Dear [Representative/Senator]:

As the [President/Chancellor/Student] of a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI), I understand that the sequestration approved by Congress would include cuts of 8.2 percent to all discretionary programs and 7.6 percent to mandatory programs. These cuts would have a direct and negative impact on Minority-Serving Institutions, including HSIs like mine. As you address the funding decisions imposed by the Budget Control Act of 2011, I urge you to prevent the sequestration and to maintain level-funding, based on FY 2012, for programs authorized under Title V of the Higher Education Act and other HSI programs.

Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) serve the nation's largest, youngest and fastest-growing ethnic population, enrolling 54 percent of Latino college students. HSIs continue to receive only 66 cents for every dollar of federal funding accorded to all institutions of higher education on a per student basis. Fueled by Hispanic population growth, the number of HSIs has more than doubled since 1990.

Federal HSI grant programs were established in recognition of the fact that institutions of higher education that serve disproportionate percentages of Hispanics are by-and-large historically under-resourced institutions that need federal resources reflective of the extra costs to prepare, inspire, and graduate traditionally under-served students, to build institutional capacity and to scale their successes. Thanks to these investments, HSIs are stronger and better equipped to offer high-quality, culturally relevant education opportunities to our students and the communities we serve. HSIs are also well-positioned to achieve the goals of the American Graduation Initiative by 2020. Many are graduating high percentages of traditionally underrepresented students in teaching, STEM fields, and other key growth and high need disciplines. College Board Trends data indicate that in many regards these institutions offer the nation one of the best returns on investment in higher education.

As you make the difficult funding decisions required under the Budget Control Act of 2011, I strongly urge you to agree to a compromise that will continue funding for the programs outlined herein at the FY 2012 level for the remainder of FY 2013, allowing our institution to continue to provide access to high quality postsecondary education to our students and the communities we serve.

Sincerely,