AICCU Higher Education Affordability Factsheet

AICCU institutions provide affordable regional access to higher education for students across all income levels.

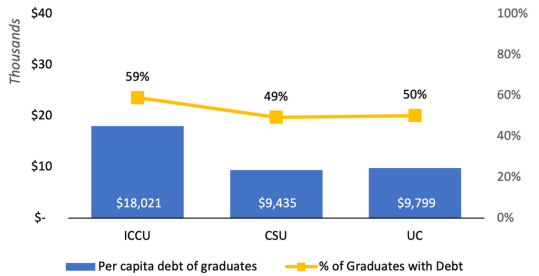


The 80+ nonprofit, independent CA colleges and universities (ICCUs) collectively educate nearly 200,000 undergraduates, including over 28,000 Cal Grant recipients and nearly 50,000 Pell Grant students. Given our large statewide presence – from the Bay Area to San Diego – ICCUs represent the majority of four-year higher education institutions, making the independent sector a critical partner in providing regional access and preparing the state's skilled workforce.

Institutional financial aid officers work to make these institutions truly accessible to students of all backgrounds and means. For example, an ICCU Cal Grant recipient will, on average, receive $23,275 in institutional grant aid per year. Combined with state and federal grant aid, these institutional resources help minimize, and sometimes eliminate, the need for students to take on loans.

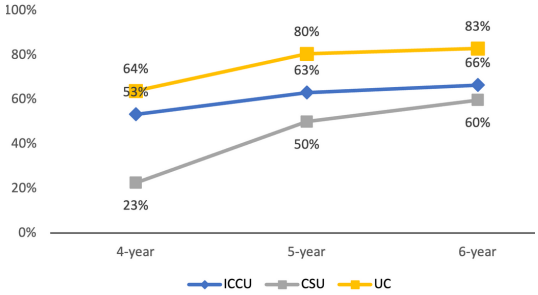
These resources are all critical in supporting student persistence and success, and ultimately in supporting their path to meaningful employment without the burden of significant debts.

Student Debt in 2019 by Sector



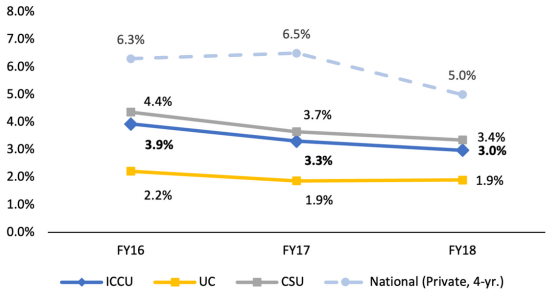
High Aid Model Creates Affordability & Minimizes Debt: Approximately 2 out of every 5 students who attend an ICCU do so without taking on any (federal and private) loans to finance their education. Overall, the average undergraduate student graduates with less than $20,000 in debt.

Graduation Rates by Sector



High Graduation Rates: In addition to robust financial aid packages, timely degree completion is critical to promoting affordability. ICCUs offer personalized attention through small class sizes, high quality academics and direct access to faculty, which creates a strong learning environment that allows students to persist and graduate in a timely manner. For example, 53% of ICCU students successfully graduate in four years, as well as 65% of Cal Grant students. This is a great return on the state's investment for the maximum Cal Grant award amount of $9,220/student/year.

Cohort Default Rates, FY2016-2018



Success After Graduation: AICCU graduates enjoy high placement rates into career and graduate school. They continue to do well because their education has provided the liberal arts skills that employers cite as keys to success – critical thinking, problem solving, communication, teamwork, creativity, and the capacity for life-long learning. As seen here, despite the slightly higher proportion of students borrowing and the amount borrowed, the default rates of students with debt are comparable or lower than those graduating from a UC or CSU, and lower than the national average for private, 4-year colleges and universities.

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Sources: 2019 IPEDS, Federal Student Aid, California Student Aid Commission, The Institute for College Access & Success, College Insight

AICCU Policy Priorities & Recommendations:

AICCU continues its advocacy work through collaboration with state and federal governmental partners as well as other advocacy groups to ensure that student aid programs provide equitable support for all students with access to the higher education institution of their choice.

To further promote affordability for students, policymakers can advocate for:

1. Equitable access to financial aid programs for students in the ICCU.

For example, any targeted support for special populations should also include said groups within the independent nonprofit higher education institutions, such as the $6,000 supplemental Cal Grant awards for student parents & foster youth, both of which are only awarded to students at public institutions. These California students also attend ICCUs and should be provided the same support as their peers at public institutions.

2. Policy-based, strong, and stable Cal Grant award amount for students in the ICCU.

The 2021-21 State Budget included a one-year delay of statutory requirements enacted by the prior administration for Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) admits to AICCU institutions. AICCU is firmly committed to enacting broader changes to this statutory requirement, to implement a growth mechanism for the Cal Grant award while maintaining the sector's commitment to the ADT pathway.

3. Double the Pell Grant maximum award for all eligible students, including undocumented students.

Pell Grants are a proven bipartisan program and the fairest and most efficient way to help low-income and first-generation students access and complete college. Doubling Pell would put much needed funding in the hands of students first and allow them to use it at the higher education institution of their choice that best fits their educational needs.