

Kristen F. Soares
PRESIDENT



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University of Southern California
University of the Pacific
University of the West
Vanguard University
Western University of Health Sciences
Westmont College
Whittier College
William Jessup University
Woodbury University

November 15, 2016

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown
State Capitol Building, 1st Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Kevin de León
President pro Tempore
California State Capitol, Room 205
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Anthony Rendon, Ph.D.
Speaker, California State Assembly
California State Capitol, Room 219
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Brown, Senate President pro Tem de León, and Assembly Speaker Rendon:

The Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities (AICCU) and our 79 member institutions are committed to serving every student at our campuses. The private, nonprofit higher education institutions in California will continue to provide an environment free from harassment for our students and a space for diversity, access, and success for all that pass through our doors.

This election has been divisive, perhaps the most in recent memory. We understand that many groups of our student body may feel particular angst and concern about potential administrative changes and laws, and the tone of the political discourse taking place. AICCU wants to reinforce to our students and to legislative leaders in California that our institutions are committed to providing a safe learning environment free from assault, and the fair treatment of all of our students.

There is much uncertainty arising from this election, but there is little doubt that we can expect many federal policy and administrative changes in the area of higher education. Like our higher education colleagues in the public sector, AICCU is trying to anticipate what this new higher education landscape may be, in the context of a presidential campaign that did not provide much information regarding higher education. In light of this, AICCU assures you that California's independent higher education institutions are aware that many of these changes may impact students.

AICCU institutions are committed to working on issues of college affordability, access, and success. We will be seeking support for federal policies that continue to invest in student financial aid, namely the Pell Grant program that has provided generations of low-income students access and choice of a public or private nonprofit institution.

AICCU institutions have been and remain deeply committed to the ideals of democratic values. The role of colleges and universities is more important now than ever in supporting key principles of higher education, including: academic freedom, freedom of expression, and respect for diversity and diverse viewpoints. We will continue to promote these values within our campus communities.

We look forward to continuing our work with you to support our California students.

Sincerely,

Kristen F. Soares
President

cc: Devorah Lieberman, President, University of La Verne and Chair, AICCU Executive Committee
Lark Park, Senior Advisor to the Governor, Office of Governor
Kimberly Rodriguez, Education Policy Director, Office of Senate President pro Tempore
Monica Henestroza, Special Assistant to the Assembly Speaker, Office of Assembly Speaker