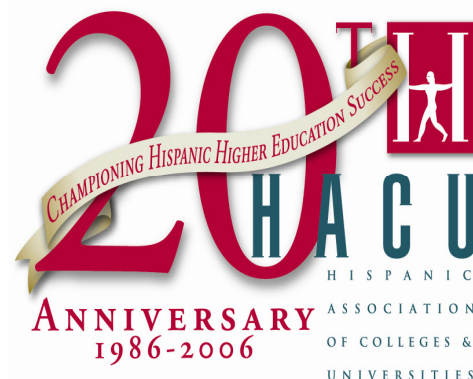


National Headquarters
8415 Datapoint Drive, Ste. 400
San Antonio, TX 78229
210-692-3805 (voice)
210-692-0823 (fax)
Website: www.hacu.net

March 19, 2007

RE: Academic Preparation Funding

The Honorable John Laird
California State Assembly
Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
Sacramento, CA 95814



Dear Assembly Member Laird:

On behalf of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU), I am writing to request your support in restoring the state general funding for academic preparation programs in the 2007-08 Budget.

Student academic preparation programs were designed for educationally and economically disadvantaged students enrolled in K-12 schools that have low college enrollment rates. The vital purpose of these programs is to close California's opportunity gap in college access. Programs like Puente and MESA have been evaluated, and students who participate in these programs graduate with a 4-year college degree in higher numbers than similar students who do not participate in academic preparation programs. As we know, students with a 4-year degree earn, on average, \$1 million more over their lifetime. These graduates pay more in taxes and are less likely to use social services over their lifetime. The investment in these programs is a wise one that creates economic contributors to our great state.

The 2007-08 Budget proposal includes no new state funds and eliminates the current state funding for these programs (\$7 million from the California State University System and \$12.3 from the University of California System). Since the 2000-01 fiscal year, the programs' funding has declined 63%. Such decline has and will continue to have a negative impact on its beneficiaries which are over 800,000 primarily low-income and minority students.

The state's future success rests on today's generation and their ability to prepare and succeed in achieving a higher education. It is our duty to make certain that students are educationally prepared to lead our state and nation.

Should you require any additional information Erica Romero, our Executive Director of Western States Legislative Affairs, will be glad to provide your office this information. Erica may be reached at eromero@hacu.net or 916-442-0392.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Antonio Flores'.

Antonio Flores
President and CEO

cc: Members, Assembly Budget Committee
Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
HACU Governing Board
HACU California Membership
Erica Romero, Executive Director of Western States Legislative Affairs