

April 2, 2020

The Honorable Betsy DeVos Secretary of Education 400 Maryland Avenue, SW Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary DeVos,

On behalf of the associations listed below, representing the nation's four- and two-year public and private colleges and universities, I write regarding the Department of Education's implementation of the recently enacted Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, and in particular the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund authorized therein.

All colleges and universities are and will continue to be substantially and profoundly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This crisis is causing massive disruption to students, institutional operations, and institutional finances. On some campuses, it is creating an existential threat, potentially resulting in closures. We appreciate the significant sums the federal government has provided thus far to combat the impact of COVID-19 on our campuses. However, we must stress that the assistance included for students and institutions in the CARES Act is far below what is essential to respond to the financial disasters confronting both.

In addition, I fear this funding will be for naught for many institutions unless the Department can act very quickly to make these funds available. Indeed, Congress wisely directed the Department to use its existing payment systems for the Title IV student financial aid programs to distribute these funds to our campuses. Our members stand ready to assist the Department with this effort.

It is likewise critical for the Department to provide campuses with as much flexibility as possible for distributing these funds on campus, both for emergency grants to students and to help cover institutional refunds, expenses, and other lost revenues. Clarifying the statutory language regarding the acceptable uses of these funds will help greatly. For example, it will be very helpful to know if the funding for emergency grants to students can be used to reimburse institutions for students' expenses, such as housing, food, transportation, equipment, and the like, that already have been or may soon be refunded or incurred on behalf of students.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this critical matter. We look forward to working with you to maximize the benefits of this funding via the quick and orderly disbursement of the CARES Act funds to our students and campuses.

Sincerely,

Follow.

## Ted Mitchell President

## On behalf of:

Achieving the Dream, Inc.

**ACPA-College Student Educators International** 

American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers

American Association of Community Colleges

American Association of State Colleges and Universities

American Association of University Professors

American College Health Association

American Council on Education

American Dental Education Association

American Indian Higher Education Consortium

APPA, "Leadership in Educational Facilities"

Association of American Colleges and Universities

Association of American Universities

Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities

**Association of Community College Trustees** 

Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges

Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities

Association of Public and Land-grant Universities

Association of Research Libraries

Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities

College and University Professional Association for Human Resources

Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area

Council for Advancement and Support of Education

Council for Christian Colleges & Universities

Council for Higher Education Accreditation

Council for Opportunity in Education

Council of Independent Colleges

**EDUCAUSE** 

ETS

Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities

NAFSA: Association of International Educators

NASPA - Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education

National Association of College and University Business Officers

National Association of Colleges and Employers

National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities

National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators

National Collegiate Athletic Association Phi Beta Kappa Society UNCF UPCEA