



THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA



THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY



CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

August 27, 2021

CALIFORNIA CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION

Dear Members of Congress:

On behalf of the University of California (UC), the California State University (CSU) and the California Community Colleges (CCC), and the nearly 2.9 million students our institutions serve, we ask you to ensure that doubling the maximum Pell Grant award is included in any budget reconciliation package that is moved through the legislative process. This will ensure that low- and moderate-income Californians continue to have access to the socioeconomic engine that is California public higher education and can continue to pursue the certificate or degree that is a ticket to a brighter future.

Thank you for the emergency funding provided to our students and institutions throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The investments made to help stabilize the economy and address the immediate needs of our students, institutions and the communities we thrive in were essential to navigating the early stages of the public health emergency successfully. As we continue to respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, robust and ongoing federal investment in public higher education and the students it serves is more important than ever.

Pell Grants are the cornerstone of the federal government's efforts to help low-income students afford college. Across California's public higher education institutions, more than 750,000 students receive Pell Grants. These grants are a foundational component of the financial aid that California students receive, including the CalGrant and institutional support, and are critical to ensuring that higher education in California remains within reach.

As public institutions, we serve many vulnerable student populations—including students who are low-income, homeless and formerly foster youth—for whom the pandemic has exacerbated existing basic needs insecurities. The lowest-income students at our institutions do not pay any tuition or fees because robust financial aid packages—including the California College

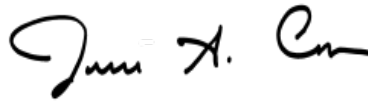
Promise Grant, Pell Grant, Cal Grant and institutional aid—are able to cover these expenses. These students, however, are more likely to take on student debt to pay for living expenses, allowing them to cover the entire cost of attendance. Many students are wary of taking on significant student loan debt, and consequently face food and housing insecurity. Doubling the Pell Grant would ensure that the lowest-income students at our institutions are not forced into deep debt or asked to make difficult decisions about which meals to skip or where they should sleep and study.

We thank you for considering our request. If you have any questions about this letter or our request, please contact our federal governmental relations staff. At UC, contact Chris Harrington (Chris.Harrington@ucdc.edu, 202-997-3150); at CSU, contact George Conant (GConant@calstate.edu, 202-365-5669); and at CCC, contact David O'Brien (DOBrien@cccco.edu, 650-704-9477).

Sincerely,



Michael V. Drake, M.D.
President
University of California



Joseph I. Castro, Ph.D., M.P.
Chancellor
California State University



Daisy Gonzales, Ph.D.
Acting Chancellor
California Community Colleges

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