**IMPORTANT!**

**This document is a template only. It is provided for illustrative purposes only, and is not, and is not intended to be, a definitive format. Your institution should personalize the material in the template to make sure that your institution is telling its own story to its US Senators and House Members. Please make changes as your institution deems appropriate. Please consult with appropriate professionals of your institution’s own choosing in deciding which elements to adopt, vary or discard in this template.**

(to be submitted on Institution’s letterhead)

[Date], 2021

The Honorable [full name]

Room Number \_\_, House [or Senate, as applicable] Office Building

US House of Representatives [or US Senate, as applicable]

Washington, DC 20515 [or 20510 for US Senate]

 Re: Stimulus Funding for Higher Education

Dear Representative [or Senator, as applicable] LAST NAME:

[Name of Institution] is a [appropriate description here of the type of institution and a summary of the institution’s mission; e.g., “community college in Gary, Indiana that serves first generation college students, primarily from historically disadvantaged backgrounds” or “Roman Catholic liberal arts university in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania that provides undergraduate and graduate education, primarily in the areas of health care and teacher education”]. We applaud Congress for the bold actions taken to help improve the lives of US residents with the CARES Act/CRRSAA stimulus packages. Your actions are helping millions of college students across the country to continue their education. That in turn helps to strengthen our economy and our national identity by helping individuals advance their careers, obtain better-paying jobs, increases the country’s tax base, and fosters a sense of community responsibility. We thank Republicans and Democrats in both chambers, and the Administration, for investing in at-risk students, colleges and universities. This investment in Higher Education is an investment in our economy.

While the 2020 stimulus packages have provided post-secondary institutions and our students with some much-needed funding, the reality is that more needs to be done, and your assistance to that end is of vital importance to higher education. Disruption from the COVID-19 pandemic threatens the financial future of higher education and the long-term success of the U.S. workforce and economy. During this crisis, colleges and universities are answering the needs of their students and families, workforce and communities. [Name of institution here], which employs over \_\_ people in the community of [town and state names here] and educates more than an \_\_ students annually, is struggling to manage loss of revenue and operational disruption. Indeed, these challenges threaten the very existence of some institutions of higher education – including [insert institution name here, as applicable].

With the campus closures brought on by the pandemic, many institutions are operating in new ways and spending dollars to shift operations online. We have prioritized disbursing 2020 stimulus funding as financial aid to students. We are coping with how to deliver student learning while retaining and recruiting students for the fall. They are concerned that the crisis will worsen already-existing equity gaps among students. We are looking for ways to make up for the drastic decline in revenue from traditional sources such as room and board, student fees, space, sports and ancillary businesses.

Stimulus funds have been used by institutions to manage the short-term crisis. As Congress continues to debate and shape the next wave of stimulus funding, now is the opportunity to aggressively deploy and focus new federal funds on building a more resilient future for our Higher and workforce development system, which in turn will support the students, workers, communities and regional economies that depend on the survival of their local institutions. We hope leaders and legislators will reassess the challenges of living in global interdependence, the vulnerabilities of the sector and the need to prepare for future disruptions.

Given these realities, we recommend continued Federal action around these priorities:

* **#1: Protect solvency of critical schools**: Mitigate against unpredictable short-term revenue and boost financial resiliency of distressed institutions (under a set of criteria)
* **#2: Bolster student persistence**: Provide holistic supports (academic, financial, emotional and health) to ensure student success
* **#3: Promote innovative, online academic and support programs answering local market needs:** Lower barriers for learners to quickly attain market-relevant skills and credentials for employability
* **#4: Build resilient and efficient operations:** Support the improvement of school operations through accelerated Cloud technology modernization and new operating models
* **#5: Use secure data to steer strategy**: Create the information resources and privacy protections necessary to measure outcomes, inform institution strategic direction and support responsiveness

We believe that, if together we can succeed in building a more resilient, accessible and market-focused U.S. higher education system, empowered by innovation, technology, and data analytics, we not only have the potential to meet the challenges of today’s crisis; we have the power to improve future U.S. educational and workforce outcomes as well.

We would welcome the opportunity to speak with you or your designated staff member directly about any of the above topics, and to share more of the [insert institution name here] story, including introducing you to some of our students and our faculty and staff, and, when we can safely do so, showcasing our campus. We will follow up directly with your office.

Thank you for your consideration, and for your ongoing service to our institution, to higher education, and to our country.

Sincerely,

[Name]

[Title]