism spectrum disorder – a substantial increase from a 2012 estimate of one in 88 children. In New Jersey, the home state of both bills’ primary sponsors, the CDC estimates that one in 45 children has been identified with ASD.

* This is the complete news article.

**NASA ASTRONAUT, NIH OFFICIALS DISCUSS MEDICAL RESEARCH BEING DONE ON SPACE STATION**
NASA News Release, June 10, 2014

NASA astronaut Michael Hopkins met Stephen I. Katz, director of the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases on Tuesday at [the] NIH campus in Bethesda, Maryland, where they discussed the importance of research taking place aboard the International Space Station, including NIH-funded investigations.

**REPORT EXAMINES MILITARY RESEARCH ON HEALTH EFFECTS OF LOW-LEVEL RADIATION**
National Academies Press, June 12, 2014

The Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute (AFRRI) carries on a robust program of research on the biological and health effects of ionizing radiation exposure, but it is not substantively advancing research on health risks arising from exposure to low-level radiation, says a new report from the Institute of Medicine. However, AFRRI’s unique infrastructure, which would be difficult to reproduce elsewhere, positions it to contribute to low-level radiation research.

**CONGRESSIONAL SCHEDULE**

**HOUSE GOP’S SUMMER AGENDA: BERGDAHL, BENGHAZI AND TAX EXTENDERS**
By Daniel Newhauser, CQ.com, June 9, 2014

The House is back in Washington for almost two full months, but don’t look for a lot of breakthroughs: GOP leadership has pared back big-ticket wish lists, choosing instead to sprint for the August recess with a relatively modest legislative agenda. There is less and less serious talk of an overhaul of immigration, a rewrite of the tax code or replacing the Democrats’ health care law. Instead, it’s much more likely the next two months of House floor action — roughly 28 legislative days before a month-long summer recess — will be consumed by such small-bore economic measures as targeted tax extenders and energy regulation bills. The exception will be appropriations bills, and members and staff are more hopeful than they have been in years past about their chances of passing a full slate before the August break, so they can conference
House and Senate spending plans when the chambers return. With last year’s budget agreement easing the path, members hope to avoid another calamitous fiscal cliff before government funding runs out in September. While Republican goals on the legislative front are modest, they’ve set their sights high on oversight, with a series of hearings aimed at holding the White House to account on everything from the Veterans Affairs scandal to the IRS, and Benghazi and the recent Guantánamo Bay prisoner swap. The trade of five Taliban combatants from Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, for Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, who had been imprisoned in Afghanistan for the past five years, has Republicans, and even a few Democrats, demanding answers from the administration. Despite the reluctance to take up larger legislative items once named as major priorities, Republicans hope to transition these oversight and economic measures into a winning messaging package with which to equip members as they head back to campaign in their districts in August. “You’ll see again and again that the American people’s priorities are our priorities when it comes to jobs, the economy, cutting spending, doing our work in regular order when it comes to appropriations bills, oversight when it comes to the deal that led to Sergeant Bergdahl’s release, the VA, the IRS and Benghazi. These are all priorities for the American people,” said Michael Steel, spokesman for Speaker John A. Boehner of Ohio. Still the legislative road map is not completely devoid of potholes. One major policy issue that must be dealt with before the break is the Highway Trust Fund, due to run out of cash by the end of August, according to the Department of Transportation. That leaves congressional negotiators just the next two months to find a solution. House Republican leaders issued a memo to their members late last month, proposing a $14 billion to $15 billion yearlong patch to the trust fund, paid for by changes to the Postal Service’s delivery schedule. The proposal has already been decried by Senate Democrats, conservative outside groups and newspaper editorial boards alike, all noting that it does not provide a long-term revenue source for highway funding. And while House GOP aides concede it is not a perfect plan, they note that there have been no other viable plans put forth to deal with the issue. President Barack Obama’s budget, for instance, called for backfilling the trust fund with revenue taken from business tax reform. And with the midterm elections just months away, neither party will likely broach the idea of increasing the fund’s existing revenue stream — a gas tax. House GOP aides said they would look at other plans if the Senate proposes them. House Republicans will have a chance to discuss their Postal Service idea in a private conference meeting Tuesday morning in the Capitol, the first opportunity to gauge collective reaction to the memo, since most members were back home last week. More immediately, House Republicans will hold votes this week on small business tax extenders, hoping to pick off Democratic votes and appear proactive as Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada said he would not hold votes on tax extenders until after the November elections. “Our goal,” said one GOP aide, “is in part get as many Democrats to vote for this bill as possible to show the administration and Harry Reid that there are a number of Democrats who support these policies and we think there is strong bipartisan support to overcome whatever small objections are on their end.” House Democratic leaders, on the other hand, will make hay of the fact that the proposals are unpaid for, while extensions to their preferred policies, such as unemployment insurance, languish, according to a Democratic leadership aide. That sets up Democrats to drive home their election-year economic message, calling for a UI extension and minimum wage hike, neither of which are likely to be taken up by Republicans. Republicans will counter with an agenda focused on alleviating what they call the “middle class squeeze,” a legislative package that consists of bills rolling back federal regulations and targeting gas prices in time for the annual summer spike in gas costs as families take to the
roads for vacation. In the long term, the House faces expiration of both the Export-Import Bank and the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act, both of which must originate in the Financial Services Committee. Aides said it remains unclear whether either will see floor action before August.

* This is the complete news article.

**FEDERAL BUDGET PROCESS**

**HOUSE ADOPTS FOOD AID PROVISION AS AGRICULTURE BILL PASSAGE SLIPS TO NEXT WEEK**

By Ellyn Ferguson, CQ.com, June 11, 2014

The House on Wednesday pushed further debate and a vote on final passage on the fiscal 2015 Agriculture appropriations bill to next week after giving bipartisan support to an amendment to provide more money to buy international humanitarian food aid closer to areas in need. By a vote of 223-198, lawmakers approved an amendment by Foreign Affairs Chairman Ed Royce, R-Calif., to shift $10 million from the Agricultural Marketing Service to the Food for Peace program to buy food overseas to provide speedier delivery to people in disaster or war-torn places. Agriculture Appropriations Chairman Robert B. Alderholt, R-Ala., had requested a roll call vote on what has been a contentious issue: whether the United States should reconsider its practice of buying most of the food aid in the United States and shipping it overseas on U.S. flagged ships. The practice bolsters U.S. agriculture and the merchant marine service, but critics say it’s inefficient, slow and costly. However, Rep. John Garamendi, D-Calif., warned that Royce was reopening a highly charged issue that could reduce support for the program, which began as a way to bolster U.S. agriculture and its merchant marine fleet. Stephen Fincher, R-Tenn., put the argument more bluntly: “This amendment gives away American taxpayer money to foreign competitors.” The administration included concerns about the food aid program in its Statement of Administration Policy, but the White House’s veto threat was largely posited on the bill’s treatment of the administration’s school nutrition plans. A spokeswoman for the House Appropriations Committee said the delay on final action on the Agriculture spending bill was a matter of timing, and not because of the brewing fight over school meal nutrition standards. The House will take up an amendment on the issue when it resumes work on the bill June 17. **Food Fight:** The biggest lightning rod in the bill is a provision by Aderholt directing the Agriculture Department to provide waivers for the 2014-2015 school year to school cafeteria managers for meal and snack food nutrition rules set to take effect July 1. Under the provision, the meal providers would have to document six months in operating losses to qualify for a waiver. The School Nutrition Association, which represents school meal providers and their food suppliers, backs the provision and fought back against the veto threat with a conference call where several school cafeteria managers described the challenges and costs of meeting already-implemented school rules and concerns about pending rules calling for further reductions in sodium in meals, use of whole-grain-rich breads and changes to a la carte foods and vending machine snacks. The Agriculture Department is already allowing school districts up to two years to meet the requirement for whole grain pasta. The waivers were not the SNA’s first choice of relief, vice president-elect Becky Domokos-Bays said in a Wednesday phone call. The organization had pressed for additional per-meal reimbursements of 35 cents, but, she said,
“We were informed this year to not bring that to the Hill because it had no chance of passing.” Sam Farr, ranking Democrat on the House Agriculture Appropriations subcommittee, plans to offer an amendment to remove the provision, arguing that the nutrition rules are tools to combating child obesity. He is unlikely to draw Republican votes needed to win. Farr lost on a party-line vote in the full Appropriations Committee when he offered a similar proposal. At a news conference before floor debate started, Farr said most schools were faring well under the nutrition rules and that cafeteria managers struggling with the requirements should work with the Agriculture Department for flexibility. “Waivers are a cop-out. You don’t give waivers to kids because math is hard,” Farr said. “Congress is a heavy parent. We just don’t give out money. We give conditions.” Aderholt and other Republicans argue they are providing relief to local school districts and cafeteria operations from an unfunded mandate. On the floor, Rep. Rodney Davis, R-Ill., accused the Obama administration of being out of touch in defending nutrition rules, which he said are costing rural and urban schools “money that could be better spent on education.” Aderholt also chided some Democrats for a “complete misreading” of his intentions. The goal is not to roll back nutrition rules or contributing to obesity. “We’re talking about providing lunches and flexibility,” he said. Opponents of the waivers, who include first lady Michelle Obama, are expected to continue the fight, which could play out in an eventual conference between the House and Senate Agriculture appropriations bills. The fiscal 2015 bill (HR4800) would provide $20.9 billion in discretionary funding for the Agriculture Department, Food and Drug Administration and the Commodity Futures Trading Commission and related agencies. The mandatory funding level is $121.6 billion. The overall funding total of $142.5 billion is 2 percent less than current funding and 14 percent less than the president’s request. 

CFTC Funding: Floor debate Wednesday touched on various areas covered by the bill, including the funding needs of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC), which would receive $218 million in fiscal 2015 under the House bill. The administration had requested $280 million. Connecticut Rep. Rosa DeLauro, a senior Democratic appropriator, called the funding inadequate, but targeted her amendment to loosen a requirement in the bill that the CFTC devote $53 million of its 2015 budget to improving its technology information system to better police the over-the-counter derivatives market. DeLauro said her proposal would give the agency flexibility in deciding whether it needed more people or more technology to do its job. Aderholt objected, saying the amendment would allow the CFTC to grow its staff and discourage investment in technology needed to track high-speed financial transaction and detect irregularities. The House rejected the amendment on a 194-227 vote.

* This is the complete news article.

**AGRICULTURE SPENDING BILL SIDETRACKED IN HOUSE**

By Philip Brasher, CQ.com, June 12, 2014

The fiscal 2015 Agriculture appropriations bill (HR4800) has been put on hold in the House, which had been expected to resume debate on the bill next week, a senior aide said Thursday afternoon. The aide declined to comment on the reason. But the ranking Democrat on the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee, Sam Farr of California, said earlier that it appeared the defense appropriations bill might be brought to the floor instead next week because it would be easier to pass amid the turmoil in the GOP leadership in the wake of Majority Leader
Eric Cantor’s primary loss. The GOP whip, Kevin McCarthy of California, is running to replace Cantor, of Virginia. “The Republicans are in disarray with Cantor’s defeat and they are putting their whip organization together,” Farr told CQ Roll Call’s Ellyn Ferguson. “I think the Democrats have really made an issue out of the school lunch and white potatoes [added to the Women, Infants and Children nutrition program] that are controversial enough and are causing concerns in their caucus and they need more time to whip it to get the votes.”

* This is the complete news article.

**SENATE PANEL APPROVES BUDGET INCREASES FOR PELL GRANTS AND NIH IN 2015**

Senate appropriators approved a spending bill on Tuesday that would increase the maximum Pell Grant by $100, to $5,830, and provide an additional $606-million to the NIH in the 2015 fiscal year.

**APPROPRIATORS PUNT ON LABOR-HHS SPENDING BILL**
By Niels Lesniewski and Humberto Sanchez, *CQ.com*, June 11, 2014

The Senate Appropriations Committee won’t consider a typically contentious federal spending bill this week. And it was unclear Wednesday whether Sen. Tom Harkin will ever get the chance to bring his final Labor-HHS-Education spending bill through the full Appropriations Committee. In a brief interview, Harkin said “there are no plans” for when a markup might happen. The spending panel was widely expected to consider the Iowa Democrat’s $156.8 billion measure on Thursday, although it was not published on the official committee schedule. Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, said that she had the markup on her own calendar for Thursday. Murkowski’s Democratic counterpart, Mark Begich, said he had heard talk among Democrats about wanting to put off the markup over a concern about possible gotcha-amendments. Both Alaska senators serve on the Appropriations Committee. “I think there are some that may not want to,” Begich said. “But I am not worried about it,” added Begich, who is in a tight re-election campaign of his own. “It’s important to move these bills and there are always tough amendments, there is always tough debate.” The bill funding the Department of Health and Human Services is ripe for amendments related to social policy and implementation of the health care law. “Look, we’ll see what transpires on this, and we’ll see what, what my position is on this in the next few days,” Harkin said.

* This is the complete news article.

**DOE SCIENCE FUNDING WOULD REMAIN FLAT UNDER U.S. HOUSE SPENDING BILL**
By David Malakoff, *ScienceInsider*, June 10, 2014

The U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) science program would see flat funding under a spending bill set for action today in the Appropriations Committee of the U.S. House of
Representatives. The bill would provide $5.071 billion for DOE’s Office of Science in the 2015 fiscal year that begins October 1. That is essentially the same as this year's budget, and about $40 million less than requested by President Barack Obama.

**U.S. LAWMAKERS PROPOSE SCALING BACK PENTAGON SCIENCE CUTS—SLIGHTLY**

When President Barack Obama proposed a hefty 6.9% cut to the U.S. military’s basic research programs earlier this year, many academic science lobbyists winced. Today, the Appropriations Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives passed a spending bill that wouldn’t cut quite as deep—just 6.4%—but that’s not doing much to dull the pain.

**AAU CRITICIZES SIGNIFICANT CUT IN FY15 DEFENSE BASIC RESEARCH INCLUDED IN HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE BILL**
Association of American Universities (AAU), June 10, 2014

...We are dismayed by the House Appropriations Committee’s Defense bill for FY15, which cuts the Department of Defense's (DOD) investment in basic research by 6.4 percent. We criticized the President’s budget for its 6.9-percent cut; this bill provides only a modest improvement. The basic research DOD has conducted since World War II has consistently made our nation’s military the world's best equipped, most technologically advanced force. DOD basic research has led to technologies ranging from radar to GPS, from the laser to stealth technology. Congress should approve this kind of cut only if it wishes to erode our armed forces’ future technological advantages. We recognize that the damaging spending caps and sequestration imposed by the Budget Control Act have put pressure on every area of discretionary spending. But the fact is that basic research is a very small, but vital, part of the Defense budget. Sustaining spending for this critical research priority would have very little impact on the rest of the Defense budget. We urge the full House and the Senate to reverse this unfortunate action.

**HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY**

**OBAMA DEFENDS COLLEGE RATINGS**

A bipartisan pair of Congressional lawmakers on Tuesday introduced a resolution in the House of Representatives opposing the Obama administration’s college ratings system. The president, meanwhile, defended the proposal as a necessary tool for students. The resolution, by Representatives Bob Goodlatte of Virginia and Michael Capuano of Massachusetts, Republican and Democrat, respectively, criticizes the ratings system as “reductionist” and warns that the government’s ratings would “carry an image of validity that will mislead” prospective students.
BANKS BRACE FOR DEBIT CARD BATTLE
By Caitlin Emma, Politico’s Morning Education, June 11, 2014

Don’t look at financial regulators when it comes to one of the biggest headaches for the banking industry this year. The Education Department will write sweeping restrictions on the products that banks sell to college students after negotiated rulemaking broke down last month. Banks and consumer advocates are on opposite sides of the issue, with banks saying the federal government could put student debit cards and checking accounts out of business. “Ultimately, when we see the final rule come out, it’s going to be pretty onerous,” said Michael Tarkan, a senior analyst at Compass Point Research and Trading.

* This is the complete news article.

IMMIGRATION

THE GOP’S 2016 IMMIGRATION PROBLEM
By Seung Min Kim, Politico, June 11, 2014

Suddenly, the 2016 Republican field has a new reason to worry about immigration reform: saying anything at all can be hazardous to your presidential chances. The advice to the Republican Party seemed so clear after Mitt Romney’s loss in 2012: Just do it. Get some kind of immigration reform deal — the least bad deal you can find — and then move on. Otherwise, you can forget about winning any Hispanic voters.

OBAMA WILL TALK TO BOEHNER ON IMMIGRATION; REJECTS ‘CONVENTIONAL WISDOM’ ON CANTOR DEFEAT
By Steven Davis, CQ.com, June 11, 2014

President Barack Obama isn’t buying the narrative that House Majority Leader Eric Cantor’s primary shellacking is a death knell for immigration, and plans to personally press Speaker John A. Boehner to act. “Some of you saw that there was an interesting election yesterday,” he told donors at a fundraiser Wednesday evening. “And it’s interesting to listen to the pundits and the analysts, and some of the conventional wisdom talks about, ‘Oh, the politics of immigration reform seem impossible now.’ I fundamentally reject that. And I will tell the speaker of the House that he needs to reject that,” Obama said. Obama cited kids he met at a school earlier Wednesday, many of whom he said are not here legally. “If you met those kids today, you’d know that politics can’t play a part in it,” he said. “I mean, if you think that because of politics you want to maintain a status quo that’s broken; because of politics we’re going to forgo the economic growth and the deficit reduction, and the border security, and the fairness and the opportunity that immigration reform represents — you don’t belong in Washington.” Obama then seemed to take Cantor to task for not being a stronger advocate an immigration overhaul. “My argument about yesterday’s election is not that there was too little politics, it’s that there was too little conviction about what’s right.” Obama’s mention of a plan to talk to Boehner on
immigration came after he has gone months without calling the speaker on an unemployment extension. Other Obama aides have dinged Cantor for not being a strong advocate for an immigration bill. Spokesman Josh Earnest, who Obama has tapped as his next press secretary, said he was “perplexed” by analysis suggesting that immigration was doomed. “Majority Leader Cantor campaigned very aggressively against bipartisan, commonsense immigration reform. But yet, in the analysis, there are some who suggest that his election was the key to getting immigration reform done. So I’m not quite sure how people have reached that conclusion,” Earnest said. Earnest and other White House aides pointed instead to Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham’s blowout victory in South Carolina. “I’m no expert in Republican Party politics, but I’d be hard pressed to name a constituency more conservative than those who cast ballots in the South Carolina Republican primary,” he said. “Senator Graham didn’t just support comprehensive immigration reform in the Senate, he actually wrote the bill, or at least he helped write the bill...And he made no apologies about that.”

* This is the complete news article.

**INNOVATION**

**UNIVERSITIES ARE NOT PATENT TROLLS**
By Gene Quinn, *IPWatchdog*, June 8, 2014

Several weeks ago I had the opportunity to speak with Jane Muir, who now serves as President of the Association of University Technology Managers. At the time of our conversation there had been a number of so-called “news reports” that were characterizing universities as trolls. That, of course, is utter nonsense. The role of the university is to push technologies into the marketplace and work with those who license university innovation, which is the antithesis of what a patent troll does. Still, some in the popular press who obviously have their own agenda see it otherwise, which is both curious and sad.

**LIBRARIES**

**UNBEATEN STREAK**

HathiTrust’s book digitization and accessibility efforts have once again been found to be fair uses of copyrighted works, as a federal appeals court on Tuesday dealt a further blow to authors’ groups and publishers. The opinion, delivered by a three-judge panel in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, affirms nearly all of a lower court’s ruling that praised the “transformative uses” of HathiTrust and its “invaluable contribution to the progress of science and cultivation of the arts.”
FCC CHIEF PLANS ACTION ON WI-FI IN SCHOOLS

Visiting a middle school in Oakland earlier this year, Tom Wheeler, the chairman of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), got a glimpse of just how badly American schools need better high-speed Internet connections...Mr. Wheeler is said to want to change that. According to FCC officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity, Mr. Wheeler is planning next week to offer his fellow commissioners a proposed regulatory change to promote Wi-Fi in schools. Mr. Wheeler’s aim is to get the issue on the agenda for the FCC’s July 11 meeting.

PHYSICAL SCIENCES & ENGINEERING

FY 2015 SUSTAINABLE CHEMISTRY, ENGINEERING, AND MATERIALS (SUSCHEM) FUNDING OPPORTUNITY
NSF Dear Colleague, June 11, 2014

In fiscal year (FY) 2013, NSF started an initiative to encourage and foster research in Sustainable Chemistry, Engineering, and Materials (SusChEM), partially in response to the mandate of the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010. The SusChEM initiative addresses the interrelated challenges of sustainable supply, engineering, production, and use of chemicals and materials. In FY 2015, the participating divisions are Chemistry; Chemical, Bioengineering, Environmental, and Transport Systems; Materials Research; Earth Sciences; and the Materials Engineering and Processing program in the Division of Civil, Mechanical and Manufacturing Innovation. Examples of fundamental research topics of interest in SusChEM include the replacement of rare, expensive, and/or toxic chemicals/materials with earth-abundant, inexpensive, and benign chemicals/materials; recycling of chemicals/materials that cannot be replaced; development of non-petroleum based sources of important raw materials; chemicals/materials for food and/or water sustainability; the elimination of waste products and enhancement in efficiencies of chemical reactions and processes; discovery of new separation science that will facilitate recycling and production of valuable chemicals/materials; and development and characterization of low cost, sustainable and scalable-manufactured materials with improved properties.

VOTE SCUTTLED ON DOE RESEARCH PROGRAMS
By Randy Leonard, CQ.com. June 11, 2014

A subcommittee markup up of a draft Energy Department research measure fell apart Wednesday after a flurry of objections by Democrats to cuts to renewable energy programs. “I strongly oppose this legislation,” said Rep. Eric Swalwell, D-Calif., the ranking member on the subcommittee, before requesting a full reading of the 102-page draft of the fiscal 2014 and 2015 reauthorization for the department’s research programs. “There are a number of seriously troubling parts in this bill,” he said, objecting also to the subcommittee’s process of moving a measure that he said he didn’t see until Friday. Swalwell said the bill would deal a 40
percent cut to the department’s energy efficiency and renewable energy program as well as cuts to biological research and the Advanced Research Project Agency-Energy — below levels House subcommittee appropriators approved Tuesday. In her opening remarks, subcommittee Chairwoman Cynthia M. Lummis, R-Wyo., defended the cuts as an attempt to rein in spending to control debt. “Federal funding for energy efficiency and renewable energy has grown at an out-of-control rate under the Obama administration without a clear justification,” she said. Republicans moved to adjourn rather than have a reading of the full bill and did so after a 6-4 vote, indicating an intent to bring the bill to a full committee markup. Swalwell said he will push instead for the subcommittee to hold more hearings on the department’s programs. “We had hoped that they were going to pull this and give us at least a week or two to have a legislative hearing,” he told reporters afterward. “They’re afraid of what this reveals about what they want our energy programs to be," he said. “We’ll continue to push for hearings before a full committee markup.”

* This is the complete news article.

A CALL TO ACTION TO PROTECT OUR OCEANS
By Secretary of State John Kerry, Huffington Post, June 9, 2014

The ocean covers almost three quarters of our planet and sustains life on Earth as we know it. But our ocean is at grave risk today -- and we know the reason why. Human activity threatens the world's ocean. Often illegal international fishing practices are decimating fisheries. A garbage patch twice the size of Texas floats in the Pacific Ocean, evidence of the trash we cast into our waterways. Rising carbon dioxide levels from emissions increase ocean acidity, endangering coral reefs and other marine life. The warning could not be starker: Unless these trends are reversed, the effects across the planet will be profound. The damage will be felt whether you live on a coastline or hundreds of miles from the nearest ocean's edge. The ocean produces half the world's oxygen, creates the clouds that bring fresh water and regulates our climate. More than a billion people eat fish for their primary source of protein. Fishing is a $500 billion global industry, and one in six jobs is marine-related in the United States.

The good news is that we know what is behind the degradation of the ocean. We know the steps required to counter the dangers and restore the health of our ocean for this generation and those to come. We know the science to change the future for the ocean.

What we also know is that the global political will to address this urgent peril has yet to be summoned. We must change the equation. The plight of the ocean compels us to fight complacency and build consensus for action.

The United States has demonstrated that we can make progress. We have begun to restore fish stocks and sustain the livelihoods of our fishermen. We have reduced the flow of waste into the marine environment and launched intensive studies of the effects of rising acidity levels on sea life. Some other nations are also addressing the challenges in innovative ways.

But governments will not undertake this enormous campaign without prodding from the private sector -- from businesses that depend on a healthy ocean, from non-governmental organizations committed to saving the ocean and from all of us who recognize that the ocean is a defining feature of life on our planet.
That's why we will hold the State Department's first ocean conference on June 16 and 17. Government leaders from around the world -- heads of state and foreign ministers -- will join scientists, environmentalists, and business leaders to discuss the threat to our ocean and the steps that should be taken to reverse the damage and restore the balance.

We intend to create a global movement to protect the ocean and its resources.

**STUDENT AID**

**MAKING STUDENT LOANS MORE AFFORDABLE**
White House Fact Sheet, June 9, 2014

...A postsecondary education is the single most important investment that Americans can make in their futures. Higher education results in higher earnings and a lower risk of unemployment, but for too many low- and middle-income families this essential rung on the ladder to opportunity and advancement is slipping out of reach. Over the past three decades, the average tuition at a public four-year college has more than tripled, while a typical family's income has barely budged. More students than ever are relying on loans to pay for college. Today, 71 percent of those earning a bachelor’s degree graduate with debt, which averages $29,400. While most students are able to repay their loans, many feel burdened by debt, especially as they seek to start a family, buy a home, launch a business, or save for retirement. The President and his Administration have a long track record of taking steps to make college more affordable and accessible for families. And as part of his year of action to expand opportunity for all Americans, the President is committed to building on these efforts by using his pen and his phone to make student debt more affordable and more manageable to repay. Today the President will use the power of his pen to help millions of borrowers afford their student loan payments. He will sign a new Presidential Memorandum directing the Secretary of Education to propose regulations that would allow nearly 5 million additional federal direct student loan borrowers the opportunity to cap their student loan payments at 10 percent of their income. The Presidential Memorandum also outlines a series of new executive actions aimed to support federal student loan borrowers, especially for vulnerable borrowers who may be at greater risk of defaulting on their loans. Today the President will also reiterate his call for the Senate to pass legislation that could help an estimated 25 million Americans refinance outstanding student loans at lower interest rates, the same as those available to federal student loan borrowers taking out loans this year. This move could save a typical student $2,000 over the life of his or her loans.

**WHITE HOUSE TAKES STEPS TO ALLOW RELIEF ON OLDER STUDENT LOANS**
By Carolyn Phenicie, *CQ.com*, June 9, 2014

Five million borrowers with student loan debt would be eligible to cap their student loan repayments under a proposed regulation announced Monday by the Obama administration.
The White House disclosed executive actions that President Barack Obama will take on student loans ahead of a vote expected this week in the Senate on a Democratic proposal (S 2432), which is expected to fail. The Senate bill would allow borrowers with older student loans to refinance at the current lower interest rates. The Education Department will begin work on regulations to expand a 2010 law (PL 111-152) allowing student loan borrowers to cap loan payments at 10 percent of their income, with the balance forgiven after 20 years of repayments. This option, known as Pay As You Earn, currently is not available to borrowers who took out loans before October 2007 or who have not borrowed since October 2011, according to a White House fact sheet. Under the White House proposal, those borrowers now would be eligible.

Congressional reaction to the Obama proposal, which The New York Times first reported Saturday, split predictably on party lines. Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions ranking Republican Lamar Alexander said the 2010 law that established the Pay As You Earn option only addressed loans made after July 1, 2014. “I don’t see that he has the authority to do that [expand the option for older loans], and I don’t know how much that costs,” the Tennessee Republican said in an interview. He also blasted Senate Democrats’ bill, which would pay for the increased costs of refinancing the loans by closing tax loopholes and instituting a 30 percent effective tax rate on the wealthiest taxpayers, as “class warfare.” HELP committee leaders are working in a bipartisan way to address student loan debt – including prohibiting part-time students from borrowing enough money to pay for school full-time, permitting colleges to require additional loan counseling and giving schools the ability to limit loans students may take out – as part of a reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (PL 110-315). “There’s no excuse for interrupting that serious discussion for a political stunt on the Senate floor,” Alexander said of the refinancing bill. House Speaker John A. Boehner, R-Ohio, said the president’s proposal does nothing to address the underlying problems. “Today’s much-hyped loophole closure does nothing to reduce the cost of pursuing a higher education, or improve access to federal student loans – nor will it help millions of recent graduates struggling to find jobs in the Obama economy,” he said in a statement. Education and the Workforce Committee ranking Democrat George Miller, meanwhile, praised the White House move as a way to help borrowers while waiting for Congress to act. “Ultimately, this is an issue that Congress must address, but steadfast Republican opposition has hamstrung legislative efforts to provide Americans feeling trapped by student loan debt with some relief,” Miller, of California, said in a statement. “We simply can’t wait for congressional Republicans to decide they’re willing to invest in our nation’s hard-working students, graduates and middle-class families.” In addition to expanding the Pay As You Earn option, which would be available to borrowers by December 2015, the White House announced several other changes, including:

- Renegotiating contracts with student loan servicers to strengthen financial incentives to help borrowers repay their loans on time; lower payments to servicers when borrowers are delinquent or default on their loans; and increase the weight given to borrowers’ customer satisfaction when allocating new loans.
- Automatically reducing the interest rates on active duty military members’ student loans under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (PL 108-189) without additional paperwork.
- Working with tax preparers Intuit, Inc. and H&R Block to communicate information about student loan repayment options during the tax filing process and with Mint.com to communicate to users of the personal finance website about the availability of income-based repayment options.
- Testing new ways to reach borrowers with the greatest risk of repayment difficulty, such
as borrowers who left college before finishing their degree, missed their first loan payment or defaulted on loan balances.

• Launching a pilot project between the Education and Treasury departments to test the effectiveness of loan counseling resources.
• Working with labor unions and professional organizations representing teachers, nurses, social workers and others to provide information about repayment options.
• Providing guidance on how Pell Grant recipients may claim the American Opportunity Tax Credit.

* This is the complete news article.

**OBAMA CONTINUES PUSHING STUDENT LOAN MESSAGE**


On the heels of the president's executive order Monday that expands the pool of people eligible for the Pay as You Earn loan repayment cap, the White House today issued a report that breaks down how many additional borrowers, by state, could stand to benefit, estimated at a total of up to 5 million. Roughly 424,000 borrowers in California, 103,000 in Massachusetts, 193,000 in Michigan and 146,000 in North Carolina are among those who took out loans before October 2007 or who stopped borrowing by October 2011. After the Education Department writes regulations, these borrowers will be eligible to make loan debt payments that are no more than 10 percent of their monthly income. Some 222,772 Direct Loan borrowers are already enrolled in Pay As You Earn, according to the Education Department, since the program was first created in 2011.

• The report also notes that more than 25 million borrowers could benefit from a debt refinancing proposal from Democratic Sen. Elizabeth Warren and also breaks out those potential beneficiaries by state: 343,000 in Alabama, 262,000 in Kansas, 172,000 in Nebraska and 629,000 in Virginia, among them. The partisan bill, called a political stunt by some Republicans, is slated to go to the Senate floor on Wednesday, bypassing committee and the chance for Republicans to amend it.

• Today’s report also announces a new commitment to partner with the AFT, NEA, SEIU, American Association of Colleges of Nursing and other groups to provide information about repayment options and federal student aid resources available to their members, in addition to other efforts outlined to spread the message about income-based student loan repayment.

• While Democrats praised the initiatives, Republicans including John Kline, chairman of the House Education and the Workforce Committee, said the order fell short and accused Obama of "treating students and families as political pawns." But President Barack Obama said he had to take action because "a generation of young people cannot wait for Congress" to do so.

* This is the complete news article.
QUESTIONING PAYE COST  
By Caitlin Emma, Politico’s Morning Education, June 11, 2014

During a call with reporters Tuesday, the White House again declined to say how much it might cost to pay for President Barack Obama's executive action expanding eligibility for loan repayment breaks under its Pay As You Earn program. Cecilia Muñoz, White House director of the Domestic Policy Council, acknowledged that the president's 2015 budget contains a $7.6 billion line for the program, but said, "the proof in the pudding is, ultimately, when students enroll." Another 5 million borrowers will be eligible to have loan repayments capped with this week's change (in addition to the 1.6 million already qualified), she said, but the White House doesn't know how many will enroll.

* This is the complete news article.

APLU JOINS OTHER ASSOCIATIONS IN LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR SENATE STUDENT LOAN REFINANCING BILL  
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) Congressional and Governmental Affairs Update, June 10, 2014

APLU joined the American Council on Education and several other higher education associations in sending a letter of support for S. 2432, the Bank on Students Emergency Loan Refinancing Act. The bill would allow borrowers with existing loans to benefit from lower rates available to new borrowers in the direct student loan program.

* This is the complete news article.

LOAN BILL BLOCKED  
By Michael Stratford, Inside Higher Ed, June 12, 2014

Senate Republicans on Wednesday blocked legislation that would allow existing student loan borrowers to lower the interest rate on their debt. The loan refinancing bill, championed by Sen. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts and backed by President Obama, failed to clear the 60-vote threshold needed to advance. It was defeated on a 56-38 vote. The measure would allow borrowers of both federal and private loans to refinance their debt at the interest rate currently offered to new federal borrowers. It is part of a package of bills that Senate Democrats are promoting as part of their “fair shot” agenda, essentially a platform for the 2014 elections.

THE NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES OF RELYING ON LOANS TO RAISE HIGHER EDUCATION ATTAINMENT  
By Laura Perna, The Hill, June 6, 2014

The U.S. cannot reach the levels of educational attainment required for international competitiveness in a global, technologically driven economy without closing the considerable
gaps in attainment that persist across groups. Gaps in attainment based on family income are among the most vexing. Compared with students from higher-income families, students from low-income families are less likely to enroll in college and, among those who do enroll, are less likely to graduate.