



August 3, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Steven Mnuchin
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Treasury

The Honorable Mark Meadows
Chief of Staff
The White House

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leaders McConnell, Schumer, and McCarthy, Secretary Mnuchin, and Mr. Meadows:

We urge you to sustain the critical human infrastructure and research operations that underpin the U.S. scientific enterprise in the COVID-19 relief package you are considering, by providing supplemental funding for federal research agencies to provide cost extensions for federally funded research halted and disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional funds must be provided for federal research agencies to avoid an entire generation of researchers permanently being forced out of the jobs that are the innovation engine of our economy. The relief that we seek would help avoid long-term and devastating consequences to federal research that drives American innovation, economic competitiveness, and security¹.

The pandemic has caused enormous disruptions to federally supported research. We are grateful that both the House HEROES Act and the Senate HEALS Act recognize the need for research relief for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and we strongly support the \$15.5 billion provided in the HEALS Act, including at least \$10.1 billion for research relief, as we have recommended for NIH. Beyond the funding for NIH, we are also grateful for the funding for the federal science agencies in HEALS and HEROES to

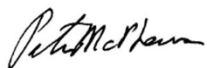
¹ Please note, this letter does not focus on the important funds proposed in the HEALS and HEROES Act to directly support our institutions and students, as well as the need for temporary and targeted liability protections related to the pandemic. The necessity of federal assistance in these areas have previously been detailed in other letters, including the August higher education community letter on institutional and student aid, and letters from [AAU](#), [AAMC](#), and [APLU](#).

“prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus,” but **it is also essential to provide relief funds for the ongoing research supported by the other federal science agencies, as that research continues to face disruptions.** The \$26 billion in [research relief funds we request](#) is needed to preserve the current investment already made by taxpayers. This funding would help ensure that extramural work funded by the federal research agencies can be completed and that federally supported researchers across the country continue to be employed.

The bipartisan, bicameral Research Investment to Spark the Economy Act (RISE) Act (H.R. 7308 and S. 4286) – currently cosponsored by over 100 members of Congress and [endorsed by our organizations and over 300 universities, science, engineering, and business organizations](#) – outlines the research relief needed to protect American science and the STEMM jobs that underpin our research enterprise. As specified in the RISE Act, we recommend the following levels for emergency supplemental appropriations: Department of Defense – \$3 billion; Department of Energy – \$5 billion; National Science Foundation – \$3 billion; NASA – \$2 billion; Department of Agriculture – \$380 million; Institute for Education Sciences – \$200 million; NOAA – \$350 million; NIST – \$300 million; and EPA – \$200 million. The interconnectedness of science requires a strong foundation across all the federal research agencies to maximize opportunity and progress in any individual scientific discipline.

Supplemental research appropriations are urgently needed to allow agencies to provide research grant and contract supplements (i.e., cost extensions) for expenses arising from COVID-19 related impacts; emergency relief to sustain research support personnel and base operating costs for core research facilities and user-funded research services until the facilities can accommodate research activities; and support for additional graduate student and postdoc fellowships, traineeships, and research assistantships for up to two years to allow early career scientists to complete degrees and enter the workforce rather than leaving science altogether. Without supplemental funding, federal research agencies will be forced to make difficult decisions between funding the completion of existing research projects or funding new projects – both are important to our nation’s scientific competitiveness and economic recovery. We urge you to swiftly complete work on bipartisan comprehensive COVID-19 relief legislation that includes funding for all federal research agencies to address critical research needs.

Sincerely,



Peter McPherson
President
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities



David J. Skorton, MD
President and CEO
Association of American Medical Colleges



Ted Mitchell
President
American Council on Education



Matt Owens
Interim President
Association of American Universities

Cc: Members of the Senate Committee on Appropriations
Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
Members of the Senate Committee on Armed Services
Members of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Members of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
Members of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
Members of the House Committee on Appropriations
Members of the House Committee on Agriculture
Members of the House Committee on Armed Services
Members of the House Committee on Science, Space and Technology
Members of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce
Members of the House Committee on Natural Resources

The Association of American Universities (AAU) is an association of 63 U.S. and two Canadian leading research universities that transform lives through education, research, and innovation. AAU member universities collectively help shape policy for higher education, science, and innovation; promote best practices in undergraduate and graduate education and strengthen the contributions of leading research universities to American society. The Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) is a research, policy, and advocacy organization with a membership of over 200 public research universities, land-grant institutions, state university systems, and affiliated organizations in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico, that is dedicated to strengthening and advancing the work of public universities. The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) is a not-for-profit association dedicated to transforming health care through medical education, patient care, medical research, and community collaborations. Its members comprise all 155 accredited U.S. and 17 accredited Canadian medical schools; more than 400 major teaching hospitals and health systems; and more than 70 academic societies. The American Council on Education (ACE) is a membership organization that mobilizes the higher education community to shape effective public policy and foster innovative, high-quality practice. As the major coordinating body for the nation's colleges and universities, our strength lies in our diverse membership of more than 1,700 colleges and universities, related associations, and other organizations.