



- 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
- 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

March 19, 2021

**The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.**  
**President**  
**The White House**

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

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

**The Honorable Charles Schumer**  
**Majority Leader**  
**U.S. Senate**

**The Honorable Mitch McConnell**  
**Minority Leader**  
**U.S. Senate**

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

On behalf of America’s leading research universities, we thank you for including much-needed relief for the nation’s colleges and universities and their students, faculty, staff, researchers, and their communities in the American Rescue Plan Act and in other measures enacted since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. With vaccines – made possible by decades of federally supported research at America’s universities – the end of the pandemic is in sight. Nonetheless, additional federal actions are needed in the months ahead to spur recovery and help ensure American health, competitiveness, and security for the next decade and beyond.

Research universities contribute significantly to America’s health, economy, and security. Our universities were among the first to tackle COVID-19 in our labs and hospitals. They not only contributed to the development of COVID-19 tests, therapies, and vaccines, but they have been – and continue to be – on the front lines of deploying these in their communities and states. Our members are also critical drivers of local economies. They are among the largest (and often *the* largest) employers in their cities and states, and their economic contributions are far-reaching. Tens of thousands of small businesses depend on our institutions for their survival, and thousands of companies of all sizes trace their origins to our graduates and to the discoveries and innovations that emerge from research conducted on our campuses. These companies employ millions of Americans from all backgrounds, and they produce services and products vital to our nation.

As you turn toward the FY22 budget and measures on economic recovery, climate change, infrastructure, and competitiveness, we urge you to work together to enact legislation to reinvigorate the extraordinarily successful government-university partnership. For more than seven decades, this crucial alliance has fostered unprecedented scientific achievement to meet national challenges, generated untold job growth, improved national health, and reinforced our national security. As we emerge from the pandemic and confront growing economic competition and security challenges, now is the time for bold actions to significantly bolster federal student aid, research funding and infrastructure, and innovation policies and investments that are key to

the partnership and essential elements of a national strategy to foster a strong and sustained economic recovery and prosperity for all Americans. Specifically, we urge you to enact legislation 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. The Pell Grant program is the single most important tool to enable low-income students to access and afford college. Pell Grants no longer cover the majority of costs for students attending a four-year institution, 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. Doubling the maximum Pell Grant 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 in a similar fashion will further make college accessible and affordable for students from lower- and middle-income families and reduce student borrowing and indebtedness.
- **Provide recovery funding to federal research agencies consistent with the bipartisan H.R. 869/S. 289, the “Research Investment to Spark the Economy Act,” or RISE Act.** This will help mitigate the pandemic’s harmful disruptions and impacts on students, researchers, and research supported by the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, the Department of Energy’s Office of Science and ARPA-E, the Department of Defense S&T programs, NASA, National Institute of Standards and Technology, and other federal research agencies. This funding is necessary to reinforce the nation’s research enterprise and help ensure that extramural research projects put on hold due to the pandemic can be completed, thus preserving research investments already made by taxpayers. Relief for federal science agencies will help avoid long-term and devastating consequences to federally-supported research, which drives American innovation, economic competitiveness, and security. Failure to provide this funding will force federal research agencies to make difficult decisions between funding the completion of existing research projects or funding new projects.
- **Invest in scientific research infrastructure to enhance the nation’s research and innovation capacities.** This should include significant new funding for the NSF’s Major Research Instrumentation, Mid-scale Research Infrastructure, Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction, and Academic Research Infrastructure programs; the NIH biomedical construction grants; the DOD Defense University Research Instrumentation Program; NIST competitive construction grants; and the DOE Science Laboratories Infrastructure Program (which provides funds to maintain, repair, and upgrade core DOE national laboratory and scientific user facility operations). To assess and coordinate research infrastructure across federal agencies and review future scientific infrastructure capacity and need, we also urge the establishment a new National Coordinating Office for Scientific Infrastructure and an Office of Science and Technology Policy National Science and Technology Council interagency working group. In addition, new capital financing vehicles that can be used for research infrastructure would further bolster our nation’s innovation capacities. Such vehicles include restoring advanced refunding bonds and Build America Bonds and easing restrictions on the share of industry-sponsored research that can take place in tax-exempt bond financed university buildings.

- **Ramp up federal scientific research and STEM education investments in FY22 and set a path for sustained growth.** Many Members of Congress, business leaders, and commissions and reports have flagged our country's lagging rate of research and innovation investment compared to China and other competitors. Bold, new federal scientific research investments are needed to empower discoveries and innovations that are crucial to U.S. competitiveness and economic and national security. This should be coupled with a commitment to sustained funding growth thereafter to outpace our competitors and remain the world's innovation leader. To this end, after bold, new investments, federal funding for basic research should be increased at a sustained real growth rate of *at least* four percent per year, with the goal of raising federal basic research funding as a share of the gross domestic product by 50 percent (from the present 0.2 percent to 0.3 percent). This growth rate is called for by a panel of industry, science, and other leaders in [\*The Perils of Complacency: America at a Tipping Point in Science & Engineering\*](#), issued by the American Academies of Arts and Sciences. Additionally, we should make complementary sustained investments in STEM human infrastructure through education, scholarship, fellowship, and traineeship programs. This is essential to supporting individuals of all backgrounds and empowering them to engage fully in our nation's research and innovation enterprise and the industries of the future that require highly educated, highly trained people.

We thank you again for the important measures you have taken to address the pandemic and to support higher education. We hope you will work in a bipartisan manner to continue to support our nation's recovery and strengthen our global competitiveness. As we emerge from the pandemic in the months ahead, 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 economy, climate, and security for decades to come. Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,



Barbara R. Snyder  
President

cc: Members of the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress  
Rob Fairweather, Acting Director, White House Office of Management and Budget  
Kei Koizumi, Acting Director, White House Office of Science and Technology Policy  
Brian Deese, Director, National Economic Council  
Susan Rice, Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy  
Miguel Cardona, Secretary, Department of Education