January 10, 2022

Dear Members of the 117th Congress,

On behalf of America’s leading research universities, I urge your attention to legislation important to our nation’s health, economic competitiveness, security, and crucial government-university research partnership. America cannot afford continued inaction on FY22 appropriations and the Build Back Better (BBB) Act. As you begin the second session of the 117th Congress, we believe it is urgent that you to complete FY22 appropriations and the BBB Act in the weeks ahead.

Congress has made significant progress in setting FY22 funding levels; now it is time to approve a final funding package. Specifically, we support proposed increases for the Pell Grant maximum award and other student aid programs as well as increases for critical research agencies like the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, and the Department of Energy’s Office of Science. In a previous letter we addressed distressing reports that Congress was considering a year-long continuing resolution (CR). CRs create funding uncertainty for students and researchers which stall innovation. It is vital that you complete FY22 appropriations early this year and avoid a harmful year-long CR.

Similarly, the BBB Act presents a key opportunity to make long-term investments in our workforce, national security, and economic competitiveness. We support House-passed provisions that raise the Pell Grant maximum award as a step toward doubling Pell; invest in critical research infrastructure, including at HBCUs, HSIs, and other MSIs; and bolster scientific research consistent with pending bipartisan competitiveness legislation (the U.S. Innovation and Competitiveness Act, the NSF for the Future Act, and the DOE Science for the Future Act) that authorize a new use-inspired directorate at NSF and critical funding increases for the scientific research and innovation programs at NSF and other agencies. The proposed investments would support research grants, scholarships, fellowships, technology transfer, and scientific facilities. They would also help make college more affordable for students from low- and middle-income families by increasing the Pell Grant maximum award by $550. These proposed investments are an important down payment on the next-generation workforce and American innovation. Failure to approve these provisions will thwart implementation of the bipartisan competitiveness legislation and hamper our national interests.

We urge you to seize this moment and approve these legislative proposals essential to our nation’s health, security, and economic prosperity. Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

Barbara R. Snyder, President