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To Whom it May Concern:

We are writing from the Western District Conference (WDC) of Mennonite Church USA, to express our support for Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, KS, and to protest the firings of faculty and staff on February 14 by the federal government.

Many congregations of our conference are located within areas of Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas from which students have attended or currently attend Haskell Indian Nations University. From Koinonia Indian Mennonite Church in Clinton, OK, we received the testimony of Quinton Roman Nose “Man on the Cloud,” enrolled member of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes, Executive Director of the Tribal Education Departments National Assembly (TEDNA), and member of the American Baptist Church in Watonga, OK. As the great-grandson of a Cheyenne leader who interacted with Mennonites over a century ago, he writes, *“I am the great-grandson of Cheyenne Chief Henry Roman Nose (1856-1917). My great-grandfather, along with others during forced assimilation policies that sought to break our families, advocated for a peaceful balance of retaining our culture, our faith and our identity as a people with education. Chief Roman Nose knew that formal education would help our people to survive for those generations to come. Presently, I have four grandchildren who are attending Haskell Indian Nations University (HINU). When I learned what happened to HINU - that silent precision cut of people with a stroke of a pen - I was met with devastating quietness, much like my great-grandfather’s people who were left on the battlefields grounds of long ago wars. Today, I and our peoples stand with the communities of academics, communities of peoples and all our communities of faith. While we are many denominations - we are all with one God.”*

In this same spirit of unity and of lament for the tragic injustice of the past, today we as Mennonite leaders seek to follow Jesus’ way of peace and justice by standing in solidarity with Tribal communities. We call on the United States government to strengthen support for Haskell Indian Nations University, so that it might continue to provide vital educational programs for Indigenous people from across the country, and to grow in its positive impact as a vibrant cultural center locally, regionally and nationally.

We have also sent this letter to President Donald Trump; Secretary of the Interior Doug Burgum; Bureau of Indian Education Director Tony Dearman, and U.S. Senator Jerry Moran, U.S Senator Roger Marshall and U.S. Representative Tracey Mann from Kansas.

Sincerely,

Executive Committee of Western District Conference: Eric Buller, Moderator;
Katherine Goerzen, Moderator-Elect; Wendy Schrag, Secretary
Heidi Regier Kreider, Conference Minister,
Kathy Neufeld Dunn, Associate Conference Minister (Kansas-based)
Sandra Montes-Martinez, Associate Conference Minister (Texas-based)