



May 24, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Skinner
Chair, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee
California State Capitol, Room 5094
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senator Skinner:

On behalf of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU), I am writing to share our appreciation for the Legislature's previous support of higher education, and we look forward to seeing strategic, major investments in higher education as the state sees a significant budget surplus. HACU would like to share the following recommendations to ensure access and success in higher education for California's Latino/a students:

Regional K-16 Collaborations

- 1) HACU supports the Governor's proposal to include \$250 million for regional K-16 collaboratives, modeled after the Fresno Demonstration Project.
- 2) HACU recommends that priority be given to regions with highest proportions of underserved communities, and where the proposals have a commitment to equitable outcomes for students, regardless of their background.
- 3) HACU recommends that in addition to fulfilling the needs of employers, the projects should also aim to diversify the most well-paid sectors, including the STEM fields and the healthcare professions, where students of color are woefully under-represented.
- 4) HACU recommends including California's private, nonprofit colleges and universities as part of the regional collaborative, given that one-fourth of the state's Hispanic-Serving Institutions are private, nonprofit institutions and to ensure that all students and institutions can achieve equitable educational outcomes.

California Student Aid Commission, (CCC, 6980)

- 1) This year's budget reflects cost savings from fewer students accessing the entitlement awards, we want to ensure that students in at least the last two classes have more time to use their entitlement award before being tossed into the competitive pool. This is an equity issue for the most underserved communities who were most negatively impacted by the pandemic.
- 2) HACU supports additional funding for financial aid that would cover tuition and fee costs at the California Community Colleges, California State University, University of California, and support the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities' request for students in their sector.
- 3) HACU supports an increased access award for California's lowest income students, regardless of their sector.
- 4) HACU supports removing unnecessary barriers to the Cal Grant entitlement, such as time out of high school, as well as the age cap.
- 5) HACU supports the increased number of competitive Cal Grant awards, as well as summer Cal Grants to allow all students to graduate in a timely manner.

California Community Colleges (CCC, 6110)

- 1) The CCC are home to 109 federally designated Hispanic-Serving Institutions, they serve the largest percentage of Latino/a students in the state. HACU endorses providing additional support for categorical programs that serve the needs of our students, who are largely first-generation, and low-income.
- 2) HACU supports providing the California Community Colleges with the same cost of living adjustment that was provided to the K-12 system.
- 3) HACU recommends the removal of the performance-based component of the Student-Centered Funding Formula. Research on performance-based funding shows it consistently negatively impacts campuses with the hardest to serve students. This is not a reflection on the campus's desire to serve these students, rather the lack of appropriate funding levels for the needs of these historically underserved student populations.

California State University (CSU 6610)

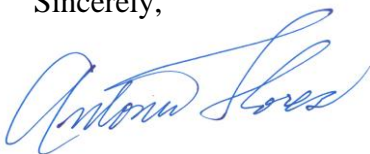
- 1) The CSU, with 21 of the 23 CSU campuses being federally designated Hispanic-Serving Institutions, educates a diverse student body, and provides the largest number of bachelor's degrees to Latinos in the state.
- 2) HACU supports the funding to convert Humboldt State University (an HSI) into California's third polytechnic higher education institution. We hope that the state will also continue to invest long-term in diversifying the student body in STEM fields.
- 3) HACU supports the \$25 million one-time increase for a national Hispanic-Serving Institution "Equity Innovation Hub" at CSU Northridge to also help prepare underrepresented students for careers in the STEM field.

University of California (UC, 6440)

- 1) HACU respectfully requests additional funding be provided to the UC to address the continued opportunity and achievement gaps for historically underserved student groups. Of UC's nine undergraduate schools, five are federally designated Hispanic-Serving Institutions, while the remaining four are emerging HSIs (at least 15% Latino/a enrollment). While the UC boasts the highest graduation rates of the public universities, those rates are not equal among all ethnic groups, and with a historic surplus, we should provide funds to address those gaps. We support the UC's request for an additional \$23 million for the Student Academic Preparation and Educational Partnerships, as well as \$20 million more to specifically support undocumented students, foster youth, and students impacted by incarceration.

HACU recognizes the continued work ahead for the Governor and Legislature and are thankful for your commitment to higher education. We urge the Legislature and Administration to champion access and success to the higher education systems for all college students, regardless of education sector, and including our undocumented student populations. If you have any questions, please contact Erica Romero, Assistant Vice President for State Advocacy, at 916-248-9534 or erica.romero@hacu.net.

Sincerely,



Antonio R. Flores
President and CEO

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May 24, 2021

Page 3

cc: Senator Jim Nielsen, Vice Chair, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee
Senator John Laird, Chair, Subcommittee 1 on Education
Senator Dave Min, Member, Subcommittee 1 on Education
Senator Rosilicie Ochoa Bogh, Member, Subcommittee 1 on Education
The Honorable Toni Atkins, President pro Tempore, California State Senate
The Honorable Scott Wilk, Senate Republican Leader
Lande Ajose, Ph.D., Senior Policy Advisor for Higher Education, Office of Governor Newsom
Christopher Ferguson, Program Budget Manager – Education Systems
Erica Romero, Assistant Vice President for State Advocacy, HACU