AICCU Statement on Bill to Double Pell Grant

June 24, 2024

AICCU applauds Senators Mazie Hirono, Patty Murray, Jack Reed, and Sheldon Whitehouse and Representatives Mark Pocan and Bobby Scott for leading the Pell Grant Preservation and Expansion Act of 2024. This legislation would make higher education more affordable and accessible for millions of students and strengthen the structure of the Pell Grant program for future generations.

AICCU member institutions enroll nearly 184,000 students, including over 46,300 Pell Grant recipients who reflect the diversity of California. The grant has been critical to providing equitable access to higher education opportunities, college affordability, and helping all students—no matter their economic background—achieve their academic goals.

The Pell Grant was established over 50 years ago. At its peak, the maximum award amount covered three-quarters of the costs to attend a public, four-year institution. However, the award has not kept up with inflation and the rising cost of tuition. As a result, it covers less than one-third of the costs today. While AICCU institutions have kept tuition increases modest, the increasing cost of providing a quality education has made it more challenging to continue meeting the full extent of a student's needs.

This legislation would double the Pell Grant in five years, strengthen the funding structure so the program can endure into future years, and extend the grant to Dreamers. AICCU fully supports this landmark bill. We thank Senators Alex Padilla and Laphonza Butler and California Representatives Mark DeSaulnier, John Garamendi, Barbara Lee, Doris Matsui, Brad Sherman, and Juan Vargas for co-sponsoring the bill.

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About AICCU

The Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities (AICCU) is comprised of 89 independent, nonprofit colleges and universities, which make up the Independent California Colleges and Universities (ICCU) sector. The ICCU sector plays a pivotal role in the development of the state's model higher education offerings and in making California a symbol of innovation across the globe. Within California, ICCU institutions award nearly 20% of all undergraduate degrees and over 50% of graduate degrees, making them the largest preparers of California's advanced workforce.

Media Contact: Sharlene Phou | (916) 767-1112 | sharlene.phou@aiccu.edu