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CU's Federal Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic [1]

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In response to the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, CU's federal relations team worked with university leadership, institutions of higher education across the state, and the Colorado congressional delegation to ensure critical support for students, research and the State of Colorado.

CU Leadership Response

Over the past four months, CU leadership worked closely with Colorado's Congressional delegation to advocate for higher education and research within congressional relief packages. CU President Mark Kennedy spoke to each member of the Colorado congressional district personally in an effort to discuss university priorities for coronavirus relief legislation. On April 9, President Kennedy joined CU Boulder Chancellor Phil DiStefano on a call with Congressman Joe Neguse and other higher education leaders from Colorado's second congressional district. During the call, President Kennedy and Chancellor DiStefano provided key updates and highlighted the critical need for additional support for higher education and research priorities. On April 22, UCCS Chancellor Venkat Reddy joined more than a dozen leaders from across the Pikes Peak Region for a virtual town hall with Senator Michael Bennet to discuss the region's ongoing response to COVID-19. Chancellor Reddy provided key updates on campus' response efforts as well as advocated for additional financial relief for higher education and research within future congressional relief packages.

On May 7, Todd Saliman, CU's Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, presented an analysis on statewide impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Colorado higher education institutions to more than a dozen staff from Colorado's congressional offices. Saliman discussed estimated additional expenses and losses for the current academic year, as well as projected revenue declines based on enrollment changes and gaps in state funding anticipated next academic year and the critical need for Congress to provide additional relief for higher education in future aid packages.

In June, CU Anschutz Medical Campus Chancellor Don Elliman and CU School of Medicine Dean John Reilly discussed the campus response to the COVID-19 pandemic in meetings with Senator Michael Bennet and Senator Cory Gardner . Chancellor Elliman and the Dean Reilly highlighted many of the important roles played by CU Anschutz faculty, staff and students during the pandemic, including caring for a significant percentage of the state's COVID-19 patients, opening clinical trials to find new cures and treatments, ramping up testing capacity, and modeling the spread of the virus. The meeting included discussion of important issues for consideration in the next coronavirus relief package, such as preserving Medicaid financing, providing relief for researchers impacted by the closure of labs, further increasing the availability of personal protective equipment, and extending the CARES Act student loan payment holiday.

Higher Education Coalition and Research Funding

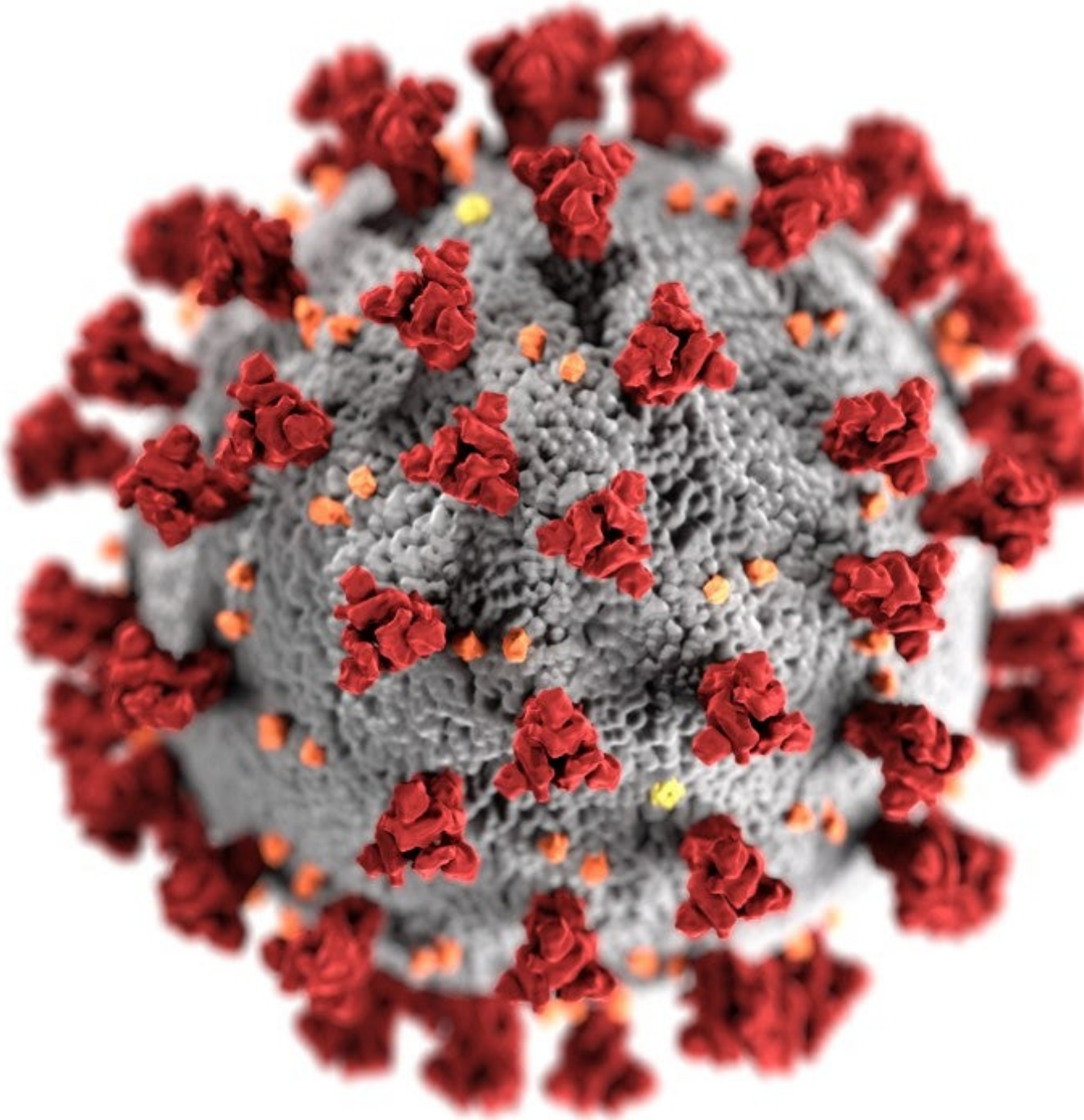
CU's federal team worked with President Kennedy to build a coalition with all the CEOs from 19 of Colorado's higher education institutions, both private and public, to outline the impact of COVID-19 on Colorado institutions as well as advocate for collective priorities within congressional relief packages. As a result, the group of university leadership sent three letters on March 20 [3], April 8 [4] and May 1 [5] to Colorado's congressional delegation highlighting those priorities. President Kennedy spoke with each member of the Colorado congressional delegation individually as well as joining the higher education CEOs' on calls with Senators Michael Bennet and Cory Gardner to discuss university priorities for future coronavirus relief legislation. CU leadership, including President Kennedy, Chancellor Elliman, Chancellor DiStefano, Chancellor Dorothy Horrell, and Chancellor Reddy all signed a joint letter [6] with Colorado State University and Colorado School of Mines leadership underscoring the critical role of research. The letter outlined the institutions' collective contributions to combat COVID-19 and discussed the unprecedented challenges and significant relief needed to sustain essential university research and our nation's science and technology workforce. The leaders also encouraged the lawmakers to sustain investment in multidisciplinary fundamental research, which has been instrumental to the COVID-19 response and will be essential to mitigating future public health crises.

The research letter coincided with efforts to support Colorado Congresswoman Diana DeGette, who led a letter to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy asking for $26 billion in relief funding for scientists supported by grants from federal agencies to cover costs associated with the impacts of the pandemic on their research. This bipartisan letter [7] was signed by 182 members of congress, including Congressmen Jason Crow, Joe Neguse, and Ed Perlmutter of Colorado. It was endorsed by a wide array of scientific societies, universities associations, patient groups and other national organizations. A similar letter [8] in the Senate followed, and was endorsed by 33 Senators, including Colorado Senator Michael Bennet. This effort led to Congresswoman DeGette, along with Congressman Fred Upton (R-MI), introducing the bipartisan Research Investment to Spark the Economy (RISE) Act (H.R. 7308 [9]), which would provide appropriators with a roadmap of how to allocate the $26 billion in relief for federal research agencies. In a press release [10] issued by Congresswoman DeGette, President Kennedy discussed CU's support for the legislation issued by Congresswoman DeGette, President Kennedy discussed CU's support for the legislation, which now boasts nearly 100 bipartisan co-sponsors, including Colorado Representatives Jason Crow, Joe Neguse, and Ed Perlmutter. The legislation has been endorsed [11] by more than 300 research organizations, scientific societies, businesses and universities, including CU.

On May 8, Congressman Neguse led a bipartisan and bicameral letter [12] to congressional leadership advocating for the inclusion of higher education priorities in upcoming relief packages. The letter was signed by six members of Colorado's congressional delegation and sent to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell.

In April, CU's federal team sent funding and policy recommendations to include in future coronavirus relief/stimulus packages to the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology. The request reflects feedback from CU's four campuses on ways to accelerate critical research on COVID-19, support the research workforce, and enhance the nation's research capabilities through capital construction and other research infrastructure. Among the priorities advanced by CU, as well as its national association partners at the Association of American Universities (AAU) and the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), is an effort to reconstitute the National Institute of Standard and Technology (NIST)'s Construction Grant Program, which would provide competitive funding for universities to construct new facilities to advance research in industries of the future such as quantum information science.

CU Federal Team continues to collaborate closely with the Colorado Congressional delegation and CU's leadership team to work towards securing meaningful relief for students, their families, the faculty, staff and our local communities during the pandemic.



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