Secretary Miguel Cardona

U.S. Department of Education

400 Maryland Ave SW

Washington D.C. 20202

Director Susan Rice

Domestic Policy Council

1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW

Washington D.C. 20500

Acting Director Shalanda Young

Office of Management and Budget

1650 Pennsylvania Ave NW

Washington D.C. 20503

Dear Secretary Cardona, Director Rice, and Acting Director Young:

We, the 45 undersigned individuals and organizations representing the interests of Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) students and Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPISI) write to sincerely thank you and the entire Biden-Harris Administration for your continued leadership in advancing the Build Back Better framework that is currently being negotiated on the Hill. We are also writing to ask that you ensure the Administration’s emphasis on educational equity continues to be reflected in your fiscal year 2023 (FY23) budget request.

We appreciate the focus on addressing educational equity issues during the reconciliation process and your efforts to ensure that AANHPI students and AANAPISIs share in that investment. The proposed budget reconciliation text released on October 28, 2021 would make a meaningful down payment on the investments needed by AANHPI students and the AANAPISIs that support them. Specifically, we applaud the $550 increase in the maximum Pell grant, the expansion of Pell eligibility for DACA/TPS students, and the $23.5 million in annual Title III, Higher Education Act spending that has been allocated to AANAPISIs. The increased Title III spending represents a more than four-fold increase over the current funding level, which will enable many more eligible institutions to better serve first-generation and low-income AANHPI students in higher education.

It is crucial that the Administration continues to build on the solid base of funding proposed in the budget reconciliation legislation and the substantial investments for AANAPISIs proposed in your FY22 budget request by continuing to address the traditional underfunding of institutions serving large numbers of AANHPI students. To that end, we urge you to include in your FY23 budget request an **increase in funding for AANAPISIs under the Higher Education Act Title III and Title V, Parts A and F, to $100 million dollars**. We are requesting this funding increase because AANAPISIs have been chronically underfunded since their establishment and remain the category of Minority Serving Institutions (MSI) with the lowest levels of Title III & V funding per capita. In FY 2021, AANAPISI appropriations received only 1% of all Title III & V funding for MSIs, totaling just $9.8 million. Disappointingly, while 166 institutions have been identified by the U.S. Dept. of Education as eligible AANAPISIs, only 20 of those institutions are receiving AANAPISI funding given the underfunding of this set of schools and students. For reference, the current average funding is $59,606 per AANAPISI compared to $589,167 per Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI).[[1]](#footnote-1) If the Administration were to request equitable funding of all 166 eligible AANAPISIs at the same level as HSIs, the AANAPISI program would require an annual funding amount of $100 million dollars. However, any increase in AANAPISI funding should not come at the expense of other MSIs.

The impact of AANAPISIs cannot be understated. AANAPISIs enroll 40% of all AANHPI undergraduates though AANAPISIs only make up only 5% of all colleges and universities in the United States. Three-quarters of low-income AANHPI students attend an AANAPISI, and AANAPISIs confer a large concentration of both associate's and bachelor's degrees to AANHPI students. AANAPISIs provide critical support for these students by cultivating environments that promote the success of underserved AANHPI students and attending to their distinct needs. As such, we ask that your FY23 budget request represent a continued commitment to providing the resources that AANHPI students need to recover and succeed by increasing AANAPISI funding to $100 million dollars.

Thank you again for your leadership on these critical issues of educational equity.

Sincerely,

APIA Scholars

Note: Institutional affiliations are for identification purposes only. The individuals listed on this letter are signing in their personal capacity rather than as official representatives of their affiliated organization.

**National**

Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (EPIC)

Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP)

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National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC)

OCA—Asian Pacific American Advocates

Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)

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\* Indicates AANAPISI-eligible institution

1. Nguyen, M.H., Espinoza, K.J., Gogue, D.T.L., Dinh, D.M. (2020). *Looking to the Next Decade: Strengthening Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions through Policy and Practice*. Washington, DC: National Council of Asian Pacific Americans.  [↑](#footnote-ref-1)