Dear [name of MS/AS]

I hope you and your family are safe and well.

I am writing to you as a constituent and member of university staff feeling extremely concerned about the future.

A robust higher education sector will be central to getting this country through the pandemic and to rebuilding the economy, so I am concerned that not enough has been done to protect universities through this difficult time. Will you call on the Welsh Government to support us through this crisis?

In many universities research is taking place on vaccines, antibody tests and tracking systems, while others are investigating its social and economic effects. We all need stability to continue this vital work, and that’s just the immediate crisis. The country will also rely on our sector to train the next generation of key workers to sustain and build our public services. Current and future students are the nurses, scientists and teachers of tomorrow, to name just a few.

Those students deserve the chance to access quality local higher education whatever their background, and I worry that without a financial package to protect universities now, some courses and institutions could be forced to close, cutting off opportunities for young people and those who need to retrain. My union UNISON’s position is that higher education should be free and fully funded at the point of access. I support this and I’m seriously concerned that not all institutions will come out of this crisis intact.

Welsh universities directly provide jobs for 21,000 people like me (and support almost 50,000 jobs in total), so our livelihoods have been plunged into uncertainty too. Universities are the single biggest employer in many towns and cities, generating a knock-on impact of over £5bn for the Welsh economy. In a sector already facing huge uncertainty, this crisis could tip all that over the edge.

I’m pleased the Welsh Government has endorsed the idea that all four UK governments should work collaboratively, but please use your role as my Member of the Senedd

to keep pushing it to do everything it can to protect the HE sector in Wales and ensure that Welsh institutions and staff are strongly represented in these working arrangements. Our voices must be heard and our jobs must be protected.

The package of measures announced by the UK government so far will simply not provide universities with the support they need. So the Welsh Government must do everything it can to prevent us from getting into financial difficulties as a result of this pandemic.

I’m urging you to protect me and my colleagues, protect the jobs we love, protect the students and communities we support, and protect the economy we’re helping to build.

Yours sincerely

Name