



AICCU Policy and Advocacy Priorities Plan

2017-18 Legislative Session

2018 Update

The Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities (AICCU) represents 78 private, nonprofit, regionally-accredited higher education institutions in the state. AICCU institutions educate 186,000 undergraduate students (76% of whom are California residents) and 152,000 graduate students. AICCU institutions are committed to improving California by educating and preparing engaged citizens, employing residents and providing communities with economic, social, and cultural opportunities. The state's demand for a highly skilled and educated workforce is met, in part, by AICCU institutions.

As recognized in the California Master Plan for Higher Education, California's independent—private, nonprofit—colleges and universities play a unique and important role in serving California's students. The State's Cal Grant program further provides opportunities for hardworking, low-income students to attend an AICCU institution of their choice. AICCU is proud of this joint effort with the state, a successful partnership that deserves strong support and investment. In conjunction with significant aid by the sector, the partnership has enabled us to continue to fulfill our purpose of providing college choice and access to California's students from all backgrounds.

As private entities that serve the public good, AICCU institutions value their ability to provide diverse educational programs and offerings, innovative approaches to learning, and campus experiences that best meet the needs of each student. A hallmark of the Independent California College and University (ICCU) sector is smaller learning environments, where an average 12-to-1 student-to-faculty ratio lends to greater student success as demonstrated in the sector's graduation rates.

AICCU leadership will continue advocating for students—our highest priority. It is critical that we work with our members and state policymakers to ensure they are fully aware of the sector's role in providing higher education opportunities and the positive impact of the Cal Grant program. Also, we must persevere in raising awareness with students and their families regarding the diverse opportunities and institutions that are available in the private, nonprofit sector. California should and can provide a seat to every student who has the desire to attend college and the sector is committed to helping the state meet this goal.

2018-19 Policy and Advocacy Agenda

- 1. Advocate for the repeal of the pending 11.3% reduction and for preservation of the current Cal Grant amount of \$9,084 in the 2018-19 Budget Act.**

The current maximum grant amount of \$9,084 reflects a 6.4% reduction from the 2011-12 level, and over a 48% decrease in real dollars since 2000. If the 11.3% cut were to go through, the

award for AICCU students will be \$8,054, much less than what students received in 2001 when the Cal Grant Entitlement program was created. Providing a Cal Grant to an ICCU student—the only state financial aid that a student at a private, nonprofit college is able to receive—is less expensive than the total state subsidy (Cal Grant plus state subsidy per student) that a Cal Grant student receives to attend a UC or CSU. The cost to the state per year for an ICCU Cal Grant student is \$9,084, compared to \$14,200 at the CSU and \$27,600 at the UC. Thus, the state actually saves money when utilizing capacity in the ICCU sector, while investing in California’s future.

2. Advocate for legislation that would bring California into a State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) for online distance education.

Today, 48 states and territories participate in SARA to efficiently navigate individual state regulations for online distance education programs. California currently does not participate in SARA and, as a result, colleges and universities must sign a unique agreement with each individual state so that their online distance education programs are recognized in that particular state. SARA provides common definitions for quality distance education programs; student protections, including a student complaint process; and registration and accountability standards for all participating institutions.

If California is able to join SARA, it would allow recognized institutions to offer students access to quality distance education to help them achieve their college and/or workforce training objectives, while providing common protections and standards and streamlining the recognition process for higher education institutions in the state.

3. Advocate for legislation that increases access and affordability in higher education, including efforts that provide for predictability, portability, the efficiency of the various state financial aid programs, and to ensure that students at an ICCU institution have equal access to these programs.

The Assembly Select Committee on the Master Plan for Higher Education in California has started hearings to review the existing Master Plan. AICCU will continue to participate in the hearings, which will take place across the state and will cover a variety of topics. The independent sector’s role in the Master Plan has focused on the capacity to serve California students and the importance of state financial aid in helping low-income students get into, stay in, and graduate from college.

4. Advocate for legislation that will address the statewide teacher shortage, and recognizes the important role of ICCU institutions in preparing California’s teacher workforce.

Support legislation that will strengthen teacher education programs and support institutions and students in the effort to increase the number of credentialed teachers in the state, particularly in high need areas. AICCU is a significant stakeholder in the state’s production of teachers. ICCU institutions produce 43% of the state’s teaching credentials and offer programs throughout the state, through a variety of models that include year-round programs.

5. Continue to advocate on issues that impact the day-to-day operations of our institutions.

Policy issues such as labor and employment, student safety, campus climate, athletics, compliance/accountability, and responding to statutorily required reporting requirements, affect all institutions in the ICCU sector and directly impact the costs to campuses and their students. AICCU will seek to limit regulatory burdens on our campuses. At the same time, AICCU will join



opportunities in such areas as research and dissemination of best practices, and other initiatives to enhance and assure safe and supportive campus environments.

2018-19 Advocacy and Institutional Engagement Plan

AICCU and its member institutions have an opportunity to gain greater recognition and, in turn, greater support, with current and newly elected officials from the 2016 elections, as well as with the 2018 elections for statewide offices, including governor and lieutenant governor. Today, many policymakers do not fully understand the role that ICCU institutions play in educating the workforce, preparing future leaders, and serving the diverse population of California. In both Sacramento and Washington D.C., it is imperative that we clearly tell our story to create a common understanding. This is also important to accomplish at the local level—in our communities, with employers, business leaders, and even alumni—who can be active supporters of the work we do at the ground level.

AICCU will continue to pursue an aggressive grassroots engagement plan that requires institutional participation to be effective. This will include several events for institutions to meet directly with legislators—on campus, in the Capitol, and in the district office. There will also be targeted media outreach, district and region-specific informational sheets, and trustee and alumni outreach efforts, to stress the importance of the Cal Grant award with students. A comprehensive “roadmap” of advocacy, media, and grassroots actions, was created for the 2017-18 session and will be updated for the second year of the two-year legislative session. AICCU will continue to work with the Legislature and campuses to schedule site visits, in addition to individual campus efforts, to bring their local legislators to campus.

This year, the engagement is aimed at repealing the Cal Grant cut and addressing federal proposals that limit student choice. The broader goal is to continue to better familiarize legislators with the sector: diversity numbers; outreach efforts to underserved communities; programs for veterans; economic and social impact on the community; superior graduation rates; and other important attributes that are integral to current policy discussions. AICCU wants to ensure that legislators will have a greater understanding of campuses and appreciation for the ICCU sector as a whole.

Grassroots engagement priorities for 2018-19 include:

- a) Laying the groundwork for engaging with the next gubernatorial administration to ensure that AICCU is included as a key partner on higher education issues and that the ICCU sector is recognized for its key role in educating California students. Campus leaders, trustees, alumni, and donors can provide critical access to these policymakers.
- b) Identifying new champions in the Legislature that will be strong supporters of AICCU’s policy goals, and will speak on our behalf in “closed-door” caucus meetings. Once identified, these champions should be supported, educated, and engaged on an ongoing basis.
- c) Strategically engage influential trustee members in key areas of AICCU’s grassroots outreach plan to connect with legislators, local and regional organizations, business and community leaders, and



other stakeholders.

- d) Continue and expand on the *Day in the Capitol* advocacy day and incorporate support from student government bodies to support student advocacy efforts on campus. Students are the most influential advocates of the ICCU sector. AICCU will partner with member institutions and student government representatives to engage with the student body to be advocates on the issues that directly impact them and future students.
- e) Engage with alumni directors to leverage the power of alumni in the community and in grassroots engagement. Alumni directors are the key to this access and AICCU intends to work with them in the development of our overarching plan, which will allow us to call upon them at key moments to generate support for important policy and budget items.
- f) Actively engage the “tri-caucus”—Black, Latino, Asian Pacific Islander Legislative caucuses—with relevant information on how AICCU campuses effectively serve California’s historically underserved communities.
- g) Continue to engage institutions to leverage statewide and regional chambers of commerce, social equity advocates, and other higher education stakeholders in support of AICCU’s legislative and budget priorities.

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