Statement Regarding Governor Newsom’s Proposed 2021-22 Budget Release

Kristen Soares, President, Association of Independent California Colleges & Universities

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The governor’s release of his proposed budget for the fiscal year 2021-22 reflects a commitment to the 380,000 students attending independent, nonprofit colleges and universities. The disruptions to education because of the COVID-19 pandemic have been well-documented. I thank Governor Newsom for maintaining our at-risk students’ maximum Cal Grant award. AICCU and our member institutions undoubtedly remain committed to serving California Community College students seeking a four-year degree and to strengthening our work with the Associate Degree for Transfer. By protecting the maximum Cal Grant award for students, who often overcome significant odds to achieve their higher education goals, the governor’s budget ensures an opportunity for students to plan for college and persist once they enroll.

Given the horrendous events that took place at the U.S. Capitol this week, we must recognize that higher education is more important in order to develop an educated and civic-minded citizenry, one that is diverse and inclusive. A strong, sustained commitment to college access, affordability, and equity is needed to achieve this. The Cal Grant program, originally created by the state and nonprofit higher education in the 1950s, will continue to lift up the most vulnerable students, those coming from high school or adult students, wherever they decide to attend and help them achieve their goals—professional, academic, and civic—and, ultimately, lead to a stronger democracy.

We look forward to working with the governor and Legislature to ensure all college students are supported during this unprecedented time.

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About AICCU
The Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities (AICCU) is comprised of 85 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 over 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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