

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

October 14, 2020

Massachusetts Senate Delegation
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Massachusetts House Delegation
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Members of the Massachusetts Congressional Delegation:

Thank you for your continued efforts on behalf of the colleges and universities in Massachusetts, the students they serve, the faculty and staff they employ, the critical research they undertake, and their host communities. Your commitment to pursuing federal assistance for Massachusetts during this unprecedented pandemic is yet another example of the collaboration and dedication that the entire delegation brings to Washington.

The CARES Act provided critical funding for institutions and students at a time of great need and immense uncertainty last spring. That funding helped to cover part of the enormous and unbudgeted expenses and revenue losses incurred by pivoting entirely to remote learning and taking all necessary steps to complete the spring semester and begin the difficult process of planning for a fall semester in the midst of a global pandemic.

Throughout the summer, Massachusetts college and universities – both public and private – worked collaboratively with the Baker administration to develop a comprehensive reopening plan for higher education and they have partnered with the Broad Institute to create a robust testing program for students, faculty and staff that has quickly become an example for the nation. Utilizing this crucial planning and testing guidance, each institution was able to make its own decision on a fall learning model that best fit the needs of their students and institutional resources, be it a remote, hybrid or in-person learning experience. These plans and testing procedures, which have enabled colleges and universities to carefully navigate the first six weeks of the fall semester, have also dramatically increased operational costs on campuses, and for some institutions, proved insurmountable to bringing students back to campus this fall.

As college and universities look towards a 2021 spring semester, likely without a widely available vaccine, it is more important than ever that federal funding is available to help offset the increased institutional costs and student financial needs. Despite your sincere efforts, another omnibus federal relief package has been elusive. It is imperative that you continue to fight for funding for Massachusetts colleges and universities and the students they serve. Federal aid is needed now more than ever!

Democrats and Republicans, members of the House and Senate, have all put forth stimulus plans that include critical funding for increased student financial needs and increased institutional costs. Higher education has emerged as an area of rare bipartisan agreement and a tailored relief package for higher education would have direct financial implications for college and universities – and their students – in Congressional districts around the country. While higher education – and the country at large – will not return to a new normal until we have more effective treatment and a vaccine for COVID-19, the successes of Massachusetts' colleges and universities in repopulating campuses with robust surveillance testing demonstrates a model for responsible reopening that can and should be replicated throughout the country.

However, this can only be achieved with the support and financial backing of the federal government.

Again, your unwavering support of Massachusetts higher education has been instrumental in helping colleges and universities respond to the disruptions caused by this pandemic. Federal funds from the CARES Act provided institutions – and their students – with critical funding during a time of dire need. However, those needs and challenges remain and I urge you to continue fighting for this industry that is so critical to the future success of Massachusetts and its citizenry.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Richard (Doherty". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "R" and a distinct flourish at the end.

Richard Doherty, President