**Sample Letter to Capitol Hill**

**Push for $500 Pell increase and increases to other federal student aid and institutional aid programs**

(The more original the letter, the more effective it will be)

Dear Representative/Senator:

I write on behalf of the [number of students] at [my institution] who would not be able to pursue their postsecondary education without the federal student aid programs.

It is essential that you finalize student aid funding for FY 2023 during the lame duck session so we can tell our low- and middle-income students how much support they can expect for the coming academic year. As you make these funding decisions, I encourage you to make increased funding for the student aid programs a top priority. In a time when bipartisan agreements often seem hard to reach, the federal student aid programs have traditionally garnered strong bipartisan support, resulting in significant funding increases that help low- and middle-income students.

Both the House and Senate education funding bills include a $500 increase to the Pell Grant maximum, and important increases for Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG), Federal Work-Study, TRIO, and GEAR UP. Funding these programs at the highest levels will go a long way toward ensuring low- and middle-income students to have access to the support they need to get into college and persist to degree completion.

At my institution, we serve [insert number or percentage] Pell Grant recipients, who would not be able to go to college without this assistance. [Tell your story about how federal student aid helps your students.]

Pell Grants are a proven bipartisan program and the fairest and most efficient way to help low-income and first-generation students access and complete college. Increasing Pell, especially at a moment when students and families are facing difficult economic times and inflationary pressures, will put more money in their hands first and allow them to use it at the college or training program that best fits their educational needs.

Funding for the institutional aid programs under the Higher Education Act is also critical for underrepresented institutions to survive and sustain their legacy and for students to succeed and complete their education. [If your institution is an HBCU, HSI or other MSI, or receives SIP funds, please talk about the importance of these programs.]

Without the strong partnership between the federal government, states, institutions, and families, millions of students would not be able to go to college. Enabling students to pursue postsecondary education has significant benefits for the local economy, the state economy, and our country as a whole. A better-educated workforce means a stronger economy with lower unemployment, greater earnings, and less need for social services.

Thank you for your consideration.