Statement by AICCU President Kristen F. Soares regarding the U.S. Supreme Court Ruling on Ending Affirmative Action in College Admissions

June 29, 2023

On behalf of the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities (AICCU), I want to convey our institutions' disappointment over the U.S. Supreme Court's decision the on S*tudents for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. Harvard College* and *Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. University of North Carolina* cases. The decision upends decades of precedence and threatens the progress made toward equity, equality, and access in higher education.

Our member colleges and universities across California are deeply concerned that the decision will have a chilling effect on applications and enrollment among historically underserved community groups—Black, Latino, and Native American students, low-income and first-generation students. This will have a negative impact on students, their families, the workforce, and society at large.

I want to assure those prospective college and university students that there will be a home for them at California's independent higher education institutions. Diversity and inclusion are core values of the independent higher education sector. These principles are integral to the learning experience and to the personal growth students go through in college, no matter their background. We are more committed than ever to the work of community engagement, face-to-face meetings, and recruitment from our underserved communities. We will find new and innovative ways to connect with high school students from all backgrounds to tell them: "You have a campus community where you can learn and thrive."

Today, 78% of AICCU member institutions are Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) or emerging HSI. Ten institutions are Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions. We count the only Historically Black Graduate Institution west of Texas and an aspiring Tribal College or University as members. Many more institutions are reaching for the goal to become a minority-serving institution. Sixty-five percent of undergraduate students enrolled at AICCU campuses are from non-white backgrounds and 50% of these institutions' Cal Grant recipients are Latino. AICCU is proud that our students reflect the rich diversity of California, and our member institutions are committed to maintaining and increasing outreach and support.

Higher education institutions have a responsibility to create an educational environment that is open to new ideas and perspectives, and to prepare students for a diverse, global society. AICCU will work with our public higher education institutions in California and our partners on the national and state levels to develop best practices for engagement, service, and outreach within this new legal framework. We will not be deterred from our work to educate, uplift, and inspire all students.

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About AICCU

The Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities (AICCU) is comprised of 80+ 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 percent of all undergraduate degrees and over 50 percent of graduate degrees, making them the largest preparers of California's advanced workforce.

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