



- Amherst College
- Anna Maria College
- Assumption University
- Babson College
- Bard College at Simon’s Rock
- Bay Path University
- Becker College
- Ben Franklin Institute of Technology
- Bentley University
- Berklee College of Music
- Boston Architectural College
- Boston Baptist College
- Boston College
- Boston Graduate School of  
Psychoanalysis
- Boston University
- Brandeis University
- Cambridge College
- Clark University
- College of the Holy Cross
- Curry College
- Dean College
- Eastern Nazarene College
- Elms College
- Emerson College
- Emmanuel College
- Endicott College
- Fisher College
- Gordon College
- Hampshire College
- Harvard University
- Labouré College
- Lasell University
- Lesley University
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- MCPHS University
- Merrimack College
- MGH Institute of Health Professions
- Montserrat College of Art
- Mount Holyoke College
- New England College of Optometry
- New England Conservatory of Music
- Nichols College
- Northeastern University
- Olin College
- Pine Manor College
- Regis College
- Simmons University
- Smith College
- Springfield College
- Stonehill College
- Suffolk University
- Thomas Aquinas College
- Tufts University
- Urban College of Boston
- Wellesley College
- Wentworth Institute of Technology
- Western New England University
- Wheaton College
- William James College
- Williams College
- Worcester Polytechnic Institute

December 4, 2020

The Honorable Charlie Baker  
Governor, Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
State House, Room 280  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Governor Baker,

In what has been an extraordinarily difficult year, thank you for your consistent leadership on behalf of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Your steady hand should serve as an example for the nation in developing a response to the global pandemic that relies on science and data to balance the health and safety of our communities while permitting key sectors of the economy to remain open with proper safeguards. The contributions of your administration to the development of the testing partnership between Massachusetts colleges and universities and the Broad Institute proved vital to those colleges and universities that were able to bring students back to campus to continue their educational goals.. On behalf of all the institutions in AICUM, I would like to say “thank you”.

**As you and your administration review the final FY21 budget, I would respectfully request that you make every possible effort to accept the appropriation level (\$120,000,000) and specific language for line-item 7070-0065, which funds the Massachusetts financial aid scholarship programs.**

Massachusetts students and their families continue to experience significant financial hardships due to the pandemic. Despite these hardships, and the inherent difficulties of continuing one’s education during these difficult times, hundreds of thousands of students embraced the chance to pursue their higher education this semester at Massachusetts’ public and private colleges and universities. Institutions of higher education created a variety of learning models (in-person, hybrid and remote) that allowed students to determine the best path for safely continuing their education. For those students who chose an in-person or hybrid learning experience, colleges and universities invested tens of millions of dollars in a robust COVID-19 surveillance testing program, while also safeguarding institutional financial aid for students. This thoughtful commitment to surveillance testing allowed our institutions to continue providing safe classroom learning experiences for students – a success that few states outside of New England were able to replicate on a large scale. What the colleges and universities did this fall to provide a valuable, high-quality, and safe learning experience for their students, faculty and staff should serve as a national model.

**Last year, our colleges and universities awarded over \$650 million to Massachusetts residents attending a four-year private institution in Massachusetts.** Despite the significant institutional investment in financial aid, coupled with support from the Massachusetts Office of Student Financial Assistance and the federal government, many families most impacted by the pandemic have expressed concerns about the spring semester. The FY21 budget appropriation level would directly address those concerns by providing an immediate additional \$14.4 million to help those families pay their spring tuition payments. In doing so, the Commonwealth would be ensuring that students are able to maintain progress on their educational path despite the difficult financial situation that many families find themselves in due to circumstances well beyond their control.

This type of commitment to education is a hallmark of Massachusetts and a key

reason that our Commonwealth is a national leader for student achievement and success. Given the continued uncertainty of federal assistance, this commitment is more important than ever to help our students and their families bridge financial gaps and continue their education.

Thank you for your continued efforts on behalf of higher education and the citizenry of Massachusetts. As always, I am happy to answer any questions or provide you and your staff with supporting materials as your administration endeavors to complete its work and sign the FY21 budget into law.

Sincerely,



Richard Doherty  
President

Cc: The Honorable Michael J. Heffernan  
Secretary, Executive Office for Administration and Finance

The Honorable James Peyser  
Secretary, Executive Office of Education

The Honorable Karen Spilka  
President, Massachusetts Senate

The Honorable Robert DeLeo  
Speaker, Massachusetts House of Representatives

The Honorable Michael Rodrigues  
Chair, Senate Committee on Ways and Means

The Honorable Aaron Michlewitz  
Vice Chair, House Committee on Ways and Means