August 27, 2014

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

RE: SB 798 (de León) Income Taxes: Credits: Contribution to Education Funds

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 798 by Senator Kevin de León. This bill would allow California taxpayers to receive an income or tax credit for contributions made to the College Access Tax Credit (CATC) Fund. Resources generated by the CATC would be allocated to the California Student Aid Commission for the purpose of increasing Cal Grant B access awards. A companion measure, Senate Bill 174, also introduced by Senator Kevin de León, would provide guidance to the commission regarding the use of these new resources, including a requirement to increase the maximum Cal Grant B access award from $1,473 to $5,000 per year.

The Cal Grant B access award is a crucial resource for low-income community college students because it provides financial aid to cover the cost of living expenses, transportation, textbooks and other college related costs. However, the purchasing power of this grant has diminished over time because it is not adjusted for inflation. When the Cal Grant B access award was established in 1969, the maximum award was $960 per year. In today’s dollars that maximum award would be $5,900.

By establishing the CATC Fund, SB 798 would provide the resources needed to increase the Cal Grant B access award. Each year, community college students receive the largest number of Cal Grant B awards; approximately 50 percent or a total of 72,400 students.

I thank you for your consideration and urge you to sign Senate Bill 798. If you or your staff has any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (916) 445-4434.

Sincerely,

Brice W. Harris
Chancellor

cc: Senator Kevin de León