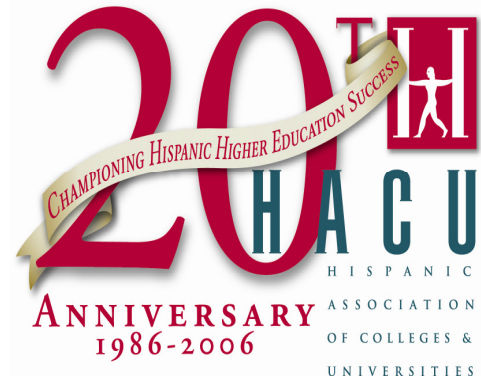


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June 2, 2006

The Honorable Wes Chesbro
Chair, Budget Conference Committee
California State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senator Chesbro:

On behalf of the 99 colleges and universities that the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) represents in the State of California, I am writing to share our appreciation for the Legislature's support in providing increased funding for higher education. Through your dedication and leadership, colleges and universities throughout the State of California will be able to better serve disadvantaged students for years to come. We look forward to working with you to resolve outstanding budget items that impact the ability of Latino students to obtain a quality, affordable education:

- 1) **Cal Grants (CSAC, p 229, issue 005)--Support a Budget Compromise.** HACU is supportive of adopting the Assembly's proposal to augment CSAC's budget by \$1.6 million to increase the age cap for the Cal Grant Transfer Entitlement Program from 24 to 27. This age cap increase would help many Latino students, who tend to be older re-entry students, in obtaining their dream of a college education. It is our hope that your committee will also appropriate an additional \$18.4 million in the California Student Aid Commission's budget to begin a phase-in allowing Cal Grant B recipients, who tend to be poorer, to have their Cal Grant B award cover their tuition and fees during their first year. Originally, it was assumed that Cal Grant B recipients would all begin their careers at 2-year colleges; however, many of these students would like to go directly to a four-year institution but cannot, since their awards do not cover fees and tuition.
- 2) **Community College Equalization Funding (CCC, 6870, p. 218, issue 854)--Support Senate Proposal.** HACU strongly supports the adoption of the Senate's proposal to fund equalization at \$159,438,000, or at the very least to adopt the Governor's proposal which funds equalization at \$130 million. Many Latino students attend community college districts that would greatly benefit from equalization funding. These funds will allow community colleges to provide additional resources to our neediest students.

- 3) **Community College Career Technical Education Funding (CCC, 6870, p. 219, issue 861)--Support Senate Proposal.** HACU strongly supports the adoption of the Governor and Senate's proposal to fund Career Technical Education at \$50 million. For students for whom a four-year degree is not a desired end goal, the state should provide high quality career technical education so that our students can complete degrees that prepare them for rewarding and needed careers. The funding of these programs is essential to the economic success of students who enter these programs.
- 4) **CSU and UC Marginal Enrollment.** Both education subcommittees removed \$10.3 million from the UC and \$13.5 million from the CSU when calculating the marginal cost of educating a student. These reductions would impact the segments' abilities to accommodate students, offer courses, and maintain quality, and/or could impact how much financial aid the institutions can provide. We respectfully request you reconsider this item.
- 5) **CSU and UC Base Budget.** We are supportive of the Assembly's increase of \$8.5 million to the UC for its base budget (**6440, p. 210, issue 009**) and the Assembly's increase of \$75.7 million for CSU's base budget (**6610, p. 214, issue 008**). Both the CSU and UC suffered dramatic cuts during difficult financial circumstances. We respectfully request that during these good financial years, you begin to restore some of the funding that will allow our schools to better serve our students.
- 6) **UC Transfer Initiative (UC, 6440, p. 209, issue 003)--Support a Budget Compromise.** The Assembly has provided \$5 million for a new UC-CCC transfer initiative. The overwhelming majority of Latino students start their careers at a community college, and so transfer initiatives are critical to their obtaining a four year degree. HACU is supportive of such a joint initiative which would increase the number of under-represented students at the University of California and hopes that the committee would expand the program, and funding level, so that all segments can work on transfers to four year colleges and universities.

We thank you and your committee for your consideration of these issues and your dedication to the education of California's students. Should you have any questions, please contact Erica Romero, our Executive Director of Western States Legislative Affairs, at eromero@hacu.net or by calling 916-442-0392.

Sincerely,



Antonio Flores
President and CEO

cc: Members, Budget Conference Committee
The Honorable Don Perata
The Honorable Fabian Núñez
The Honorable Richard Ackerman
The Honorable George Plescia
Secretary of Education Alan Bersin
Director of Finance Mike Genest
Deputy Legislative Secretary Paul Navarro
Chancellor Mark Drummond
Chancellor Charles B Reed
President Robert Dynes
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