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**College
Opportunity**

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June 13, 2012

The Honorable Jerry Brown
Governor, State of California
c/o State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Brown,

In a time of severe economic crisis, The Campaign for College Opportunity would like to commend you for your efforts to minimize the impact of further cuts to higher education in our state. With this in mind, our bipartisan Board of Directors supports your proposed tax initiative and will work to urge support with the public, the media and our coalition of more than 12,000 business, labor and civic leaders to ensure passage this November.

However, we are deeply concerned and oppose the following proposed cuts to Cal Grant aid for students:

- 1) Significant GPA increases for new and current students to be eligible for Cal Grants. Changing the rules for thousands of students without sufficient notice and disproportionately impacting Latino and African American students.
- 2) 40% decrease in the Cal Grant award for new and renewal students attending independent nonprofit colleges in California. This is especially troubling when our public colleges and universities lack the capacity to serve all eligible California students. Furthermore, it is terribly unfair for current college students already making progress toward their degree, forcing upon them a choice to work more hours, take out more loans, or drop-out of college altogether.
- 3) Linking student Cal Grant award eligibility to the federal Pell Grant program. This would disproportionately impact underrepresented students in our colleges and universities. Of current Cal Grant recipients more than 37% would see their award reduced or completely eliminated. At a time of rising tuition, this change would no longer guarantee the full tuition cost would be covered via Cal Grant for currently eligible students at the UC and/or CSU.

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June 13, 2012

Along with preserving as much college access as possible, improving college completion is an economic imperative for the state of California. We deeply appreciate your attention to improving student success and applaud innovative solutions to use Cal Grant resources most effectively. Specifically, we support the following provision in your budget proposal:

- 1) Restricting Cal Grant program participation to colleges and universities that have a maximum student loan cohort default rate of 15% and a minimum graduation rate of 30% ensuring new performance standards that protect students.

We understand you have incredibly difficult choices to make, but hope you can find a way to prevent these devastating cuts and invest in maintaining and strengthening the best public college and university system in the world – one that is not out of reach for our most talented students, regardless of their income status.

Thank you for your leadership,

David Wolf
Board Chair

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Board Vice Chair

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