

June 13, 2019

Dear Senator:

We, the Presidents of New Jersey's community colleges, are writing to reiterate our support for the continuation and expansion of the Community College Opportunity Grant (CCOG) Program in the state budget.

The Community College Opportunity Grant (CCOG) is an important investment in our students and in our state's future. This investment will assist a significant number of individuals to obtain a post-secondary degree or credential, helping them to get on the path to a family supporting career while building a skilled workforce that will close critical skills gaps.

The program is particularly important to independent / adult students who tend not to receive adequate amounts of financial assistance to attend community college. It is an efficient and effective strategy for helping meet the state's post-secondary education goal of 65% by 2025.

The pilot effort for Spring 2019 has had a significant positive impact on colleges and students. The \$5 million in the budget for planning and administration has allowed ALL of the 19 community colleges to develop and expand important student services that have proven to be successful at improving student outcomes. Thousands of students who are in households earning less than \$45,000 per year have received last dollar scholarships. These scholarships have reduced the financial burden on students, allowed students to remain enrolled in community college, and assisted students to enroll in additional courses. The program has also been exceptionally effective at educating students about federal financial aid opportunities, and about how to apply for financial aid. This has increased the access and utilization of other federal and state financial aid programs for needy students. The expansion of this program to include all community colleges last month was an important step forward.

The legislature should consider making a number of modifications to the Governor's budget to ensure that the program positively impacts more students, to encourage more students to attend community college (including working adults), and to encourage more currently enrolled students to persist in college.

These changes are:

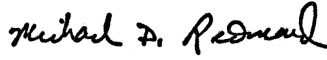
1. Include \$5 million in funds to be divided among all community colleges for student outreach, advising, mentoring, and other student supports that will ensure the success of the CCOG investments.
2. Raise the income eligibility criteria above \$45,000 to allow more students, including more working adults, to benefit from this investment.
3. Modify the program requirements to better meet student needs, by:
 - a. Reducing the number of credits that dependent students are required to enroll in from 12 to 6.
 - b. Allowing summer courses to be included.
 - c. Including fees for career and the technical education programs, including but not limited to nursing and culinary, up to a reasonable maximum amount.

Thank you for your consideration of this request on behalf of our colleges, and most importantly, our students.

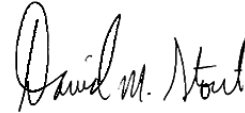
Sincerely,



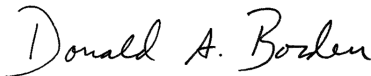
Dr. Barbara Gaba
President
Atlantic Cape Community College



Dr. Michael Redmond
President
Bergen Community College



Dr. David Stout
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Brookdale Community College



Mr. Donald Borden
President
Camden County College



Dr. Shelly Schneider
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Cumberland County College



Dr. Anthony Munroe
President
Essex County College



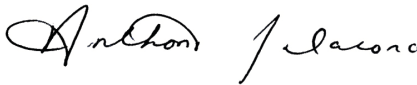
Dr. Christopher Reber
President
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Dr. Jianping Wang
President
Mercer County
Community College



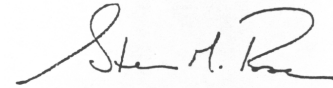
Dr. Mark McCormick
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Dr. Anthony Iacono
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Dr. Jon Larson
President
Ocean County College



Dr. Steven Rose
President
Passaic County Community College



Dr. Michael McDonough
President
Raritan Valley Community College



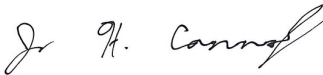
Dr. Michael Cioce
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Rowan College at
Burlington County



Dr. Frederick Keating
President
Rowan College at Gloucester County



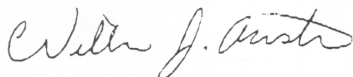
Dr. Michael Gorman
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Dr. William Austin
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Warren County Community College



Dr. Aaron Fichtner
President
NJ Council of County Colleges