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State Budget Restores Cal Grants, Places Priority on California's Students

RANCHO CORDOVA, CA— Late last week Governor Schwarzenegger and the California State Legislature restored previously proposed reductions to the Cal Grant program. The 2009-10 State budget allocates approximately \$967 million to the California Student Aid Commission to fund Cal Grants for nearly 275,000 students.

"It is evident that our State leaders placed a high priority on the economic prosperity of our State by protecting the Cal Grant programs and securing student access to college and career training," said Diana Fuentes-Michel, Executive Director of the California Student Aid Commission. "We want to remind all California students that money for college is available to those who qualify and submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by March 2nd." Please visit www.calgrants.org for more information.

Reinstatement of the Cal Grant Competitive Program funding means 22,500 students, primarily attending community colleges, whose average age is 30 and income is \$15,000 a year, will have access to a Cal Grant award. Another 2,000 low income students will be eligible for the Cal Grant award who otherwise would not have qualified due to the previously proposed tightening of income requirements.

Over 100,000 students enrolled at a University of California (UC) or a California State University (CSU) institution can count on the Cal Grant covering upcoming systemwide fee increases. Fees are expected to increase 9.3 percent at the UC and 10 percent at the CSU.

Nearly 9,500 students enrolled at California's independent and private institutions will have access to the maximum award amount of \$9,708.

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