

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,



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