



Boston University
Brandeis University
Brown University
California Institute of Technology
Carnegie Mellon University
Case Western Reserve University
Columbia University
Cornell University
Dartmouth College
Duke University
Emory University
Georgia Institute of Technology
Harvard University
Indiana University
Iowa State University
The Johns Hopkins University
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
McGill University
Michigan State University
New York University
Northwestern University
The Ohio State University
The Pennsylvania State University
Princeton University
Purdue University
Rice University
Rutgers University – New Brunswick
Stanford University
Stony Brook University –
State University of New York
Texas A&M University
Tufts University
Tulane University
University at Buffalo –
State University of New York
The University of Arizona
University of California, Berkeley
University of California, Davis
University of California, Irvine
University of California, Los Angeles
University of California, San Diego
University of California, Santa Barbara
University of California, Santa Cruz
The University of Chicago
University of Colorado Boulder
University of Florida
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
The University of Iowa
The University of Kansas
University of Maryland, College Park
University of Michigan
University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
University of Missouri, Columbia
The University of North Carolina at
Chapel Hill
University of Oregon
University of Pennsylvania
University of Pittsburgh
University of Rochester
University of Southern California
The University of Texas at Austin
University of Toronto
The University of Utah
University of Virginia
University of Washington
The University of Wisconsin - Madison
Vanderbilt University
Washington University in St. Louis
Yale University

July 23, 2021

**The Honorable Bernie Sanders
Chairman
Committee on the Budget
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510**

**The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Ranking Member
Committee on the Budget
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510**

**The Honorable John Yarmuth
Chairman
Committee on the Budget
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515**

**The Honorable Jason Smith
Ranking Member
Committee on the Budget
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515**

Dear Chairman Sanders, Chairman Yarmuth, Ranking Member Graham, and Ranking Member Smith:

I write on behalf of America’s leading research universities to strongly urge you to make bold investments in our nation’s future as you continue to develop the FY22 budget. As the United States looks beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, now is the time to make meaningful investments in America’s health, our security, our prosperity, and our future by doubling the Pell Grant, strengthening other federal student aid programs, and bolstering groundbreaking research and the scientific infrastructure that undergirds innovation.

The work done by researchers, frontline workers, and others at our member universities was critical in our national response to COVID-19. We worked closely with federal, state and local governments, and private industry to quickly identify the virus and develop the critical tests, treatments, and vaccines that our nation needed. Our institutions are also linchpins of our economy, both nationally and locally, and serve as key drivers of innovation and job creation. Tens of thousands of small businesses are dependent on our members, and many AAU institutions are the largest employers in their hometowns and states.

For the last seven decades, America’s leading research universities have partnered with the federal government and the private sector to create the technologies that have driven the American economy and to train the world’s best scientists, doctors, engineers, and entrepreneurs. COVID-19 made clearer than ever before the vital role that our institutions have long had in protecting public health, providing high-quality healthcare to Americans from all walks of life, and preparing us for the future. It was the work of our scientists over decades that set the stage for the rapid creation of effective mRNA vaccine technology, and it was our institutions and the doctors, nurses, and scientists we train that tested those vaccines.

As our nation looks beyond COVID-19 and to a brighter future, we ask that you renew America's crucial strategic investments in the programs and institutions that are helping pull our nation out of this pandemic. Our institutions are at the very forefront in finding the solutions we will need to address the challenges ahead, whether they be economic, climate, or security based.

Specifically, we urge you to include provisions in the FY22 budget to:

- **Double the maximum Pell Grant award to \$13,000 and increase funding for other federal student aid programs in FY22 to make attending college more accessible and affordable.** This is especially important during a time when many families have lost jobs or lost income due to the pandemic. Pell Grants no longer cover the majority of costs for students attending four-year institutions, and most Pell recipients come from households that earn less than \$50,000 annually. As a result, many low- and middle-income students must take on higher levels of debt that, after graduation, prevent them from fully contributing to the economy or earning advanced degrees. Putting the Pell Grant on a short path to doubling the maximum award would help reclaim much of its original purchasing power. Increasing funding for the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, Federal Work-Study, TRIO, and other student aid programs to restore their purchasing power will further make college accessible and affordable for students and reduce student borrowing and indebtedness.
- **Invest in scientific research and research infrastructure at U.S. colleges and universities to enhance the nation's research and innovation capacities.** Bold, new federal scientific research investments are needed to empower groundbreaking research discoveries and innovations that are crucial to U.S. competitiveness and economic and national security. President Biden's American Jobs Plan (AJP) provides a strong framework for forward-looking research and research infrastructure investments to create greater national research capacity and support and empower individuals from all backgrounds to engage them in our nation's research and innovation enterprise.

As specified in the AJP and in line with recently passed legislation in the Senate and the House, we urge the inclusion of funding for the National Science Foundation (NSF) and a new directorate focused on technology innovations. Also consistent with the AJP proposal for laboratory infrastructure investments, we recommend at least \$6 billion for the following programs to modernize existing laboratories and equipment and build and acquire new facilities and instrumentation essential for conducting cutting-edge research at U.S. colleges and universities: the NSF's Major Research Instrumentation (MRI), Mid-scale Research Infrastructure (RI-1 and RI-2), and Academic Research Infrastructure (ARI) programs; the NIH biomedical construction (C-06) and instrumentation (S-10) grant programs; the DOD Defense University Research Instrumentation Program; and the NIST competitive construction grants. Above and beyond this \$6 billion investment in university-based infrastructure, we encourage additional investments to maintain and enhance that scientific infrastructure supported by the Department of Energy at its national laboratories and scientific user facilities and the NSF through its Major Research Equipment Facilities Construction account.

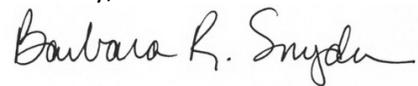
Additionally, we recommend the inclusion of new capital financing vehicles that can be used for research infrastructure to further bolster our nation's innovation capacities. Such vehicles include restoring advanced refunding bonds and direct subsidy bonds that both public and private universities can utilize. We also recommend easing restrictions on the share of industry-sponsored research that can take place in tax-exempt bond financed university buildings.

- **Provide funding to federal research agencies consistent with the bipartisan the “Research Investment to Spark the Economy Act” or RISE Act (H.R. 869/S. 289).** This will help mitigate the pandemic’s harmful disruptions and impacts on students, researchers, and research supported by the federal research agencies. This funding is necessary to reinforce the nation’s research enterprise and help ensure that extramural research projects affected by the pandemic can be completed, thus preserving research investments already made by taxpayers. Relief for federal science agencies will help avoid long-term and harmful consequences to federally-supported research and prevent federal research agencies from having to choose between funding the completion of existing research projects or funding new projects.

We urge you to take bold steps as you develop the FY22 budget to support our nation's recovery and strengthen our global competitiveness. Reinvigorating the long-standing and successful government-university partnership is vital to our nation’s strength and resilience and our capacity to address challenges to our health, climate, economy, and security.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara R. Snyder". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'B'.

Barbara R. Snyder
President

cc: Members of the House and Senate Budget Committees