



August 2, 2021

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, and Minority Leader McCarthy:

As Congress considers potential recovery and infrastructure packages, we write on behalf of America's public colleges and universities to express our strong support for a new initiative to fund student success and completion in higher education. The American Association of Community Colleges (AACCC), American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), and Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) each have a variety of priorities before Congress, but the \$62 billion College Completion Fund included in the American Families Plan merits particular emphasis.

Our nation's colleges and universities have made tremendous strides to increase access to higher learning for historically underserved students, including first-generation students, students of color, and students from low-income households. Unfortunately for too many of these and other students, many other factors can interrupt the path to completion of a degree. Federal support can help address these hurdles, such as by providing access to physical and mental health services, emergency financial aid, academic transition and support services, and other key assistance.

The American Families Plan and Biden administration's Fiscal Year 2022 budget proposal calls for a \$62 billion investment over 10 years to establish a new College Completion Fund, designed to provide grants to States and Tribes to support success and completion activities at both public and private 2- and 4-year colleges and universities. This first-of-its-kind federal investment would complement existing federal investments in college access, directing critical new resources to ensuring students make it into college, through their degree program, and successfully transition into the workforce.

University leaders have spent years creating and testing solutions to help students succeed in college, complete their degrees, and be well-prepared for the workforce. These efforts have achieved significant success at individual institutions but have not yet been fully brought to scale across higher education. A large-scale federal investment designed to both expand the evidence base for student success and completion strategies and to scale best practices would make a significant difference for students who are currently less likely to complete their degree programs. The College Completion Fund would also maximize state and federal investments in college access.

For all these reasons, we urge you to include the College Completion Fund at the level proposed in the American Families Plan in any recovery and infrastructure measure advanced by Congress. Please let us know how we can further the enactment of this extremely important proposal.

Thank you,



Walter G. Bumphus, Ph.D.
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American Association of
Community Colleges



Mildred García, Ed.D.
President
American Association of State
Colleges and Universities



Peter McPherson
President
Association of Public and Land-
grant Universities

Cc:

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and
Pensions
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Burr
Ranking Member
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and
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The Honorable Bobby Scott
Chair
Committee on Education and Labor
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The Honorable Virginia Foxx
Ranking Member
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