July 21, 2023

Members of the California Delegation
U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Congressmember:

On behalf of the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities (AICCU), I respectfully urge that you oppose the elimination of the Federal Work-Study (FWS) and Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG) programs, as announced in the House Appropriations Labor-Health & Human Services-Education FY 2024 spending bill.

AICCU is the organizational voice for over 80 independent, nonprofit higher education institutions in the state. Together, the sector educates over 188,000 undergraduate students, including over 43,000 Pell Grant recipients. While the Pell Grant award is kept whole in the spending bill, FWS and SEOG are threatened with elimination. At a time when we should be expanding higher education access, cutting these programs will make college even more expensive for low-income students and hinder their ability to achieve their academic ambitions and contribute to the nation’s workforce and social fabric.

In California, 282,000 students will be impacted by the elimination of SEOG, losing $108.5 million in critical financial assistance. Looking at students that attend AICCU member institutions, 27,000 students will lose $19.5 million in financial aid. The elimination of SEOG takes grant money out of the hands of low-income students. SEOG provides up to an additional $4,000 for a Pell Grant student so they do not have to borrow more or work more hours in off-campus jobs to pay for college. SEOG is not duplicative of Pell, it is additive for a low-income student, where every dollar of aid makes a difference.

Elimination of the FWS program will impact over 28,000 students in California, cutting over $132 million in support, of which 11,000 are students who attend AICCU member institutions, who will lose over $44 million in support. The elimination of FWS erases a critical opportunity for students to hold an on-campus job that not only teaches the value of work, but also ensures that students feel like part of the campus community.
Participating in FWS has also proven to keep students enrolled and persisting to degree completion.

Without these programs, students will be forced to borrow money to continue their education—adding to loan amounts—or drop out of college. Please reject the proposed elimination of these critical higher education programs. We look forward to working in partnership with you to address issues of college access, affordability, and success.

Thank you for your work on behalf of California. If you have questions, please contact Tom Vu, AICCU Vice President for Policy (thomas.vu@aiccu.edu.)

Sincerely

Kristen F. Soares