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Governor’s Proposed Budget Cuts to Higher Education Limit Access and Success for Latino Students

SACRAMENTO, CA – The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities decries Governor Brown’s proposed cuts to higher education institutions, but lauds increases in Cal Grants to preserve access for low-income students.

“Although we trust California’s higher education institutions will do their best to protect direct services to students, as well as access to higher education, a 20 percent budget cut to the segments of higher education will lead to students being denied their dream of a higher education,” said Antonio R. Flores, President and CEO of HACU. “We understand that these are exceptionally difficult financial times across our nation, but reducing access to higher education will only exacerbate the shortage of well-educated workers the Golden State needs to regain its competitive advantage.”

The Governor’s January Budget included cuts of \$500 million each to the University of California and the California State University, as well as a \$400 million cut to the California Community Colleges. The \$500 million reduction to UC and CSU represents just under 20 percent of last year’s General Fund expenditures. Cuts of that magnitude will lead to a reduction in the number of seats at the public institutions, as well as reductions in programs that ensure that low-income and first-generation college-going students successfully graduate from college. The cuts to the UC and CSU will also create additional pressures on community colleges as students are turned away from 4-year institutions.

“The budget achieves the \$400 million in cuts at the community colleges by changing the census date at those colleges,” said Flores. “Unfortunately, this move will likely have a stronger negative impact on higher education institutions that serve our neediest students. Many of California’s low-income students face life challenges that make staying in school very difficult. By changing the census date, we handicap those institutions that serve the neediest students by reducing funds available to provide them additional support services.”

According to Flores, HACU does wish to express its gratitude to Governor Brown for increasing the availability of Cal Grants “so that as students face increased fees at California institutions, we are able to preserve access for the neediest of students.”

“We acknowledge the magnitude of California’s budget and structural deficits,” Flores added. “However, the magnitude of California’s cuts to higher education risks damage to the dreams of Latino students for generations to come. We hope the Governor and Legislature can find ways to mitigate these cuts, particularly their impact on low-income and first-generation students.”

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. 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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