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**Budget cuts to severely impact higher education in California and student success
for Latino students**

SACRAMENTO, CA – While aware of the difficult financial situation facing California today, the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) expressed disappointment at the Governor’s proposed cuts to the higher education budget. Of particular concern to HACU are massive cuts to the higher education segments and the reduction and/or elimination of various Cal Grant Programs for financially needy students. Furthermore, if the ballot propositions fail to pass on May 19, the cuts to higher education become even more severe.

The Governor’s proposed reductions include significant cuts to the California Community Colleges, the California State University System and the University of California. The Governor proposes cutting an additional \$510 million each from UC and CSU (together they have already lost \$742 million). The Governor expects federal funds to be able to off-set these cuts, but the federal funds were not meant to supplant current education spending. The Governor also proposes additional cuts of \$242 million to the California Community Colleges. These cuts come just as demand surges for degree programs as unemployed workers seek additional skills that will put them back to work. Given the need for educated workers, cuts are counter-productive to the economic recovery of the state.

In addition, the Governor has proposed eliminating all new competitive Cal Grants during 2009-10, reducing Cal Grant awards for students at private institutions, and decoupling award levels from UC and CSU fee increases. Just as UC and CSU are forced to raise fees to cover reductions in state funding, the Governor’s proposal would eliminate a vital source of financial aid for California’s neediest students. Each year 22,500 students are awarded competitive Cal Grants; the loss of this source of funding would condemn many to defer or forgo college.

If the ballot propositions fail on May 19, the Governor proposes elimination of all UC and CSU outreach, vital to access for many low-income and first-generation college students; additional reductions of \$100 million for CSU and \$50 million for UC; and additional cuts of \$118.1 million for the Community Colleges in categorical programs and enrollment growth. These cuts pose barriers to access and success for Latino students who may lose a spot in courses needed for graduation (since course sections will be cut), or who may lose a spot to enter or transfer to a 4-year institution, or who may lose other services critical to their academic success.

“The best way to recover from a difficult financial year is to ensure that California has a well-educated, tax-paying workforce,” said Antonio Flores, President and CEO of HACU. “Forcing California’s two- and four-year institutions to make draconian financial cuts would reduce access to these institutions, and eliminating vital financial aid and outreach programs would further hurt working families. California should remain committed to ensuring that all students have access to a quality and affordable education. We look forward to working with the Legislature and the Governor towards achieving that goal,” added Flores.

HACU was established in 1986 with a founding membership of 18 institutions. Today, HACU represents approximately 400 colleges and universities committed to Hispanic higher education success in the U.S., Puerto Rico, Latin America, Portugal and Spain. Currently, HACU has 109 members in the state of California. HACU’s regional office in Sacramento represents its membership in the western region of the U.S. HACU is the only national educational association that represents Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs).

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