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THE LEAD

Independent colleges in Pa. warn congressmen about impacts of funding cuts

BY: IAN KARBAL - MARCH 10, 2025 4:14 PM



The campus at Gettysburg College. (Courtesy of Getty Images)

An organization representing Pennsylvania's 85 independent colleges and universities is warning the commonwealth's congressional delegation that cuts to federal research funding could damage the state's economy, reduce the number of students who come here for higher education and set back American science, among other consequences.

On Monday, the president of the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Pennsylvania (AICUP) [sent a letter](#) to the commonwealth's 19 congressional representatives and senators amid layoffs and threats of large research funding cuts at the

National Science Foundation and National Institutes of Health.

Last year, Pennsylvania-based researchers were awarded \$1.8 billion in NIH funding, about half of which went to AICUP member schools. In the last fiscal year, the state received \$332 million in NSF funding, with \$186 million going to AICUP colleges and universities.

“These proposed cuts will do severe damage to Pennsylvania’s economy and jeopardize America’s role as the world leader in science and research, potentially for generations,” AICUP President Thomas Foley wrote. “The bottom line is that this national research funding is an investment that pays dividends across Pennsylvania.”

The Trump administration has proposed cutting the NSF budget by as much as 66%. The National Institute of Health has also attempted to institute a policy cutting all funding of research institutions to 15% of indirect costs, far less than many colleges and universities currently receive. [A judge has blocked those cuts](#), for now. Foley estimates, if allowed to stand, the policy could cost Pennsylvania researchers \$425 million.

“It is simply inaccurate to characterize indirect costs as ‘administrative overhead’ or ‘bureaucratic bloat,’ Foley wrote. “The kind of research these grants support involves the creation of unique laboratories, the invention/purchase of expensive equipment and the capacity to run experiments in time frames that require 24-hour supervision. These costs are not waste but in fact processes that are essential to the results which produce cancer-defying medications, heart-saving therapies and so much more.”

NIH- and NHS-funded research has led to the development of many pharmaceuticals and disease treatments, as well as nascent technologies that are now central to commonly used products.

“If you have ever used the internet or chatted on an iPhone, then you have benefited from the products born of federal research funding,” Foley’s letter said.

Moreover, higher education institutions [are a major employer in Pennsylvania](#), according to data from the Department of Labor and Industry. They help attract many scientists and researchers to the state.

Thirty-five AICUP member schools would be at risk of losing research funds with the proposed cut, according to the association. They include:

- Arcadia University
- Allegheny College
- Bryn Mawr College
- Bucknell University
- Carlow University
- Carnegie Mellon University
- Chatham College
- Dickinson College
- Drexel University
- Duquesne University
- Elizabethtown College
- Franklin & Marshall College
- Gettysburg College
- Haverford College
- Holy Family College
- Juniata College
- King's College
- La Salle University
- Lafayette College
- Lehigh University
- Mercyhurst University
- Moravian University
- Muhlenberg College
- Saint Joseph's University
- Saint Vincent College
- Salus University (Drexel)
- Swarthmore College
- Thomas Jefferson University
- University of Pennsylvania
- University of Scranton
- Ursinus College
- Villanova University
- Widener University
- Wilkes University
- Wistar Institute



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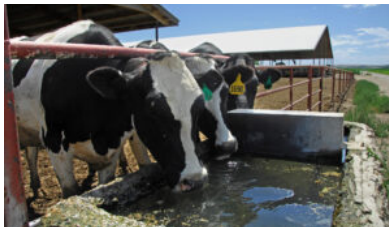
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