



INSPIRE
2025 Annual Conference & Expo

Key Policy Changes Impacting Higher Education and Their Relevance to Occupational Therapy Programs

Neil Harvison PhD, OTR, FNAP, FAOTA
April 1, 2025



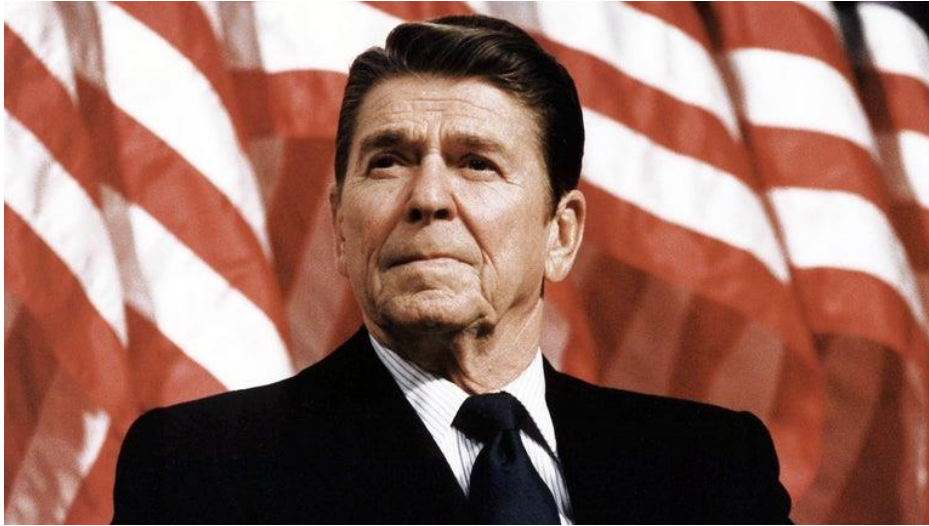
Objectives

- Identify **key policy changes** proposed and implemented by the new Administration and Congress.
- Understand who are the **key players and platforms** informing this policy.
- Understand the **impact of policy changes on higher education.**
- Identify **specific challenges impacting OT & OTA programs.**

I. Policy changes proposed and implemented by the new Administration and Congress.

Elimination of the Education Department

Dismantling of the Education Department



**The elimination of USDOE
has long been a focus of
the Republican platforms.**



The Department was created through the Department of Education Organization Act (1979).



Department
of Health,
Education,
and Welfare



Department of
Education



Department of Health
and Human Services



Because it was created by an act of Congress ...

Elimination of the USDOE requires congressional approval and would **require 60 votes in the Senate and majority in the House.**

Senate

Majority – 53 seats (Republicans)
Minority – 47 seats (45 Dems / 2 Independents)

House

Majority – 218 seats (Republicans)
Minority – 214 seats (Democrats)
* 3 vacant

Dismantling of the Education Department

President Trump has directed Education Secretary Linda McMahon through executive order to develop plans to “**dismantle**” the Department of Education.



Dismantling of the Education Department

Implemented:

- Elimination of a number of discretionary programs.
- Institute of Education Sciences (IES), contracts terminated.
- National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) was reduced.
- Reduced Office of Civil Rights.
- Staff reductions- approx. 50%

Proposals:

- Transfer key programs, such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), to HHS.
- Shift student loan management back to the Treasury SBA ?
- Transfer key programs to the States.
- Change the role of accreditors.

Dismantling of the Education Department

March 20, 2025- When the President signed the Executive Order....
Karoline Leavitt told reporters that the **“Education Department will, for instance, retain oversight of student loans and Pell Grants”**....

March 22, 2025- According to the president, the estimated \$1.7 trillion student loan portfolio will no longer be managed by the Department of Education’s Federal Student Aid (FSA) office. Instead, the **Small Business Administration** will now oversee student loans, he said Friday in the Oval Office.

Dismantling of the Education Department



The **United States Small Business Administration (SBA)** is an independent agency of the United States government.

The mission of the Small Business Administration is "to maintain and strengthen the nation's economy by enabling the establishment and viability of small businesses and by assisting in the economic recovery of communities after disasters."

The **agency does administer a portfolio of loan programs.**

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Note: March 21, 2025 - Small Business Administration announced that it is **cutting 43% of its workforce.**

Overhaul of the Department of Education Office of Civil Rights

Elimination of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Programs:

Following initiatives were eliminated through **executive order on January 25, 2025**:

- Department's Diversity & Inclusion Council,
- Employee Engagement Diversity Equity Inclusion Accessibility Council (EEDIAC),
- DEI training and service contracts,
- Department's Equity Action Plan.

Elimination of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Programs:

In addition:

- Career Department staff tasked with implementing the previous administration's DEI initiatives put on paid administrative leave,
- Removal of over 200 web pages from the Department's website that housed DEI resources.

PRESS RELEASE

U.S. Department of Education Takes Action to Eliminate DEI

JANUARY 23, 2025

Elimination of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Programs:

February 14, 2025: Dear Colleague letter from the Craig Trainor Acting Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights

All educational institutions are advised to:

- (1) ensure that their **policies and actions comply with existing civil rights law**;
- (2) **cease all efforts to circumvent prohibitions** on the use of race by relying on proxies or other indirect means to accomplish such ends; and
- (3) **cease all reliance on third-party contractors, clearinghouses, or aggregators** that are being used by institutions in an effort to circumvent prohibited uses of race. (“[U]niversities may not simply establish through application essays or other means the regime we hold unlawful today.”).

Institutions that fail to comply with federal civil rights law may, consistent with applicable law, face potential **loss of federal funding**.

Elimination of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Programs:

February 28, 2025: Frequently Asked Questions About Racial Preferences and Stereotypes Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.

- FAQs are intended to anticipate and answer questions that stem from OCR's February 14, 2025 "Dear Colleague" Letter.
- Clarified the **responsibility of all members of the community to report violation** of the new regulations to the Department.

Elimination of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Programs:

March 14, 2025

Over 50 universities are under investigation as part of the anti-DEI crackdown:

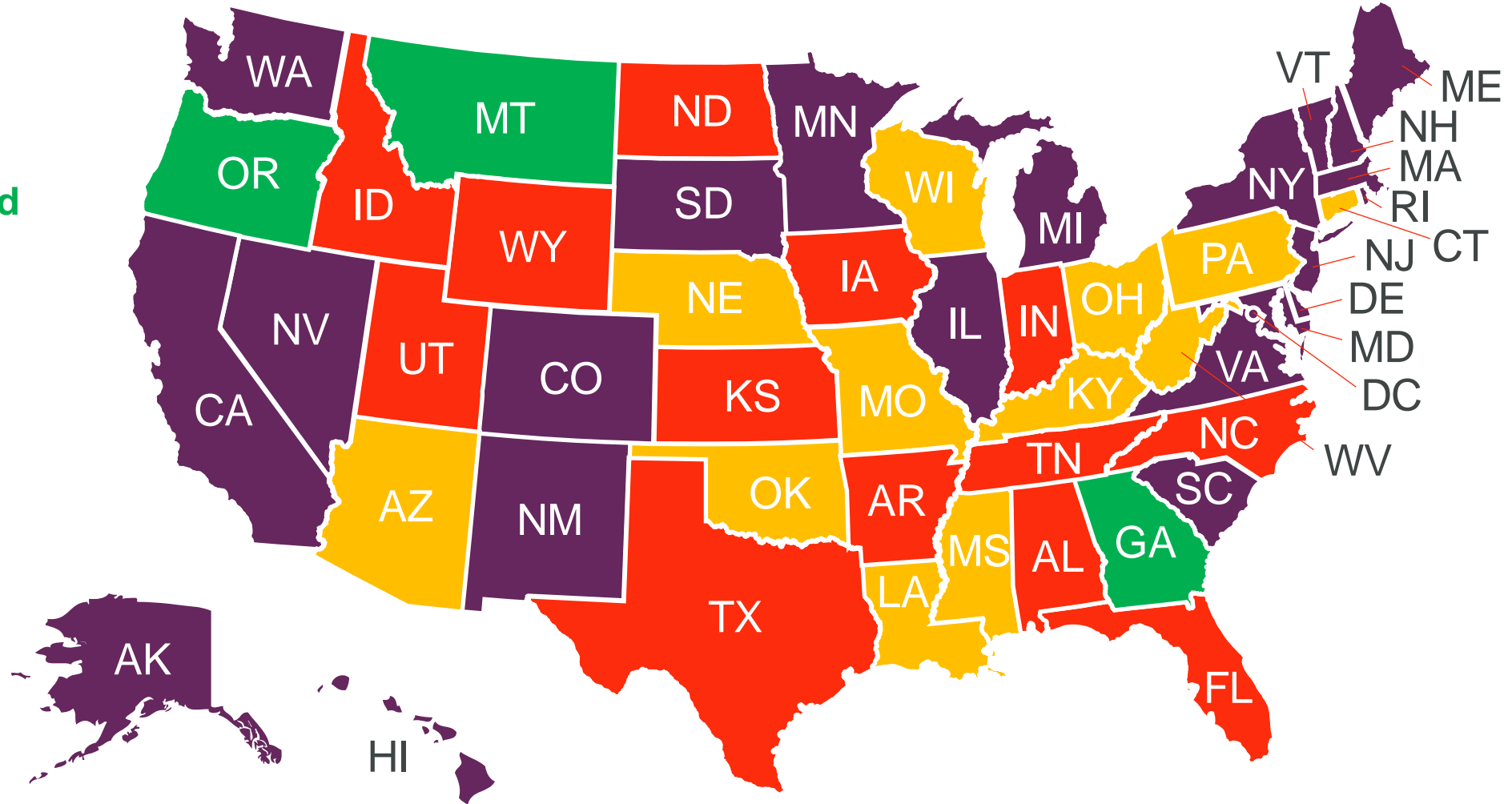
- 52 universities in 41 states, accused of using "racial preferences and stereotypes in education programs and activities."
- Schools partnered with **The PhD Project**, a nonprofit that helps Black, Latino and Native American students earn doctoral degrees in business.

Elimination of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Programs:

At least 6 institutions of higher education are being probed for awarding alleged “impermissible race-based scholarships”.

State Anti-DEI Legislation

DEI Laws
Bill intro
Veto/ Tabled



Antisemitic Discrimination and Harassment

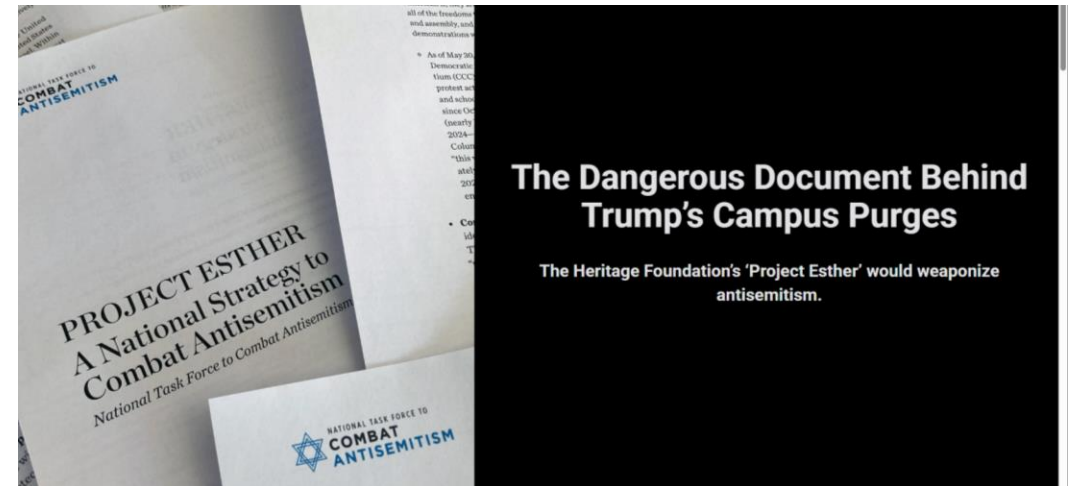
March 10, 2025

- U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights has **60 Universities Under Investigation for Antisemitic Discrimination and Harassment.**
- Letters warn of potential enforcement actions if institutions do not fulfill their obligations under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act to protect Jewish students on campus.

Antisemitic Discrimination and Harassment



<https://www.heritage.org/progressivism/report/project-esther-national-strategy-combat-antisemitism>



<https://www.chronicle.com/article/the-dangerous-document-behind-trumps-campus-purges>

Title IX

- On **January 9, 2025**, the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Kentucky vacated the Biden administration's 2024 Title IX regulations nationwide.
- With the Kentucky court's action, the **prior 2020 regulations were back in effect nationwide.**

Title IX

PRESS RELEASE

U.S. Department of Education to Enforce 2020 Title IX Rule Protecting Women

Education Department will return to enforcing Title IX protections on the basis of biological sex in schools and on campuses

JANUARY 31, 2025

Funding and financial aid programs

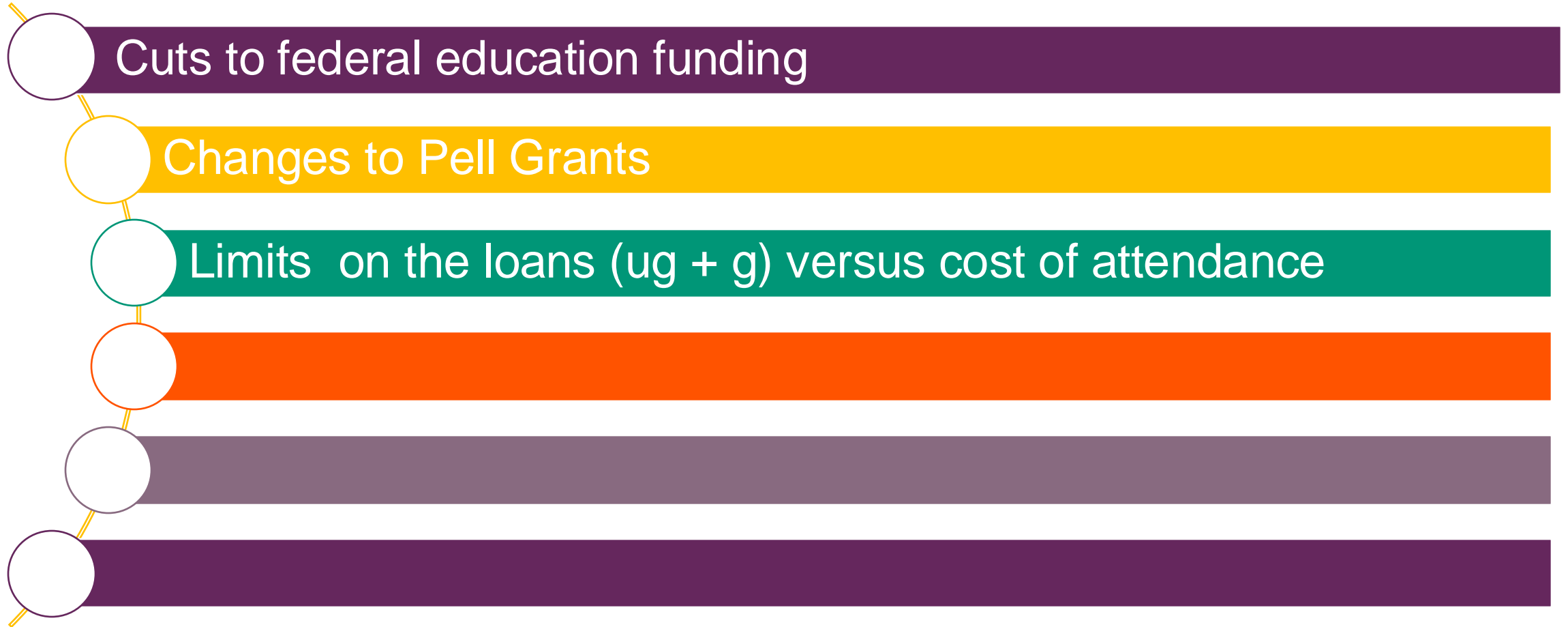
Funding & Financial Aid Proposals



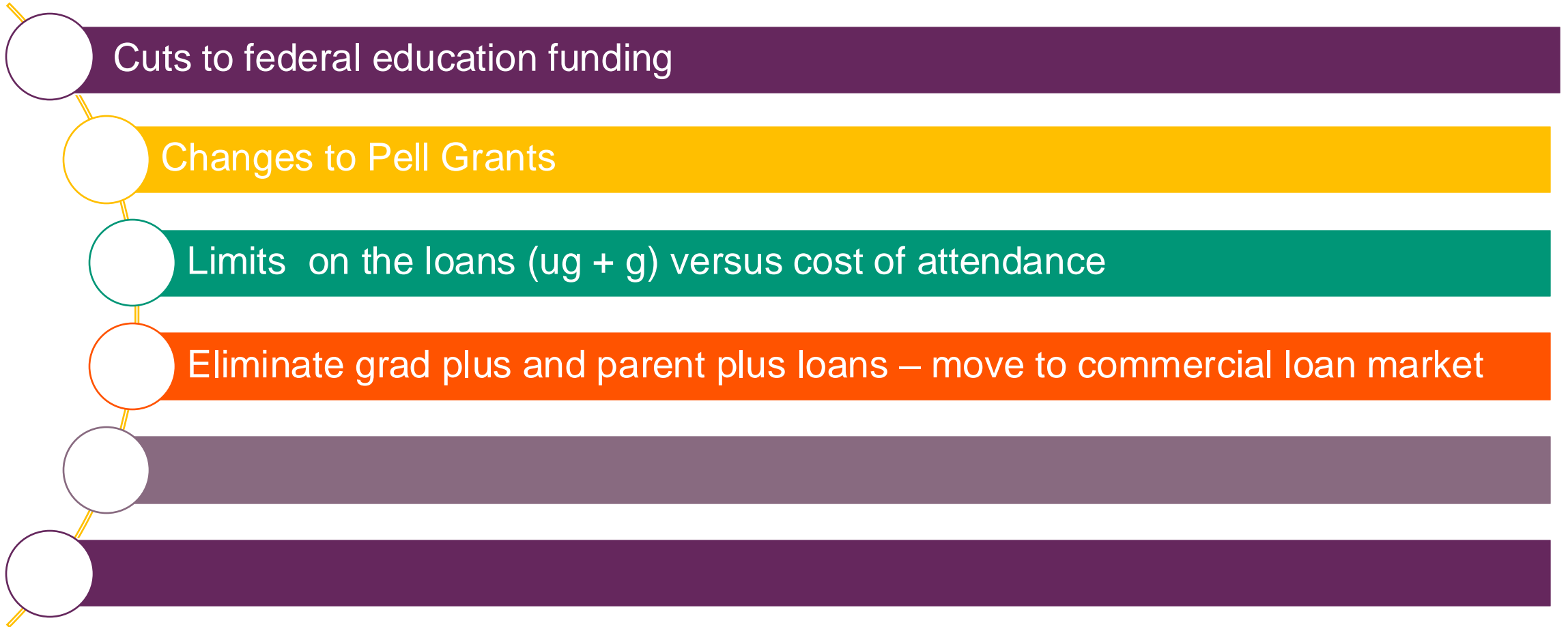
Funding & Financial Aid Proposals



Funding & Financial Aid Proposals



Funding & Financial Aid Proposals



Funding & Financial Aid Proposals



Cuts to federal education funding

Changes to Pell Grants

Limits on the loans (ug + g) versus cost of attendance

Eliminate grad plus and parent plus loans – move to commercial loan market

Limit Loan Forgiveness Programs (PSLF)

Funding & Financial Aid Proposals



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Limit Loan Forgiveness Programs (PSLF)

Eliminate the Income-Driven Repayment (IDR) programs

Impact on Research & Grants



Budget Cuts

NIH, NSF & other agencies.



Funding Priorities

Elimination of funding of selected research and limitations on indirect costs.



Capacity & Pipeline

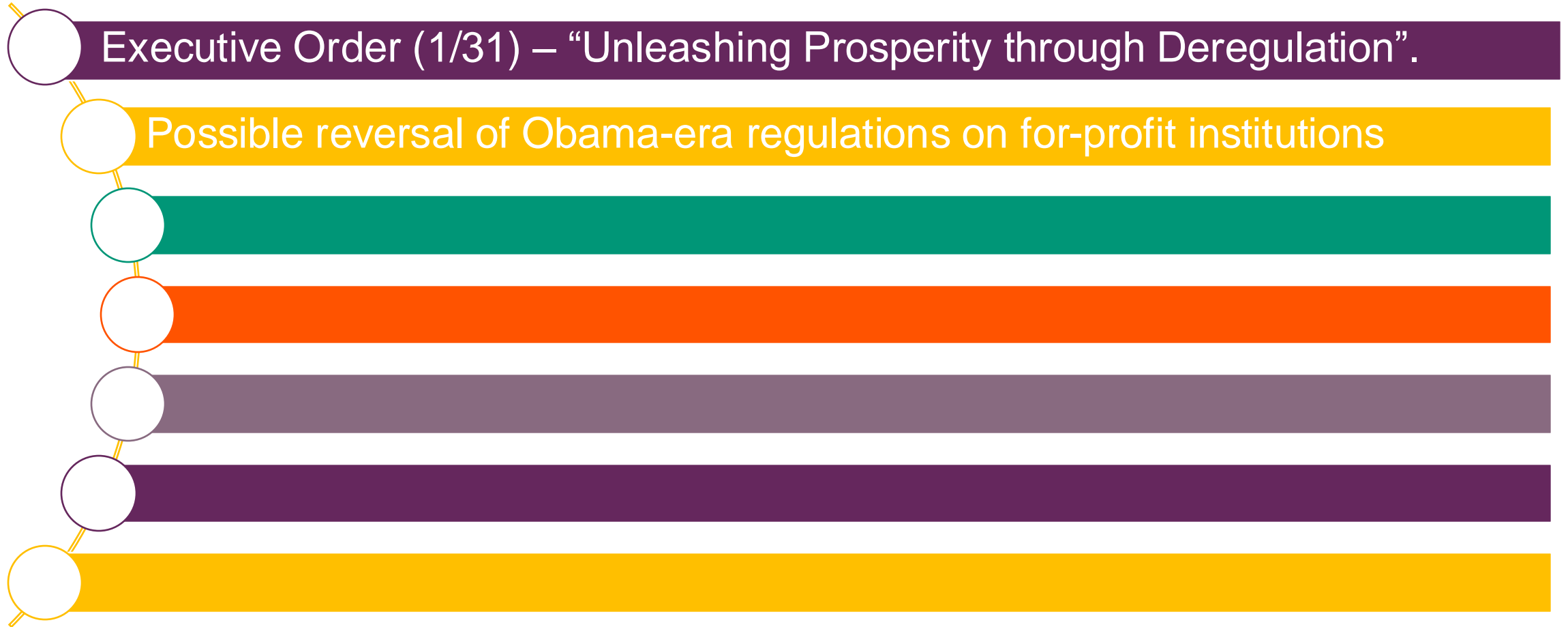
Reduced research training programs-rescinded funding for PhD students.

Regulation and accreditation

Deregulation



Deregulation



Deregulation

- Executive Order (1/31) – “Unleashing Prosperity through Deregulation”.
- Possible reversal of Obama-era regulations on for-profit institutions
- Revise Gainful Employment
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- Reversal of Biden-era Title IX regulations
- Rescinded DHS “sensitive locations” policy
- Higher Education Act

Accreditation

President Trump

- Called **accreditors a failure** and too focused on pushing liberal agendas.
- Many comments focused on DEI related standards.
- Proposed possible removal of existing accreditors and put a “new” accreditation system in the USA.

Accreditation

Project 2025, The conservative blueprint for a second Trump presidency, argues that **accreditors should be severely limited, or removed** from the higher education system completely.

Accreditation – Role

Regulation of higher education in the United States:

The **Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA)** designates three separate entities—states, accreditation agencies, and the U.S. Department of Education (ED)

Triad

Accrediting Agencies:

non-governmental organizations that ensure quality.

**Regulation of
higher education
in the United
States**

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Regulation of higher education in the United States

State governments:

regulate higher education within their borders, often through agencies responsible for consumer protection.

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Regulation of higher education in the United States

Federal government:

Oversees the accreditation process, establishes regulation for federal financial aid eligibility.
(Title IV)

State governments:

regulate higher education within their borders, often through agencies responsible for consumer protection.

Recognition by the USDE

- To be recognized by the US Department of Education (USDOE), an accrediting agency must **demonstrate that its accreditation is required for institutions to participate in federal programs.**
- A **Title IV "gatekeeper"** is an accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education that ensures institutions and programs meet the criteria for participating in Title IV.
- **Title IV refers to federal financial aid programs** for postsecondary students, authorized under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended. These programs include federal loans, grants, and work-study programs.

Accreditation

Proposed solutions:

Trump first term eliminated “regions”

Eliminate Title IV Gatekeeper role

Give States the ability to accredit

Outcomes-based accreditation reform

Accredit faster credentials with less regulation

Broader implications

New Administration
Policies



Reshaping of Higher Education
Landscape



Ongoing Debate on role of higher
education institutions in society.

Support for
Policies

Policies
promote
accountability.

Efforts to reduce
ideological bias in
education.

New Administration
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Reshaping of
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Support for
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Concerns about
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Policies
promote
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Reshaping of
Higher Education
Landscape

Risks to academic
freedom and
research excellence.

Efforts to reduce
ideological bias in
education.

Ongoing debate on role of higher
education institutions
in society.

Loss of
institutional
autonomy.



II. Who are the key players and platforms informing this change?

Administration

Administration



Secretary Linda McMahon

- Chair of the America First Action SuperPAC, and America First Policy, LLC. (2019-2025)
- Administrator for Small Business Administration (2017-19).
- 2 unsuccessful runs for Senate but has not held elected office.
- World Wrestling Executive

Administration



Penny Schwinn - Deputy Secretary of Education nominee

- Tennessee Commissioner of Education (2019–2023). Spearheaded a \$500 million high school initiative to align K-12 education with postsecondary and workforce needs.
- Began her career as an educator.



Nicholas Kent - Under Secretary nominee

- Deputy Secretary of Education for the Commonwealth of Virginia, focused on the Governor's postsecondary education strategy.
- Chief Policy Officer at Association for Career Education Colleges and Universities,
- Began his career in an accreditation agency.

Administration



Rachel Oglesby – Chief of Staff

- Chief State Action Officer, **America First Policy Institute's**
- Chief of Policy, Governor Kristi Noem in South Dakota



Jonathan Pidluzny – Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy and Programs

- Director of the Higher Education Reform Initiatives at the **America First Policy Institute.**
- Vice President of Academic Affairs at the American Council of Trustees and Alumni.



Craig Trainor - Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy, Office for Civil Rights

- Senior Special Counsel with the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on the Judiciary under Chairman Jim Jordan (R-OH),
- Senior Litigation Counsel with the **America First Policy Institute**

Guiding platforms

Guiding Platforms: College Cost Reduction Act



H.R. 6951, The College Cost Reduction Act introduced as a bill by Representative Foxx in 2024. Although the bill did not pass both houses of Congress the principles included in the bill have been repeated in the Administration and House platforms.

The College Cost Reduction Act

- **Accreditation & Regulation:**
 - End the **regional accreditation** monopoly
 - Focuses accreditors' review on **outcomes** rather than inputs.
 - **Repeals excessive and burdensome regulations** that increase administrative costs.
 - Make it easier for students to **transfer credits**.

The College Cost Reduction Act

- **Transparency:**

- Ensures college costs is clear, accessible, and consumer-friendly through **standardized financial aid offers**.
- Streamlines reporting on **college outcomes** which will allow prospective students to assess their potential ROI.
- Requires **up-front, guaranteed price** in order to receive performance-based funding, allowing students to know the cost of an entire degree program before they enroll.

The College Cost Reduction Act

- **Loans:**
 - Sunsets the inflationary PLUS loan program which effectively allows for unlimited borrowing, resulting in skyrocketing costs for graduate students while creating a debt trap for countless low-income families.

The College Cost Reduction Act

- **Loans:**

- Institutes **loan limits** that vary by fields of study that provides financial aid administrators flexibility to further **reduce borrowing** at their institution. Simplifies and improves student loan repayment, offers targeted relief to those harmed by the current system, and provides repayment assistance to struggling borrowers to ensure they always see progress towards paying off their loans.

Guiding Platforms: Project 2025

Project 2025

Mandate *for* Leadership
The Conservative Promise

Project 2025

- **Department of Education:**
 - Decreased regulation of higher education system with **limited involvement from the federal government.**
 - Federal government's **only role in education policy should be “that of a statistics-gathering agency that disseminates information to the states.”**

Project 2025

- **Department of Education:**

- Call to break up the Education Department and disperse the management of federal education programs—those that would still exist, that is—**across multiple agencies**.
- e.g.
 - Office for Civil Rights would move to the Department of Justice
 - Bureau of Indian Affairs would oversee tribal colleges and universities.
 - Treasury Department would handle the federal student loan portfolio.

Congress

U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON
Health, Education
Labor & Pensions



Rand Paul, M.D. (R - KY)
Susan Collins (R - ME)
Lisa Murkowski (R - AK)
Markwayne Mullin (R - OK)
Roger Marshall, M.D. (R - KS)
Tim Scott (R - SC)

Josh Hawley (R - MO)
Tommy Tuberville (R - AL)
Jim Banks (R - IN)
Jon Husted (R - OH)
Ashley Moody (R - FL)

Patty Murray (D - WA)
Tammy Baldwin (D - WI)
Chris Murphy (D - CT)
Tim Kaine (D - VA)
Maggie Hassan (D - NH)

John Hickenlooper (D - CO)
Ed Markey (D - MA)
Andy Kim (D - NJ)
Lisa Blunt Rochester (D - DE)
Angela Alsobrooks (D - MD)

Priorities

- Overall support for the President's agenda..
 - 03.20.2025, Chair Cassidy **Applauds Trump Effort to Return Education Power to Students & Families**
 - 03.27.2025, (HELP) Committee held a hearing to address the continued **antisemitic attacks** and harassment against Jewish students on college campuses.
 - **Nominations for HHS, CDC, FDA. CMS** etc.

What to watch...

- **SUPPORT Act for Patients and Communities Reauthorization** which would reauthorize key federal programs to address the opioid epidemic and support patients with substance use disorders.
- **Mental Health Professionals Loan Forgiveness** bill.



COMMITTEE ON

EDUCATION & WORKFORCE

CHAIRMAN TIM WALBERG

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Republicans

Rep. Burgess Owens (Chair)
Rep. Glenn "GT" Thompson, Pennsylvania
Rep. Glenn Grothman, Wisconsin
Rep. Elise M. Stefanik, New York
Rep. Jim Banks, Indiana
Rep. Lloyd Smucker, Pennsylvania
Rep. Bob Good, Virginia
Rep. Nathaniel Moran, Texas
Rep. Lori Chavez-DeRemer, Oregon
Rep. Brandon Williams, New York
Rep. Erin Houchin, Indiana
Rep. Michael Rulli, Ohio
Rep. Virginia Foxx, North Carolina

Democrats

Rep. Frederica S. Wilson, Florida (Ranking Member)
Rep. Joe Courtney, Connecticut
Rep. Mark Takano, California
Rep. Pramila Jayapal, Washington
Rep. Teresa Leger Fernández, New Mexico
Rep. Kathy E. Manning, North Carolina
Rep. Raul M. Grijalva, Arizona
Rep. Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan, Northern Mariana Islands
Rep. Lucy McBath, Georgia
Rep. Suzanne Bonamici, Oregon
Rep. Alma Adams, North Carolina

U.S. House Education And Workforce Committee Ordered To Cut \$330 Billion

The budget resolution instructs the committee to reduce spending by at least \$330 billion over the next decade, which would weaken future of work preparedness.

The House Budget Committee passed a budget blueprint on Thursday for **\$4.5 trillion in tax cuts and \$1.5 trillion in spending reductions** over the next decade.

Republicans argue the reductions are necessary to fund \$300 billion in new immigration and defense spending.

Under Consideration



**Reduce
Loan
Programs**



**Reduce
Loan
Forgiveness**



**Tax
Loan
Forgiveness**

"Short-Term Pell" - "Workforce Pell"

- Proposals to:
 - extend Pell Grant eligibility to students enrolled in quality, **short-term micro-credentials programs**.
 - lower the threshold for program length to qualify for Pell Grants, potentially including **programs as short as 8 weeks or 150 clock hours**.
 - Increase **access to workforce training and skills development**, leading to better job outcomes and economic mobility.

III. Impact of policy changes on higher education

Funding & financial strain

Funding Cuts and Financial Strain

NEWS | 27 February 2025

US universities curtail PhD admissions amid Trump science funding cuts

John Hopkins slashes more than 2,000 jobs as Trump administration's \$800 million cut in USAid funding

‘Reign of terror.’ Universities freeze hiring, rescind offers, start layoffs amid Trump cuts

By [Hilary Burns](#), [Mike Damiano](#) and [Diti Kohli](#) Globe Staff, Updated March 14, 2025, 7:54 a.m.

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WORCESTER


UMass Chan freezes hiring, rescinds PhD program admissions amid funding uncertainty

Trump to Freeze \$175 Million for U. of Pennsylvania in Latest Federal-Funding Threat 3-19-25

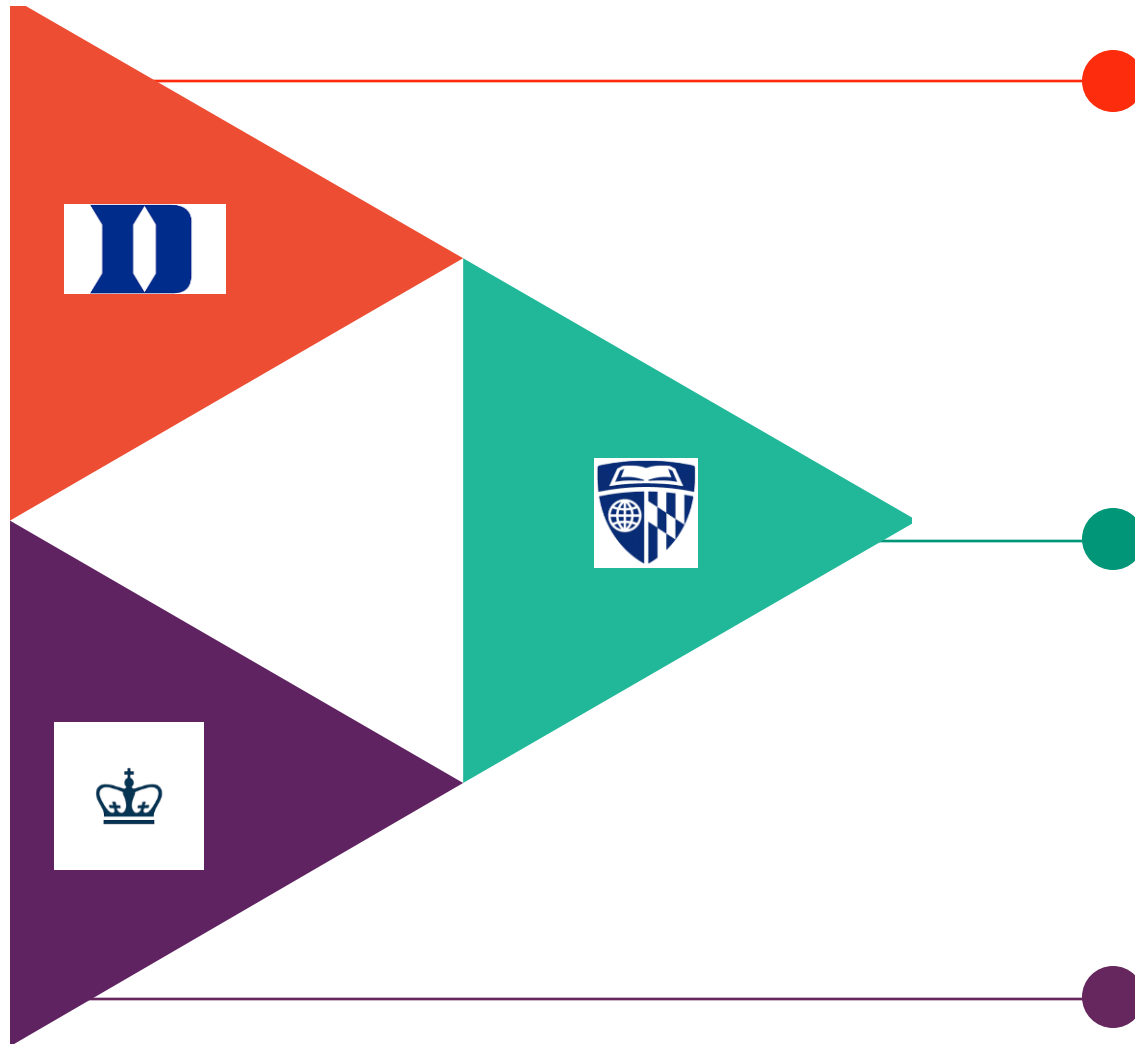
DIVE BRIEF

Harvard among latest universities to freeze hiring amid federal funding uncertainty

University of Washington announces hiring freeze

By FOX 13 Seattle Digital Team | Published March 12, 2025 7:05am PDT | [University of Washington](#) | [FOX 13 Seattle](#) | 

Funding Cuts and Financial Strain



John Hopkin's University

\$800 million cut in USAID funding

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/mar/13/johns-hopkins-job-cuts-usaid>

Duke University

Hundreds of millions in NIH funds

<https://apnews.com/article/trump-cuts-research-funding-nih-duke-7f24b33bbad54490583520536ab40e0c>

Columbia University

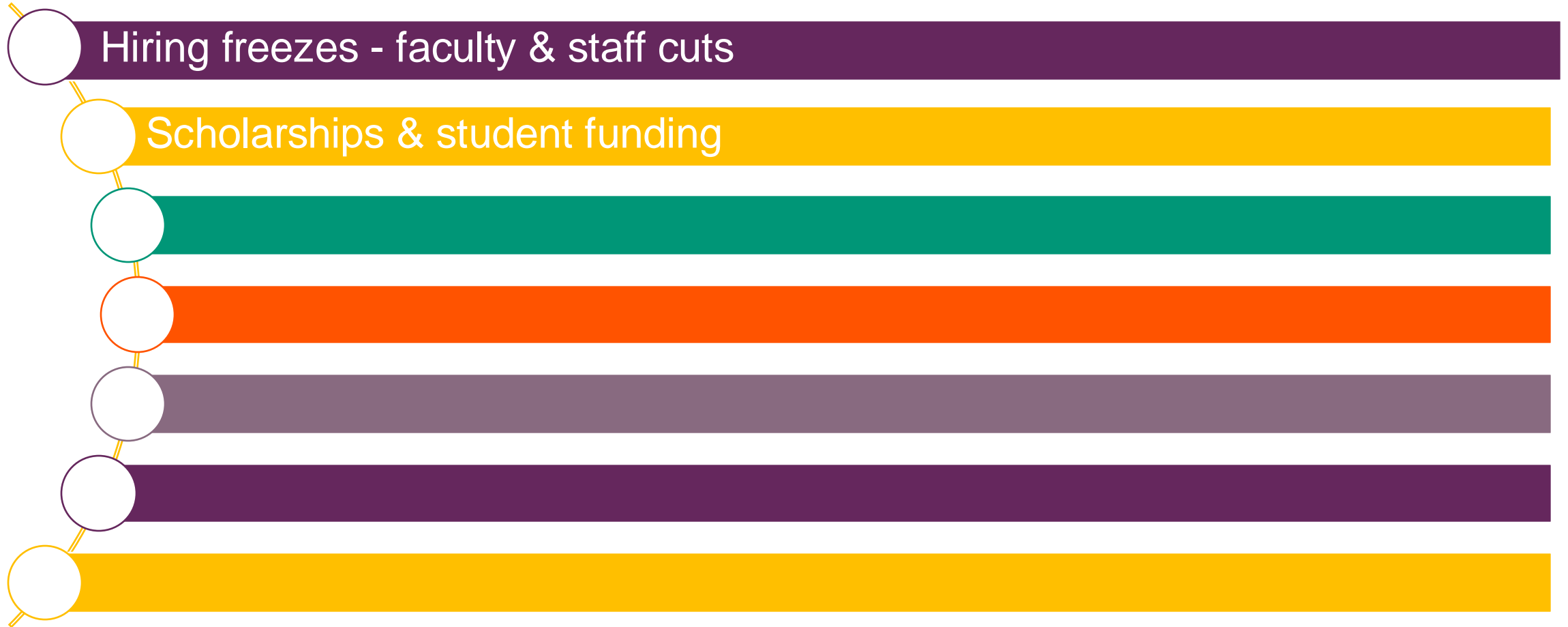
DOJ, HHS, ED, and GSA cancels \$400 million

<https://www.ed.gov/about/news/press-release/doj-hhs-ed-and-gsa-announce-initial-cancellation-of-grants-and-contracts-columbia-university-worth-400-million>

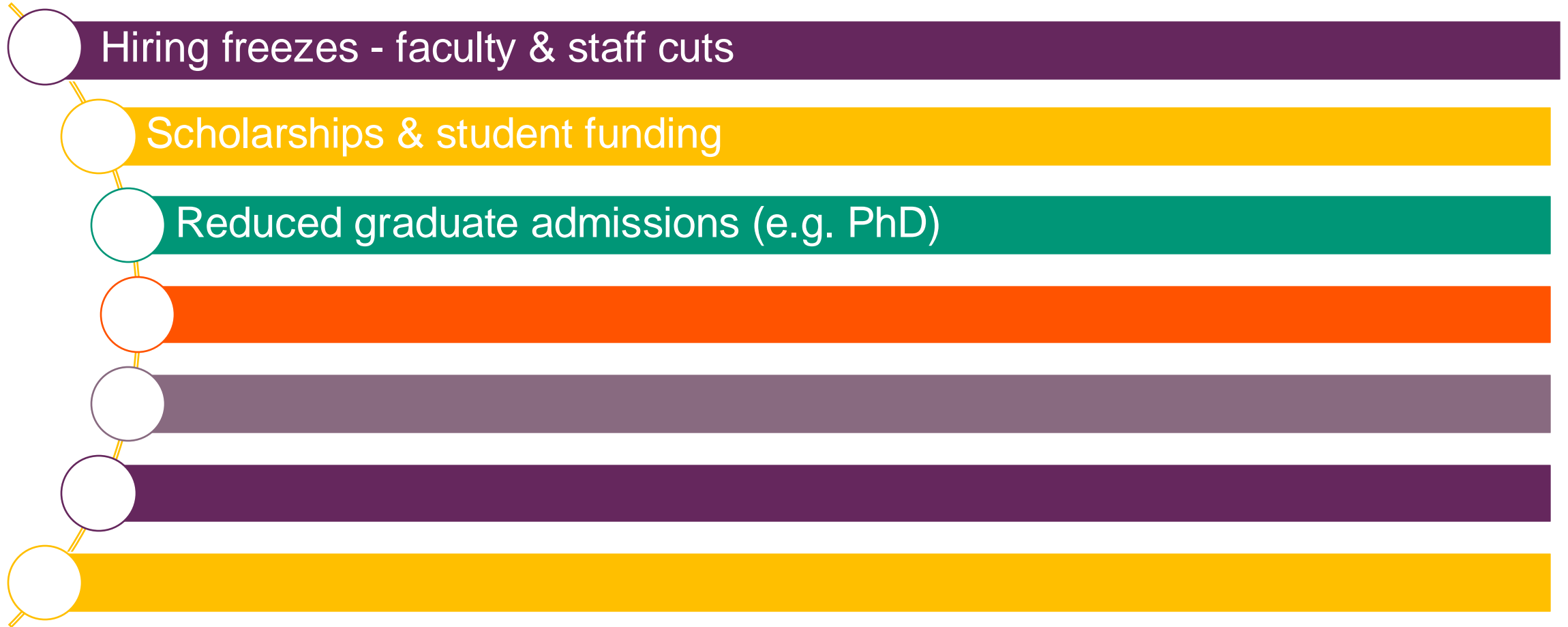
Funding Cuts and Financial Strain



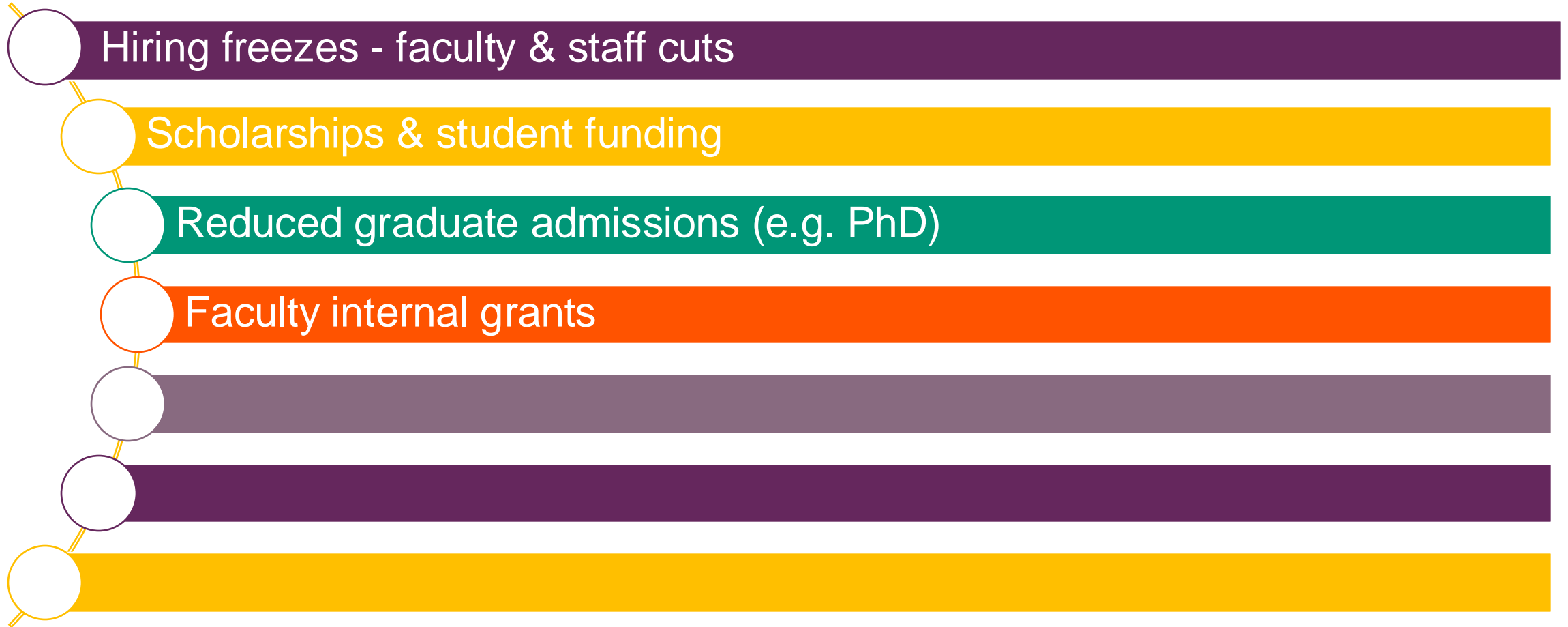
Funding Cuts and Financial Strain



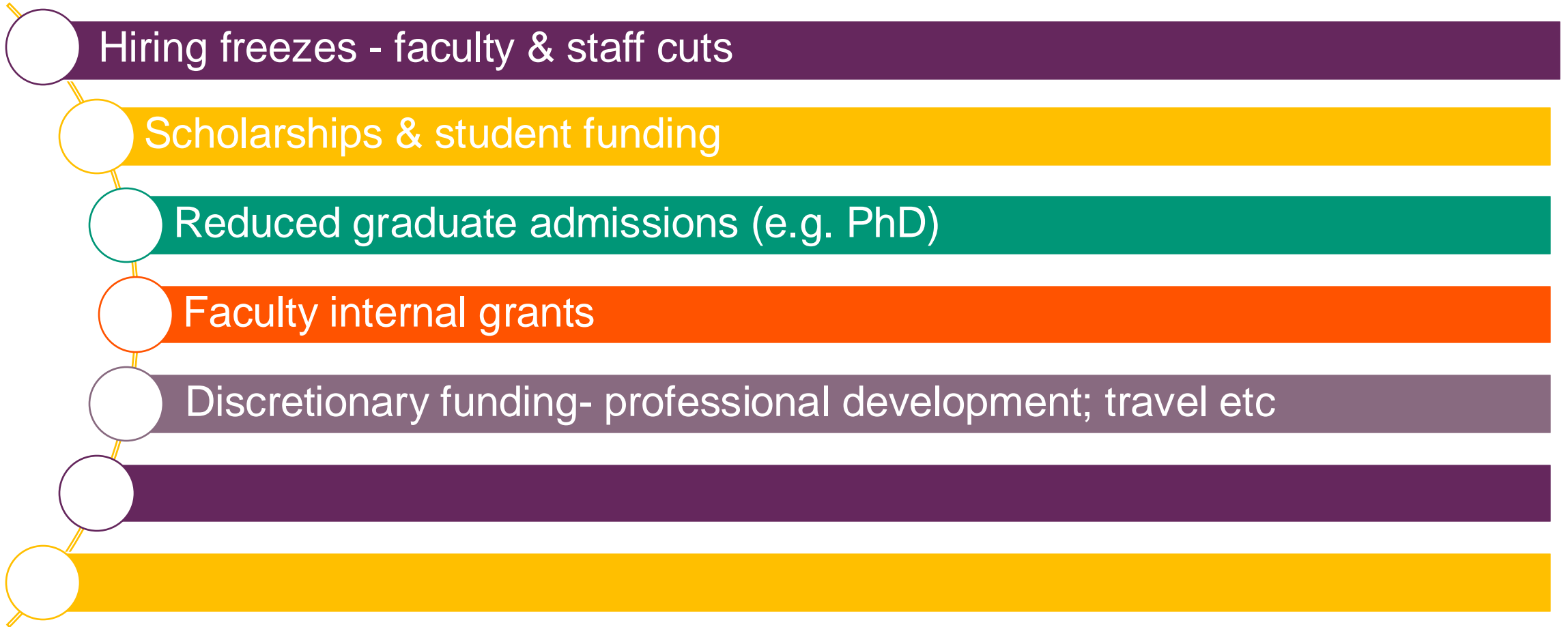
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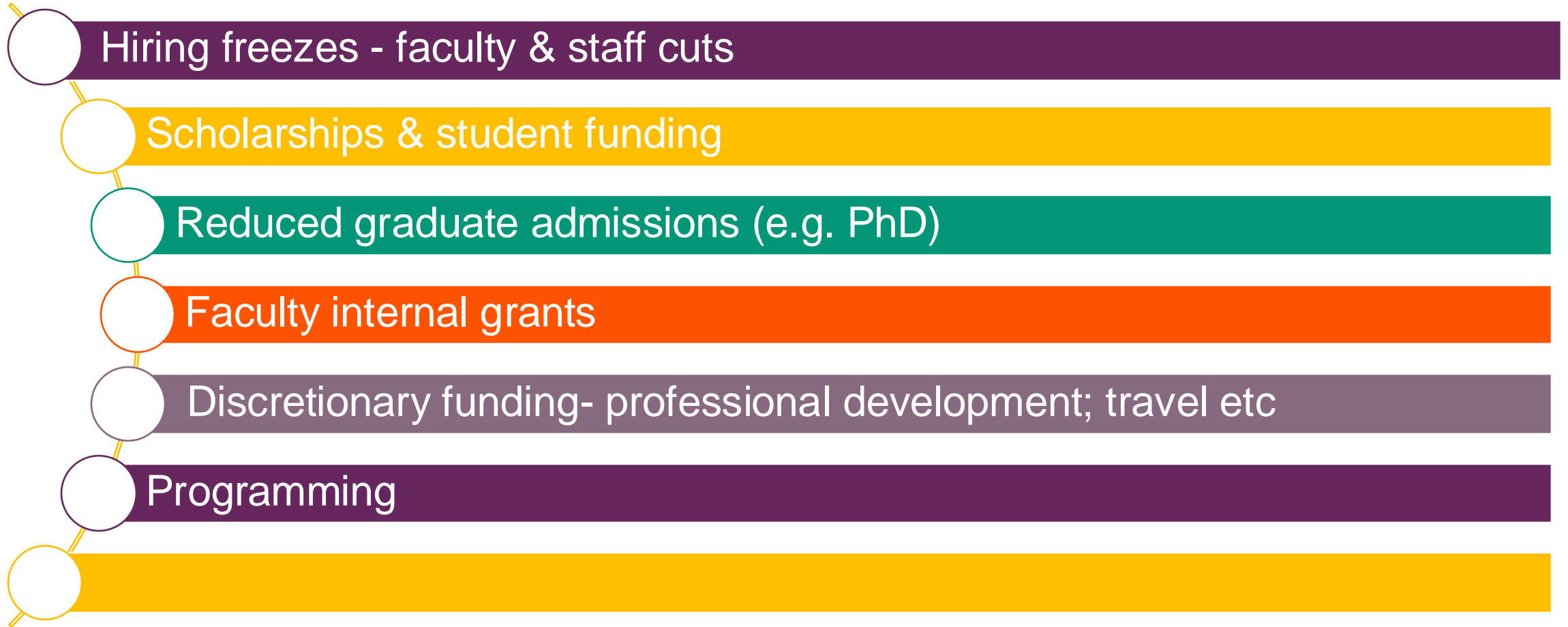
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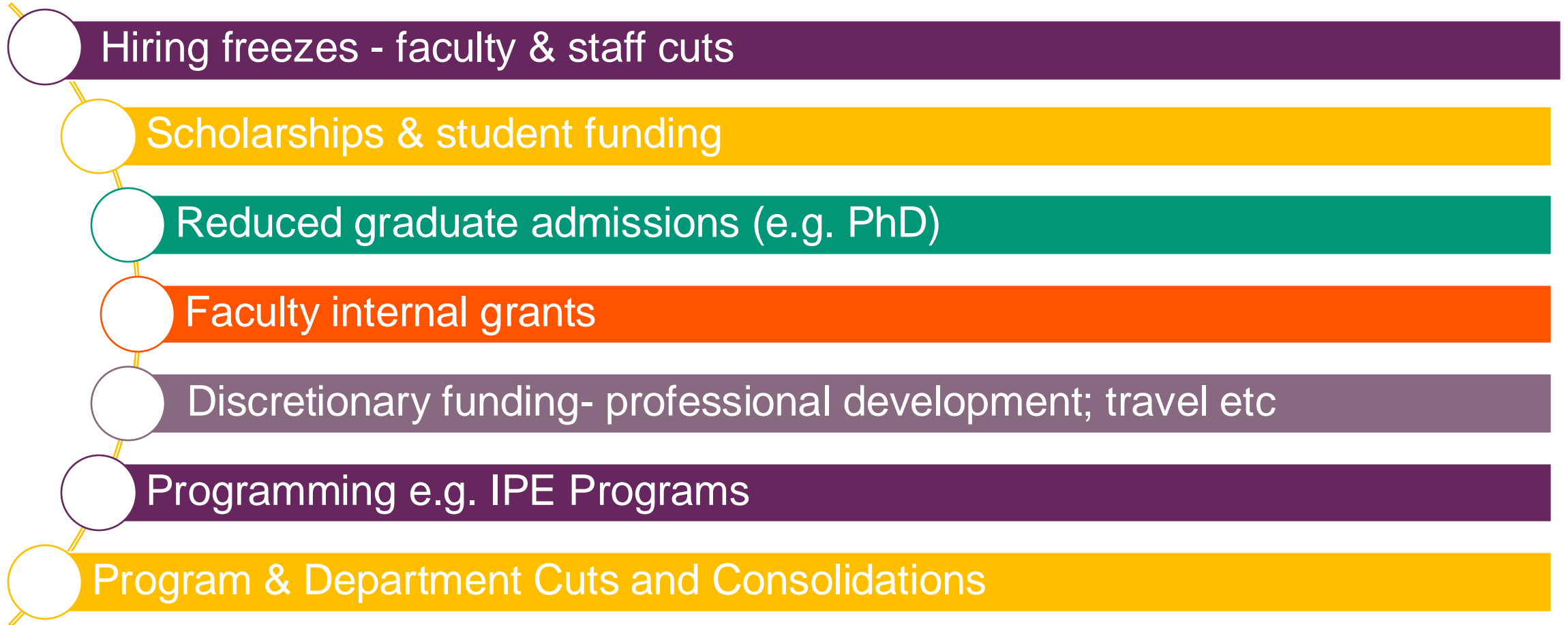
Funding Cuts and Financial Strain



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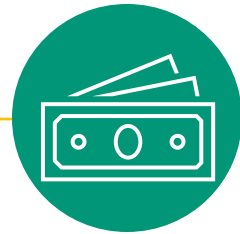


Finances: Risks to Student Loan Programs

Caps of Loans

If loans are available, they could be capped... Students enrolled in graduate professional programs could be limited to \$150,000.

Impact on Enrollment



Grad Plus Loans

Proposed elimination will limit students to the commercial lending market.

Loan Forgiveness Programs

Elimination of Public Service Loan Program & curtailing of income driven loan repayments

Finances: Pell Grants

● February 24, 2025

Amid Federal Upheaval, a Pell Shortfall Looms

The Pell Grant is facing a projected \$2.7 billion budget shortfall, its first in over a decade. With the Education Department in turmoil and Trump slashing spending, access advocates worry cuts may be unavoidable.

Federal Pell Grants usually are awarded only to undergraduate students who display exceptional financial need and have not earned a bachelor's, graduate, or professional degree.

Finances: Student Loans

- Student loan debt in the United States totals **\$1.777 trillion** in 2024.
- Majority is for undergraduate degrees.
- Federal student loan debt represents **92.2% of all student loan debt**; 7.79% of student loan debt is private, including \$29.3 billion in refinance loans.

Graduate Student Loans



\$102,790

Ave. graduate
degree holder
cumulative
federal loan
Debt.



54.0%

Graduate
school
completers
have federal
loan debt



74.8%

Graduates with
professional
doctorates.
(e.g. JD, MD, DDS etc.)

Finances: Student Loans

- **Females borrow more than males** (3.63% at bachelors and 14.2% at associates).
- Among graduate students, **40% of Black students and 22% of White** students accumulate debt for graduate school.
- **Socioeconomic status and family support major determinants.**

Student Loan Forgiveness

- **18.4%** of eligible student borrowers apply for **loan forgiveness**.
- In 2015, less than 6% of eligible borrowers of FFELP loans were enrolled in income-driven repayment plans compared to **nearly 30% of borrowers with loans made directly by the Department of Education**.

Student Loan Forgiveness

- March 7 ,2025- ALIGNING PUBLIC SERVICE LOAN FORGIVENESS WITH ACTUAL PUBLIC SERVICE: **President Donald J. Trump signed an Executive Order** to end taxpayer-funded student loan forgiveness for anti-American activists.
 - The Order directs the Secretary of Education to revise the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program to exclude from eligibility organizations that engage in activities that have a substantial illegal purpose.
 - Further, the prior administration's waiver process misused taxpayer funds to forgive loans years early. – **“Biden made immediate forgiveness available for people who didn't pay the full amount, didn't pay on time, or didn't even enroll in the right repayment plan”**.

International Student Market

- Total number of international students at U.S. colleges and universities reached an all-time high of more than **1.1 million (1,126,690) international students in 2023/2024**, a 7% increase from the previous academic year.
- 502,291 graduate students an 8% increase

International Student Market

- International students contributed an estimated **US\$43.8 billion** to the American economy during the 2023-24 academic year.
- Supported 368,339 jobs,
- Surpassed the previous year's figure by 7%.

NAFSA's analysis of enrollment data from the 2023-24 Open Doors® initiative Report prepared by of the US Department of State and the Institute of International Education.

<https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20241120154116779#:~:text=According%20to%20Open%20Doors%C2%AE%2C%20overall%2051%25%20of%20the%20%2443.8,for%20example%2C%20tuition%20and%20fees.>

International Student Market

Increasing barriers and uncertainty....

Concerns about safety and policy changes (e.g., travel bans) limiting ability to complete studies.

Federal staff layoffs impacted programs supporting international students.

House bill would bar Chinese students

Moody's Ratings

DIVE BRIEF

Moody's turns negative on higher ed's financial outlook amid Trump cuts

Funding cuts, layoffs at the Education Department, attacks on colleges, endowment taxes and other federal policy changes create major new risks for the sector, analysts said.

Published March 19, 2025

<https://www.highereddive.com/news/moodys-negative-outlook-higher-ed-trump-cuts/743014/#:~:text=from%20your%20inbox.-,Moody's%20turns%20negative%20on%20higher%20ed's%20financial%20outlook%20amid%20Trump,for%20the%20sector%2C%20analysts%20said.>

Office of Civil Rights

Title IX

- Universities do not have to change any policies implemented under the 2024 regulation if they are not in conflict with the 2020 regulations.

Reaction to DEI Bans

- **Eliminating DEI Offices** and Programs:
 - Including diversity and inclusion offices, intercultural centers, interfaith centers programs focused on women and LGBTQ people.
- **Layoffs:**
 - DEI designated positions

Reaction to DEI Bans

- **Canceling Events and Programs:**

- e.g. Rutgers University's cancellation of its online "HBCUs and Registered Apprenticeship Mini-Conference".

- **Eliminating Student Clubs:**

- e.g. United States Military Academy at West Point axed clubs centered around gender, race, ethnicity, and sexuality.

Reaction to DEI Bans

- **Scrutiny of Courses & Catalogs:**

- University officials are using keywords lists to search through course catalogs and ensure no general education or major requirements are focused on DEI.

Removing DEI Language and References:

- "diversity," "inclusion," and "affirmative action" removed from websites, policies, and course catalogs.

- **Rebranding DEI:**

- “Office of Belonging

Reaction to Protestors

Change in University approach:

- Less leniency with students
- Columbia complied with a number of the administration's demands includingit suspended or expelled some of the students who participated in the takeover of Hamilton Hall and revoked the diplomas of some graduates, nearly a year after the takeover.

Regulation & accreditation

Accreditation

As Colleges Face Funding Threat, Accreditors Offer Flexibility

February 28, 2025

Accreditors are relaxing enforcement of DEI standards as colleges grasp for answers on what unclear Trump administration directives targeting DEI mean.

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/governance/accreditation/2025/02/28/accreditors-offer-flexibility-dei-standards>

Accreditation

February 22, 2025

ABA Suspends DEI Standards for Accreditation

By Josh Moody

The **American Bar Association is suspending diversity, equity and inclusion standards for the law schools** it accredits amid President Donald Trump's crackdown on DEI efforts, Reuters reported.

An ABA council reportedly voted on the change Friday, suspending DEI standards through August as the organization—which accredits nearly 200 law schools—considers permanent changes.

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/quick-takes/2025/02/22/aba-suspends-dei-standards-accreditation>

Major Business School Accreditor Drops DEI Language

Bennett Leckrone

March 11, 2025

The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) **dropped diversity and inclusion from its guiding principles for accredited schools** in a February update. The AACSB replaced that language with “community and connectedness. The agency removed language around diversity and inclusion amid attacks on DEI.

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/quick-takes/2025/02/21/stem-accreditor-drops-deia-its-standards>

<https://www.bestcolleges.com/news/aacsb-drops-dei/>

Accreditation

December 10, 2024

The WASC Senior College & University Commission, one of the seven regional bodies tasked with accrediting U.S. colleges, has **proposed to delete all mentions of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) from its standards.**

WASC proposed the changes in late November, three weeks after the reelection of Donald Trump, who has promised to punish accreditors and to remove “all Marxist diversity, equity, and inclusion bureaucrats.” The proposal kicked off a two-week public review period.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/meglittlereilly/2024/12/10/major-college-accreditor-proposes-to-delete-dei-and-go-it-alone/>

IV. What does this mean for OT & OTA programs?

Enrollment & student access issues

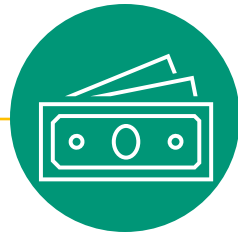
Enrollment & Student Access

Financial aid
challenges

Barriers to 1st
generation & low-
income students



Existing declines
in applicants



Job market ?



Existing Declines



71%

Seats filled in
OT Programs
AY 2024-25



56%

Seats filled in
OTA Programs
AY 2024-25

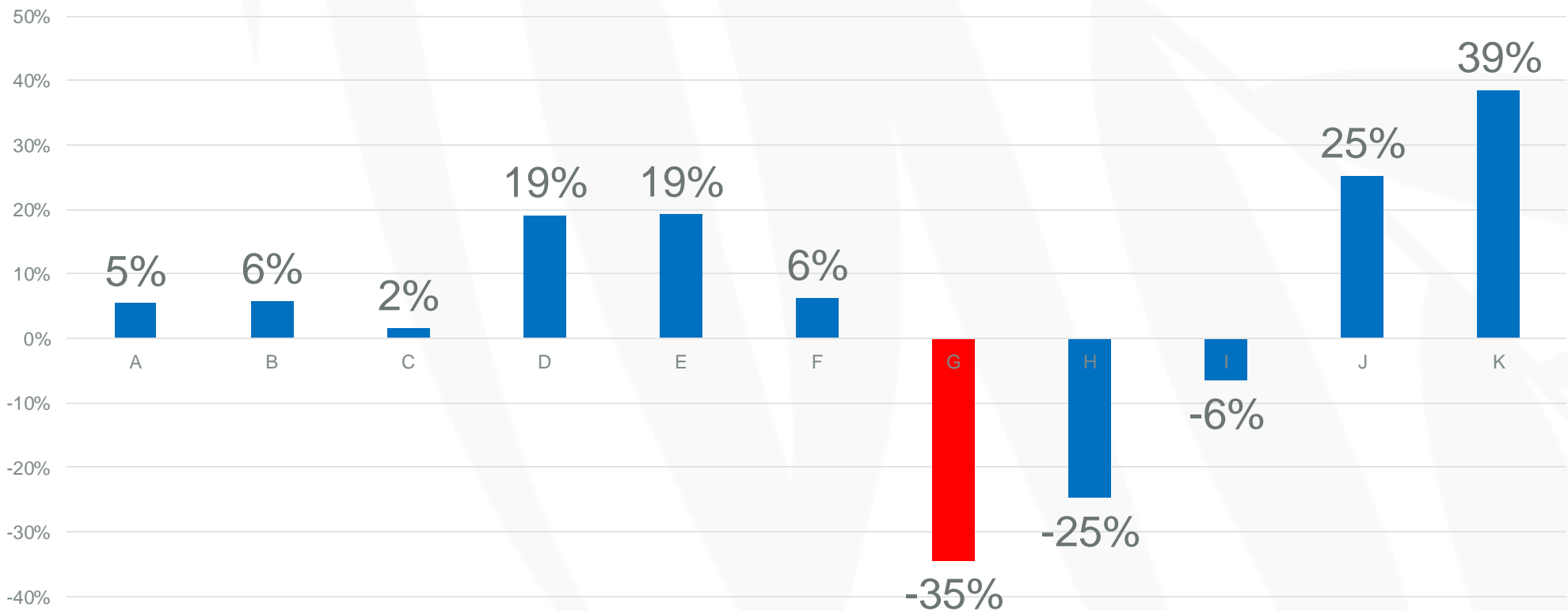


-35%

Decrease in
Applicants in
OTCAS since
2017

Existing Declines

Applicant change over the last 7 years.



Financial Aid Changes

Decreased
funding &
elimination of
programs

Potential to
move to
commercial
sector

Decrease in
loan
forgiveness
options

Job Market



**Impact of
IDEA & EI
Changes**

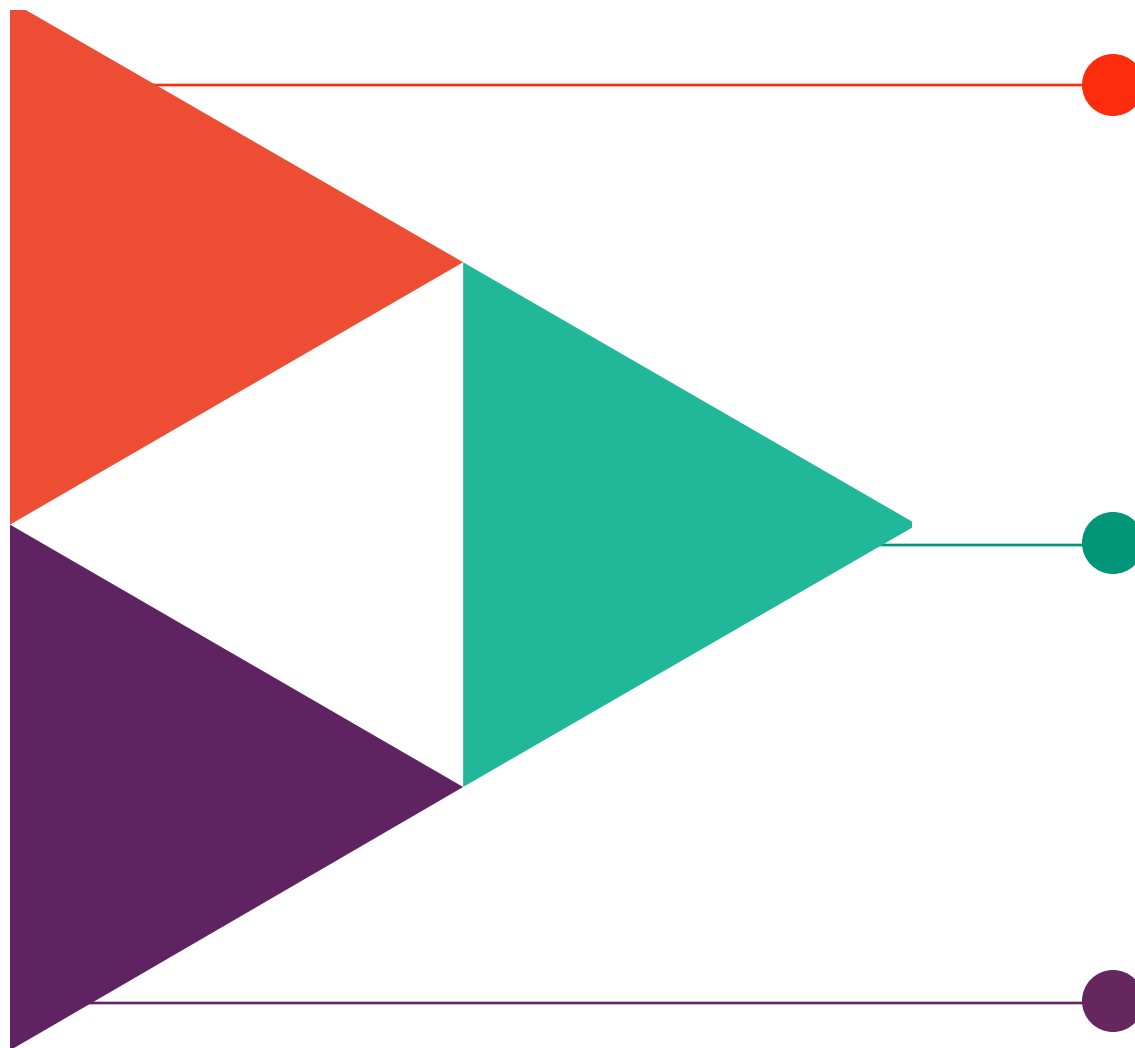


**Impact of
Medicaid &
Medicare
Changes**



**Impact of
priority
changes at
HHS**

First-generation and low-income students



Title I funding

Title I of the ESEA supplements State and local funding for low-achieving children, especially in high-poverty schools. “equal opportunity for all”

Access to resources

Resources to manage applications & college finances.

Elimination of programs

Potential widening of educational inequities & roll back of affirmative action policies.

Financial viability

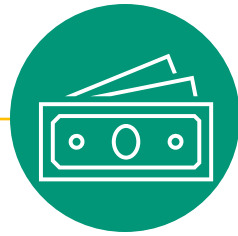
Strategies at the school level

Optimize staffing
& faculty

Consolidation and
program
reductions



Costs cutting &
budget
management



Revenue
Generation



Cost cutting & budget



Operational Costs

Travel, CPD, new equipment, technology



Temporary Savings

Freeze on hires, non-essential capital items



Outsourcing

Non-core services

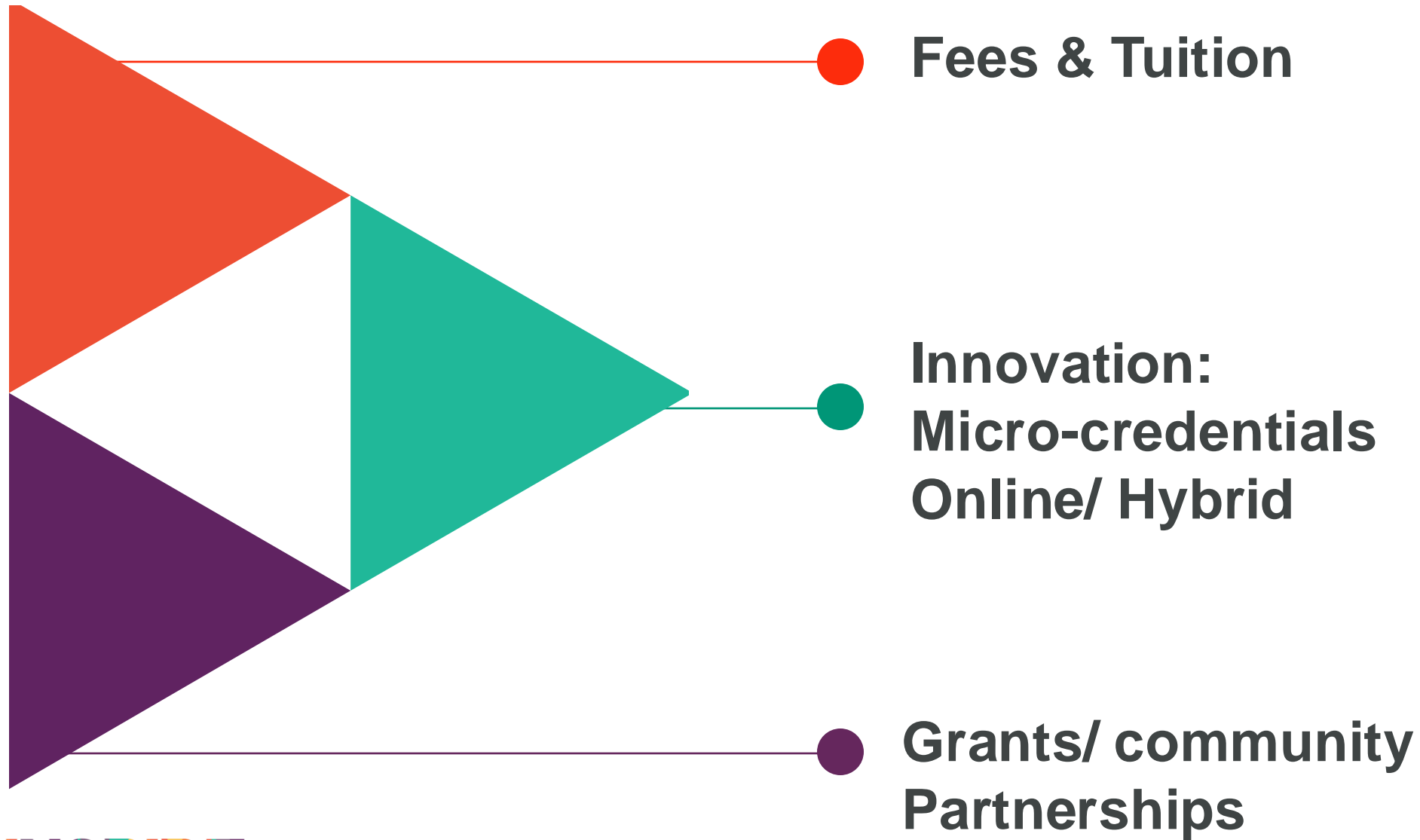
Optimize staffing and faculty

Consolidate
Administration
Roles

Adjust work
loads; hours;
share
resources

Increase use of
P/T and adjunct
options

Revenue Generation



Consolidate & Eliminate Programs

Proposed solutions:

Focus on high-demand health specialties



```
graph TD; A[Focus on high-demand health specialties] --> B[Emerging fields (e.g., digital health)]; B --> C[Eliminate poor performing programs];
```

Emerging fields (e.g., digital health)

Eliminate poor performing programs

Faculty Well-being

High Rates of Stress

New Report Sheds Light on College Faculty and Staff Mental Health
October 28, 2024

60%

Faculty
reporting
stress, anxiety
or depression

80%

Feeling same
or increased
from previous
year

Impact on Performance

New Report Sheds Light on College Faculty and Staff Mental Health
October 28, 2024

15%

Instructors felt burned
out or exhausted

15%

less energy and
patience, potentially
impacting their teaching
performance



Neil Harvison, PhD, OTR,
FNAP, FAOTA
Chief Officer, Knowledge
Division
nharvison@aota.org



Sabrina Salvant, EdD, MPH,
OTR/L, FNAP, FAOTA
VP, Education & Professional
Development
ssalvant@aota.org



Valeta Njoroge
Program Manager, Education &
Professional Development



Heather Parsons MSOT
VP, Federal Affairs
hparsons@aota.org



American
Occupational Therapy
Association