

Contact: Daniel Hurley
dhurley@masu.org / (517) 243-2520

Statement by Daniel Hurley, CEO of the Michigan Association of State Universities on today's Consensus Revenue Estimating Conference

Today's announcement that the state has a multibillion-dollar budget surplus for fiscal year 2022 presents an incredible opportunity to make a much-needed strategic investment in the future success of our residents and the Michigan economy by using a portion of this windfall to increase financial support for Michigan's 15 public universities and the 270,000 students they collectively serve.

Doing so will increase college affordability, help maintain and enhance high educational quality, and strengthen the state's capacity to create and sustain a talented workforce that is able to attract and retain leading edge employers. State hiring projections show that 38 of the top 50 in demand jobs and that pay high wages require a college degree.

The Governor and Senate have both endorsed a two percent one-time increase in state operating support for Michigan's public universities for FY 2022. At a minimum, that increase should be made into a permanent investment. Given that 2% increase was proposed prior to identifying several billion dollars in additional revenue, the state must take advantage of this opportunity to reset how it funds its primary engines of economic opportunity.

Michigan has fallen from 20th to 44th in the nation in per-capita support for higher education as a result of \$1 billion in state funding cuts and inflation over the past two decades. The impacts: an inflation-adjusted 40 percent decrease in state funding per-student in the last 20 years, higher tuition prices, and a painful shift in financial burden from the state to students and their families in paying for a Michigan public university education. The bottom line: Twenty years of bad higher education finance policies are leaving many middle-class high school graduates behind.

Let's use this opportunity to reestablish Michigan as a leading state for workforce growth and development that can compete with any state or country as a great place to work, raise a family, or start a business. Let's lighten the cost burden on students and families and drive social mobility. Let's reinvest in our public universities at long last.