



April 21, 2020

Dear Student Leaders:

On behalf of the Association of American Universities, I want to thank you for your letter of April 15 and for the leadership and concern for your fellow students that it demonstrates. In these uncertain times, we stand with you in seeking to minimize the pandemic's negative consequences for all of our students, regardless of their locations, backgrounds, or resources.

In particular, we share your concerns that the circumstances into which we find ourselves suddenly thrust may exacerbate inequities that already existed, further disadvantaging hard-working students. In talking with AAU member presidents and chancellors, I can assure you that this is a core concern of theirs and that they are striving to minimize these negative consequences.

Indeed, we have been thinking about and working on these concerns since the earliest days of this crisis. That is why the day after you sent your letter, we joined our colleagues from the nation's other leading college and university associations to endorse a statement of principles for our member schools. These eight principles are designed to ensure flexibility, creativity, and compassion in how universities handle this crisis' academic ramifications for students. They acknowledge that a one-size-fits-all approach is inappropriate, and the principles instead focus on the importance of institutional policies being flexible, transparent, and timely to meet students' needs. Please find the eight principles [here](#).

These principles focus on how universities evaluate and accept credits when students seek to transfer between institutions, seek approval for non-traditional coursework, or apply to graduate and professional programs. However, the values they embrace can be applied to each of the concerns you have raised.

We thank you for your leadership in these difficult times. We share your concerns and your commitment to protecting our students during this crisis.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Mary Sue Coleman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mary" and last name "Coleman" clearly distinguishable.

Mary Sue Coleman, PhD  
President Emerita, University of Michigan  
President, Association of American Universities