



October 29, 2020

Dear Louisiana Congressional Delegation,

Higher education finds the solutions to our world's most challenging problems. In fact, colleges and universities were created for such times as these. They have historically been and will continue to be catalysts for change, providing the knowledge and skill sets needed to invert the trajectory of economic downturn.

We write today urging that you work toward a federal stimulus package that recognizes this truth and provides desperately needed funding for our universities and colleges.

Louisiana's higher education community has been a strategic asset for our state and for the nation. Improved student graduation and retention rates, increased educational attainment, gains in the expansion of access, significant life-saving research and elimination of equity gaps in recent years are testaments to the dedication, stewardship and grit of our higher education leaders. These positive strides would be impressive during plentiful times; they are remarkable for having been accomplished in the face of such adversity.

Higher education will be central to the national recovery but cannot contribute at its maximum potential while hobbled by disaster-driven expenses, revenue losses and anemic state budget allocations.

Without a federal relief package, Louisiana will face not a budget cliff, but a budgetary abyss. COVID-related state budget reductions, compounded a previous decade and more of dwindling state support, will imperil both the education and research missions of our universities and colleges.

A Phase IV stimulus package is critical to stabilize budgets that were temporarily propped up by the resources provided in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. Those funds were vital, necessary and greatly appreciated; however, they fall far short of current needs.

CARES Act funding did not entirely replace the costs and expenses incurred by continuing to educate our students uninterrupted in the face of a global pandemic. Our campuses converted to digital delivery in a matter of weeks; our medical campuses bolstered the health care surge and drove testing and clinical care; and faculty research across physical, scientific, technological and cultural platforms will continue to lead the world forward out of this crisis. The costs of maintaining these functions reach well beyond the amount of stimulus funding provided to date.

The total COVID-19-related impact to Louisiana higher education is projected at this point to be \$383M. Even with the \$113M in CARES Act dollars received by the institutions, higher education still faces a \$270M gap.

Our campuses are reeling from losses of revenue in the wake of COVID-19, as housing, dining and affiliated on-campus services have suffered from spring withdrawals and fluctuating summer and fall enrollments.

In a state that provides approximately 30 percent of the funding necessary to operate the higher education enterprise, institutions are dependent on tuition dollars and auxiliary funding from enrollment, which have been destabilized by the pandemic.

Our challenges abound, yet we continue to heed the call to educate and help our citizens prosper. Additional reductions on top of past losses will make doing so exponentially more difficult and lack of adequate funding will cause irreparable, long-lasting damage. Now, more than ever, we must not halt successful efforts to provide students access to high-quality, affordable education. We cannot allow deterioration of our institutional capacity to educate and train students, which will exacerbate existing inequities. We cannot afford to inhibit the ability of colleges and universities to provide the tools Louisiana so desperately needs during a public health crisis and period of historic economic uncertainty.

We ask for your leadership in securing the funding our institutions require in order to do the work they were created to do: to develop the talent that will propel Louisiana and all its people forward to prosperity.

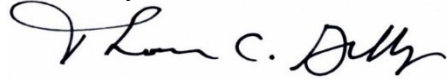
Sincerely,



Dr. Kim Hunter Reed, Louisiana Commissioner of Higher Education



Dr. Monty Sullivan, President, Louisiana Community and Technical College System



Thomas C. Galligan, Jr., Interim President, Louisiana State University System



Dr. Ray Belton, President, Southern University System



Dr. Jim Henderson, President, University of Louisiana System

Signing on behalf of:

Baton Rouge Community College | Bossier Parish Community College | Central Louisiana Technical Community College  
Delgado Community College | L.E. Fletcher Technical Community College | Louisiana Delta Community College  
Northshore Technical Community College | Nunez Community College | Northwest LA Technical Community College  
River Parishes Community College | South Louisiana Community College | SOWELA Technical Community College

Louisiana State University | Louisiana State University at Eunice | Louisiana State University of Alexandria  
Louisiana State University Shreveport | LSU Health Sciences Center New Orleans | Paul M. Hebert Law Center  
LSU Health Sciences Center Shreveport | LSU AgCenter | Pennington Biomedical Research Center

Southern University | Southern University at New Orleans | Southern University at Shreveport  
Southern University Law Center | Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center

Grambling State University | Louisiana Tech University | McNeese State University | Nicholls State University  
Northwestern State University | Southeastern Louisiana University | University of Louisiana at Lafayette  
University of Louisiana at Monroe | The University of New Orleans