

Federal Government Update - 10.9.26 ^[1]

October 9, 2026 by [Riley Black](#) ^[2]

Dear Colleagues,

Please find a federal government update from our teams.

DHS Proposes Rule to Require OPT Fees

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) published a [proposed rule](#) ^[3] in the *Federal Register* on Oct. 8 that would require new fees for Optional Practical Training (OPT). The proposed fees would apply to all F-1 nonimmigrant students who engage in OPT through a Student and Exchange Visitor Program-certified institution and would be an initial \$70,000 fee for OPT and \$30,000 fee for subsequent OPT. APLU released a [statement](#) ^[4] urging DHS to rescind the proposal.

Public comments on the proposed rule are due on Nov. 9, 2026. CU Federal Relations is working with the campuses to assess whether and how to respond.

White House Announces New Initiatives and Investments at Golden Age of Science Summit

The White House [announced](#) ^[5] on Oct. 8 new science and artificial intelligences initiatives and public-private investments at the *Science: A New Golden Age Summit*. The summit builds on a [report](#) ^[6] of the same name authored in July by the director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) to the president. Summit attendees included the OSTP director, secretary of energy, National Institutes of Health (NIH) director, NASA administrator, Genesis Mission director and more. President Donald Trump awarded [national medals](#) ^[7] to several tech executives at the summit for their science and technology contributions. CU's Massimo Ruzzene, Senior Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation, and Heather Bené, Senior Associate Vice President of Federal Relations, attended the invite-only summit in Washington, DC.

New initiatives and investments announced at the summit include:

- \$2.4 billion in super intelligence (SI) for science tools and compute credits from eleven industry partners for the [Genesis Mission Consortium](#) ^[8];
- \$100 million in SI-enabled scientific instrumentation and autonomous laboratories at the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and National Science Foundation (NSF);
- \$310 million to launch the [NSF X-Labs Consortium](#) ^[9];
- \$1.8 billion from NIH, DOE and Biohub ^[10] to launch a virtual biology initiative;
- \$96 million to 67 early-career scientists, including at CU Boulder, through DOE's [2026 Early Career Research Program](#) ^[11];
- \$100 million for the [Genesis Mission Graduate Fellowship Pilot](#) ^[12], a four-year PhD program with embedded industry and national lab research experiences;

- Quantum Genesis Priority Applications [13], a set of eight problems to guide the \$215 million Quantum Genesis Q Competition [14];
- Revival of NSF's Young Scholars Program;
- DOE's new Battelle-Genesis Mission High School Fellowship; [15]
- NSF's new 6-year integrated Bachelors-to-PhD program;
- NIH's Generation Discovery [16], which will bring 100 early-career scientists into the agency's Intramural Research Program;
- New metascience initiatives at NSF, DOE, NASA and the U.S. Department of War [17];
- A new NASA-DOE partnership, Accelerating American Leadership in Space Nuclear Power and Propulsion [18], to develop nuclear power and space nuclear fuels; and more.

Court Temporarily Blocks ED from Publishing Foreign Donor Names

A U.S. district court issued a temporary restraining order [19] on Oct. 1, which temporarily prevents the U.S. Department of Education (ED) from publishing the names or other identifying information of foreign donors reported by universities under Sec. 117 of the *Higher Education Act*. ED said [20] it would publicly release this information starting Oct. 2, 2026.

The Association of American Universities (AAU) filed an emergency lawsuit [21] on Oct. 1 challenging ED's decision to publicly release the information. The lawsuit also challenges ED's revised Sec. 117 information collection, which will collect donor names going forward without any promise of confidentiality. AAU alleges these actions exceed ED's statutory authority and violate the First Amendment, the Administrative Procedure Act, the Trade Secrets Act and the Freedom of Information Act.

The court order does not cover the 92 foreign entities on U.S. government lists of concern published by ED in July. The court order took effect immediately and expires on Oct. 29, 2026, unless the court extends it. AAU is seeking a preliminary injunction. AAU issued this statement [22] about the lawsuit.

Higher Ed Associations File Lawsuit Challenging New CPT Guidance

The Association of American Universities (AAU), NAFSA [23] and other higher education associations filed a lawsuit [24] on Oct. 5 against U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) challenging new guidance on Curricular Practical Training (CPT), which significantly narrows the eligibility for F-1 nonimmigrant students to participate in the program.

The guidance was distributed through two broadcast messages from the U.S. Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) in August. The lawsuit seeks a preliminary injunction "to restore the government's longstanding CPT framework, protect students and institutions from retroactive penalties, and ensure that international students can continue to access academically meaningful training opportunities that benefit not only them, but employers, communities, and our entire nation." CU's General Counsel and Federal Relations offices are monitoring the lawsuit.

GAO Determines AHRQ Impoundments Are Illegal

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) issued a report [25] on Oct. 7, which finds that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) violated the *Impoundment Control Act of 1974* by withholding over \$78 million in congressionally appropriated funding for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) following workforce reductions and grantmaking

delays in fiscal year 2025. GAO determined that the withholding constituted an unlawful impoundment rather than a permissible administrative delay because HHS failed to seek congressional approval through the required rescission process.

The Federal Relations and General Counsel teams are actively monitoring developments at the federal level. We are working closely with the President and Chancellors, as well as the Colorado congressional delegation to champion CU priorities. We are committed to keeping you informed. Please visit the [CU System Federal Updates and Actions page](#) ^[26] for up-to-date communications and federal memos.

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Kerry Tipper, Vice President, University Counsel

[Federal Weekly Updates](#) ^[27]

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