



January 29, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

On behalf of the associations listed below, representing the nation's four- and two-year public and private colleges and universities, I write today to communicate the willingness of the higher education community to contribute to the administration's COVID-19 response efforts. Many of our member institutions already are working hard to help their communities confront the challenges posed by the pandemic, while other colleges and universities may wish to volunteer once they are made aware of opportunities to assist.

At key moments in our history, U.S. colleges and universities have collaborated with the federal government to help tackle great national challenges, from marshalling resources and know-how during World War II to producing many of the most significant scientific and medical breakthroughs of the last century. During the current crisis, American research universities, medical schools, and teaching hospitals have been on the frontlines of the fight against COVID-19. Although not all colleges and universities have the resources or capacity to provide assistance, we reach out today to make it clear that many institutions of higher education are willing and able to step forward to support the administration's national pandemic strategy and outline some ideas for how they can do so.

Colleges and universities are critical institutions in both urban and rural communities across the country and are committed to serving the broader common good. Many of these institutions have the knowledge, expertise, and infrastructure to support the national COVID-19 response strategy, help rebuild our economy, and ensure the health and educational well-being of our most vulnerable populations. Already, there are some fine examples of institutions that have partnered with states or localities as part of COVID-19 relief efforts, including the State University of New York System, Howard University, Shenandoah University, the University of South Florida, and the University of Arizona.

The following are some tangible ways that colleges and universities with sufficient capacity and resources could volunteer to contribute to this critical national endeavor:

- **Enhance testing and tracing**
 - Help expand COVID-19 testing and strengthening capacity in local communities through use of available university laboratory capacity.

- **Support vaccination efforts by utilizing campus facilities and other capacities**
 - Continue to utilize and potentially expand use of institutions' available freezer capacity and use existing infrastructure for long-standing campus flu vaccination efforts to provide COVID-19 shots.
 - Use sports facilities and auditoriums with nearby parking to serve as vaccination sites.
 - Employ the thousands of health science students, campus-based EMS services, and potentially faculty and staff, to assist with vaccination efforts.
 - Help address COVID-19 inequities in vaccine distribution and mitigation efforts through a network of minority serving institutions.
 - Help ensure nationwide messaging and vaccine dissemination through college leaders, athletes and coaches, work-study students, and alumni, as well as through partnerships with community stakeholders in all sectors.

- **Utilize higher education experts**
 - Temporarily place researchers and other institutional staff in federal agencies where scientific or other expertise (e.g., supply chain management, logistics, data analytics, or wastewater analysis) is urgently needed. Experts can be put to work rapidly using authority under the Intergovernmental Personnel Act, Presidential Management Fellows, or other means.

- **Prevent mass migration super-spreader events**
 - Consistent with CDC prioritization recommendations, vaccinate students by late spring to prevent mass migration super-spreader events as students return home domestically and internationally at the end of the semester, as well as staff and faculty engaged in higher-risk campus activities. This will be particularly critical at large institutions that enroll thousands of students.
 - In addition to larger institutions, some small colleges could serve as regional distribution campus vaccination sites for faculty and staff.

- **Address campus mental health needs**
 - Develop and implement best practices in addressing mental health challenges of students, faculty, and staff created or exacerbated by the pandemic, economic turmoil, and racial injustice.

- **Help address K-12 learning losses**
 - Develop institutional partnerships with K-12 schools to address the learning losses in elementary and secondary schools through teacher education, training and professional development, technology, and offering higher education students as tutors in local schools.

- Conduct research to better understand learning loss and the academic, social, and emotional impact of COVID-19 on learning and wellness with the goal of developing data-informed strategies to address student and teacher needs.

Not all colleges and universities can or should do everything on this list—some are technical, some are costly, and others are only possible with the help of others, like state and local health agencies. Rather, this list is intended as an illustration of the range of ways that colleges and universities may be able to help the country fight and conquer COVID-19.

We look forward to doing our part to help confront this national crisis and to being a part of the path back to a bright, healthy, and vibrant future.

Sincerely,



Ted Mitchell
President

cc:

Jeffrey Zients, Coordinator of the COVID-19 Response and Counselor to the President
Natalie Quillian, Deputy Coordinator of the COVID-19 Response
Ambassador Susan Rice, Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy
Dr. Marcella Nunez-Smith, Chair, COVID-19 Equity Task Force
Dr. David Kessler, Chief Science Officer, COVID-19 Response
Dr. Vivek Murthy, Surgeon General-designate
Eduardo Cisneros, Director, COVID-19 Intergovernmental Affairs

On behalf of:

ACPA-College Student Educators International
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
American Association of Community Colleges
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Association of University Professors
American College Health Association
American Council on Education
American Dental Education Association
American Indian Higher Education Consortium
Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors
Association of American Colleges and Universities
Association of American Universities

Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities
Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges
Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities
Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in Massachusetts
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Association of Research Libraries
Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities
College and University Professional Association for Human Resources
Common App
Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area
Council for Christian Colleges & Universities
Council for Higher Education Accreditation
Council of Graduate Schools
Council of Independent Colleges
EDUCAUSE
Higher Education Consultants Association
NASPA - Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education
National Association of College and University Business Officers
National Association of Colleges and Employers
National Association of College Stores
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
State Higher Education Executive Officers Association
UPCEA