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Western Regional Office
915 L Street, Suite 1425
Sacramento, CA 95814
916-442-0392 (voice) 916-446-4028 (fax)
Web site: www.hacu.net

Contact: Erica Romero
Executive Director,
Western Regional Office
eromero@hacu.net
(916) 442-0392



HACU Supports Increased Higher Education Spending in Proposed California Budget; Notes concerns about two proposed policy changes

SACRAMENTO, CA – The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) thanks Governor Brown for increasing funding to the California Community Colleges, California State University system, and the University of California, as well as funding for the California Dream Act and the Cal Grant program.

“After many years of cuts to higher education, increased funding for higher education is a welcome change,” said Antonio R. Flores, president and CEO of HACU. “We are heartened that additional resources are being provided for higher education to mitigate the massive cuts sustained over the last few years.”

The Governor’s January Budget includes an additional \$125 million in funding for the University of California and the California State University system, and additional funding for the California Community Colleges. The budget also provides added funding for the Cal Grant program, as well as funds for the first year implementation of the California Dream Act. Cuts to Cal Grants for students attending the not-for-profit institutions that were implemented last year remain in this year’s budget.

“HACU is concerned about two policy changes proposed under the Governor’s January Budget,” Flores said. “First, the Governor proposes to require all students who seek a Board of Governor’s waiver at the community colleges to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Latino students will benefit from additional aid that can be secured through the FAFSA, but we also know there are barriers for many low-income students to filling out the forms. Moreover, in California Dream Act students are allowed access to financial aid, but are legally prohibited from filing out the FAFSA. We hope that, if this measure is adopted, Dream Act students will be allowed to fill out only the forms they are legally entitled to fill out and will be exempted from the FAFSA requirement. Second, the Governor proposes to change the census-based appropriations system to fund the community colleges at completion of a course. Similar proposals in other states have harmed Hispanic-Serving Institutions and other colleges that enroll underserved communities. HACU will be monitoring implementation language, and disproportionate impact, as this policy proposal moves through the Legislature.”

Flores added: “We look forward to working with the Administration and the Legislature to address any policy concerns about the budget’s impact on Latino students. We are confident that there are solutions that will work for everyone involved and move California’s higher education system forward.”

HACU staff will continue to review the detailed California proposed budget, participate in higher education budget hearings, and provide information on how the budget impacts Latino students in California.

HACU was established in 1986 with a founding membership of 18 institutions. Today, HACU represents more than 400 colleges and universities committed to Hispanic higher education success in the U.S., Puerto Rico, Latin America, and Spain. 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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