March 12, 2024

California Congressional Delegation
U.S. House of Representatives

Subject: Request to Fully Fund Federal Student Aid Programs – FY2024 Budget

Dear Congressmember:

On behalf of the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities (AICCU), I write to request that—as Congress considers the remaining six appropriations bills for the Fiscal Year 2024 budget, including the funding for the U.S. Department of Education (ED)—you support the full funding of important financial aid programs that support postsecondary student access and success: the Pell Grant program, the Federal Work-Study (FWS) program, and the Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG) program.

AICCU is the organizational voice for 90 independent, nonprofit colleges and universities in California. Our membership is diverse, ranging from liberal arts colleges to large research institutions and art and design colleges to faith-based universities. In total, AICCU member colleges and universities educate nearly 350,000 students. Of the nearly 184,000 undergraduate students, over 46,000 receive the Pell Grant, nearly 11,000 receive FWS, and nearly 27,000 receive FSEOG. Please refer to the AICCU 2024 Federal Impact fact sheet for more information about the students served in the independent higher education sector and the critical federal student aid they receive.

Late last year, the House proposed to eliminate FWS and FSEOG while the Senate proposed cutting $10 million from each and increasing the Pell Grant by $250. We urge Congress to commit to support student access and success by fully funding both programs and continue support doubling the Pell Grant. These are investments in California and the nation’s future workforce and leaders. During times of economic and budgetary challenges, we need to strengthen support and encourage more students to stay on the college pathway.

The delays and challenges of the new FAFSA implementation by ED have only exacerbated the uncertainty and hesitancy among postsecondary students about their higher education opportunities. Not knowing what the Pell Grant maximum award will be, nor whether students will receive any FSEOG or whether FWS employment opportunities will be available, creates further uncertainty for students and institutions —especially first-generation, low-income students who are the most vulnerable.
AICCU urges you to finalize the FY2024 appropriations for the federal student aid programs and asks that you fully fund the FSEOG and the FWS programs, in addition to providing an increase to the Pell Grant maximum award.

Thank you for your continued work on behalf of California.

Sincerely

[Signature]

Kristen F. Soares