



NEW ENGLAND BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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March 20, 2020

Members of the New England Congressional Delegation
United States Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Senators and Representatives:

We write with regard to the 260 public and independent postsecondary institutions in the six New England states. As you know, these institutions are critical engines of our educated workforce and talent pipelines, provide significant public service and generate world-leading research and innovation. They are home to over 1 million students—including nearly 100,000 international students from across the world.

The impact of COVID-19 is significant. Our institutions have mobilized with great speed to assist students, safeguard their health, ensure their continuity of learning and support public health measures. But additional resources and regulatory relief are urgently needed to address critical needs.

Similar to letters from the American Council on Education (ACE) and other higher education organizations, we urge Congress to enact emergency legislation and appropriations to provide:

- **Emergency Funds for Students:** Institutions require grant funds to directly address students' needs related to food, housing, relocation, transportation, lost employment, healthcare, childcare and other unanticipated expenses.
- **Further Regulatory Relief from Title IV and Other Requirements:** The U.S. Department of Education has provided some relief from regulatory requirements, but additional relief is needed.
- **Technology Transition Funds:** Institutions need financial assistance with unanticipated expenses related to rapidly transitioning to online and distance learning to serve all of their students. Students now face unexpected costs related to computers, internet access and other resources they otherwise accessed on campus.
- **Low- or Zero-Interest Loans to Institutions:** Institutions are experiencing both increased expenses and lost revenues. The loss of room and board and other auxiliary revenues from the current semester/term—and the prospect of reduced enrollments and tuition revenues in upcoming periods—will inflict notable financial harm.
- **Other Aid and Stabilization Funds:** As with the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, institutions need stabilization funds to expand financial aid resources, stabilize institutional finances, avoid staffing cuts and layoffs and speed sanitization and campus reopening.

To emphasize: It is critical to New England that legislation include appropriations to provide emergency support to both postsecondary students and institutions.

The impact of added expenses and lost revenues will negatively impact institutional financial stability, particularly for New England's colleges and universities. They are anchor institutions and primary employers in cities and towns throughout the region—and the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak threaten their stability and survival.

Thank you for your consideration. We stand ready to assist and provide any additional information that you require.

Respectfully,



Michael K. Thomas
President and CEO
New England Board of Higher Education

On behalf of:

Mark E. Ojakian
President
Connecticut State Colleges and Universities

Jennifer Widness
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