August 29, 2014

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Jr.
Governor of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, California 95814

RE: SB 1028 (Jackson) Student Financial Aid: Cal Grant C Awards

REQUEST FOR SIGNATURE

Dear Governor Brown:

On behalf of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges, I urge you to sign Senate Bill 1028 by Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson. This bill would require the California Student Aid Commission to give special consideration to social and economic situations of students applying to the Cal Grant C Program, including the long-term unemployed.

California has one of the highest long-term unemployment rates in the country. Many long-term unemployed workers enroll at community colleges to complete job training programs in order to secure employment and a family supporting wage. Students who earn a degree or certificate from a California community college nearly double their earnings within three years.

Senate Bill 1028 is an important step to help California’s unemployed workers successfully reach their educational goals. This is significant in our system because community college students comprise approximately 60 percent of the Cal Grant C awards made each year. Senate Bill 1028 also provides the added benefit of allowing Cal Grant C funds to be expended for living expenses, which for community college students represent the highest cost to attend college. In addition, the changes called for in SB 1028 would update the Cal Grant C Program to better align with the new California Community Colleges “Doing What Matters” framework. This framework focuses on building career pathways and aligning career technical education with high demand jobs.

Long-term unemployment can become self-perpetuating as a result of skills erosion and employer unwillingness to grant the long-term unemployed interviews. Providing these workers with skill sets relevant to labor market trends will go a long way in making sure they can get work. I thank you for your consideration and urge you to sign Senate Bill 1028. If you or your staff have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (916) 445-4434.

Sincerely,

Brice W. Harris
Chancellor

cc: Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson