January 25, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden  The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
President  Minority Leader
The White House  U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Speaker  Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives  U.S. Senate

The Honorable Charles Schumer  The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader  Minority Leader
U.S. Senate  U.S. Senate

Dear President Biden, Speaker Pelosi, and Leaders Schumer, McConnell, and McCarthy:

On behalf of America’s leading research universities, we urge you to work together to reach agreement on comprehensive pandemic legislation that includes relief necessary to combat the COVID-19 virus and mitigate its harmful impacts on suffering Americans and the nation’s economy. Our students, faculty, staff, and local communities are looking to Congress for leadership and support.

Our universities were among the first institutions to tackle this virus directly in our labs and hospitals, we are also among the first to curtail operations due to the pandemic, and we continue to face challenges as we deliver online instruction and help ensure the health and safety of our communities. The pandemic has caused substantial strain on our institutions, hospitals, and laboratories as we have worked to provide our nation and communities with the best scientific advice and medical care. The pandemic has also caused enormous disruptions to federally supported research conducted by our institutions to the detriment of our nation’s research enterprise. Our nation’s ability to fight this pandemic, and those of the future, is directly tied to the ability of our research universities, faculty, staff, and students to stay in the fight.

Research universities and hospitals contribute significantly to America’s health, economy, and national security. We are critical drivers of local economies. Many of our members are among the largest, if not the largest, employers in their cities and states, and the harmful economic consequences of the pandemic to these institutions is felt far beyond our campuses. Americans from all walks of life are dependent on us for their wellbeing, from doctors and nurses to facility and food service professionals. Tens of thousands of small businesses are also dependent on our institutions for their economic survival. While the end of the pandemic is now in sight, there is still much work to be done, and federal support for research universities, their students, employees, and their communities is vital to our nation’s success.

We call on you to work in a bipartisan manner to deliver a comprehensive pandemic relief package. Research universities and the federal government have a long-standing and
successful partnership that is in critical need of support as we confront the virus and stand on the front line of fighting the pandemic. Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

Barbara R. Snyder
President

cc: Members of the 117th Congress