



February 2, 2021

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives

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

On behalf of New York University (NYU), I am writing to urge Congress to include \$26 billion in supplemental funding for federal science agencies to provide critical support for the nation's scientists and engineers and the research operations that underpin the U.S. scientific enterprise. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused tremendous disruptions to university research operations just as this research is most critical to defeating the pandemic, supporting local communities, and revitalizing the economy.

As I know you are aware, the leading medical and research institutions in New York State have played a pivotal role throughout the last year in developing treatments for and advancing vaccines against COVID-19. The federal university partnership has conducted the core fundamental science that led to the development of today's mRNA vaccines for COVID-19. For example, researchers at the NYU Grossman School of Medicine and the Division of Infectious Diseases and Immunology and the Vaccine Center at NYU Langone Health have partnered with major pharmaceutical companies to launch two COVID-19-related clinical trials: one for the development of a vaccine and one to test an antibody therapy. In addition, a team of NYU scientists has developed a method using holographic imaging to detect both viruses and antibodies. The breakthrough has the potential to aid in medical diagnoses and, specifically, those related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are extremely thankful that Congress has provided emergency relief funding to college students and our universities through the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund and continued Congressional efforts to provide additional funds for them in the next COVID-19 bill. However, none of the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund dollars can be used to address the harmful impacts to federally supported researchers and research.

The pandemic has caused substantial disruptions to federally supported researchers and research funded by: the National Science Foundation (NSF); the Departments of Defense (DOD), Energy (DOE), and Agriculture (USDA); the National Institutes of Health (NIH); NASA; NOAA; NIST; EPA; and other federal research agencies. These disruptions are to the detriment of our nation's research enterprise, and they are taking an especially significant toll on early-career researchers and researchers raising children or with other caretaker responsibilities. While most federally supported research has resumed since the initial shutdowns, research output has significantly decreased due to: laboratory closures; new COVID-19 related health restrictions and laboratory protocols, and the continued inability to conduct some types of research.

At NYU, COVID-19 disruptions caused approximately 32% of our research projects to be either conducted at a reduced capacity or delayed beyond dates proposed in their original federal grants and contracts. In addition, a primary ongoing concern among our Principal Investigators (PI) is being able to fund and train talented post-doctoral research fellows and sustain key research support personnel. Without this support, we are in danger of having some of our most talented early career scientists leave science and engineering fields altogether. The bottom line is that without immediate relief to ameliorate the pandemic's harmful impacts, the contributions of research universities and hospitals to America's health, economy and national security will be impaired for years to come.

Specifically, we respectfully urge Congress to include \$26 billion for research relief in the next COVID-19 stimulus. This is consistent with the bipartisan, bicameral Research Investment to Spark the Economy (RISE) Act (H.R. 7308 and S. 4286) from the last Congress that was: cosponsored by over 150 Members of Congress; approved by the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee; and endorsed by our associations and over 320 universities, science, engineering, and business organizations.

Please feel free to reach out to me or anyone at NYU if you need to learn more about how the pandemic is having an impact on research operations. We sincerely appreciate the consideration of our views as Congress continues efforts to include students and research relief in a future federal stimulus package.

Sincerely,



Andrew Hamilton

President

New York University