**Small College Sample Op Ed**

This past year has challenged everyone in the (**name of institution**) community. Thepandemic challenged the usual benefits of a small college education, and our studentsfaced all different types of hardships. Small schools have been dealing with droppingenrollment and cutting various programs to make ends meet. The country, as a whole, has been forced to confront economic hardship brought upon by the COVID-19pandemic. These financial challenges that the country is facing have turned college into a commodity that many people will struggle to access.Now with the reopening of the country and rebuilding our economy, policymakers needto work together to create meaningful change that can build the economy back quicklyand allow students the opportunity to achieve an affordable educational experience.

To achieve sustained economic growth following the pandemic, lawmakers needto enact legislation that doubles the Pell Grant, whichawards federal financial aid to college students. Established in 1972, Congressshould double the Pell Grant by June of 2022, the 50th anniversary of theprogram. This much-needed legislation would aid many students at (**name of institution**), which includes **XX%** of students who are Pell recipients andhelp the country achieve effective and immediate economic recovery. The Pell Granthas enjoyed bipartisan support throughout its existence. By doubling themaximum grant from $6,495 to $13,000, Congress can make college possible for allstudents, no matter their financial background. Currently, there are more than 1.1 millionstudents at private, nonprofit colleges and universities who receive Pell Grants eachyear (38% of students at private, nonprofit colleges are Pell Grant recipients, similar tothe 40% at 4-year state institutions). This support provides nearly $5 billion to help themattend and complete college, including (**Find out how much Pell Grant funding comes into your congressional district and state using NAICU’s** [**Student Aid Data Sheets**](https://www.naicu.edu/policy-advocacy/federal-student-aid-data-sheets)**)**.

Pell Grants are the fairest and most efficient way to provide education funding tothose who need it most. Pell Grants help students in all states and territories, in all corners of the country, whether rural, urban or in between. Students of all backgrounds receive Pell Grants, with nearly 60% of Black students; half of American Indian or American Native Students; nearly half of Latino students; and 30% of White students using Pell Grants to help pay for college.

This would allow low-income students to have their entire college paid for and not have to work during school to make ends meet. Bydoubling the Pell Grant, more students can attend colleges and universities and graduate from theseinstitutions they might not otherwise be able to attend.

The Pell Grant is a proven government program that will open the doors ofcollege and opportunity to more young people and tackle the student debt crisis head-on. Without reinventing the wheel, this legislation can provide fair and efficient aid tostudents in need, and as a cost-efficient solution will pay for itself in the long run. Astudy found that an increase in grant aid correlated to an increase in a student’searnings post-graduation. This means that within a decade of doubling the program, thehigher wages earned by college graduates will bring in enough taxes to pay for thegrant increase (American Economic Journal: Applied Economics).

College and university leaders, along with students, from around the country are fightingfor legislation that will enable students to obtain the education theydeserve. Pell Grants have proven to be the most effective and equitable investment incollege affordability, which is why we must Double Pell now.

This vital legislation can keep students in (**name of institution**)’s community or whichever college or university best fits their needs and aspirations, whether large,small, state, or private, 2-year or 4-year. This program can provide students with the opportunity to learnand create a brighter future for themselves and our country.