

July 17, 2009

National Headquarters  
8415 Datapoint Drive, Suite 400  
San Antonio, Texas 78229  
210-692-3805 (voice) 210-692-0823 (fax)  
Web site: www.hacu.net



The Honorable George Miller  
Chair, House Education and Labor Committee  
2181 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

**Re: H.R. 3221 "Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2009"**

Dear Chairman Miller:

On behalf of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) and the more than 400 U.S. member colleges and universities it represents, I want to express our full support for H.R. 3221, the "Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act." This legislation addresses the critical need for student financial aid reform and funding for important initiatives to increase minority participation in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields and support the important role of community colleges in American postsecondary education.

We are particularly pleased to support the planned increases in the Pell Grant program, including the assurance of increases to meet the growing cost of living. The Pell program is the single most important program to allow low-income students the opportunity to pursue higher education.

Similarly, we are pleased to see the continuation of funding to support the Minority-Serving Institution STEM programs initiated in the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007. This funding over the last two years has been an important first step in increasing minority participation in STEM careers, and it is essential that these efforts continue if America is to meet the challenges of a 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce. H.R. 3221 assures this continuation at least through 2014. We commend you and the co-sponsors of H.R. 3221 for targeting support for Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) that would promote student transfer and articulation agreements between 2-year and 4-year HSIs in STEM fields.

Community colleges provide the first postsecondary experience for many students, critical local and regional workforce development, remediation and life-long learning opportunities for diverse populations. They also enroll a disproportionate number of Hispanic students and are critical entry points for this underserved and rapidly growing population. The Community College Initiative in H.R. 3221 recognizes and supports these important roles.

HACU applauds your leadership for proposing this critical investment in student financial aid and two much needed programs supporting STEM education at MSIs and strengthening our community colleges. Please call upon me, and the resources of HACU, if we can provide any support in ensuring swift passage of your legislation.

Respectfully,

Antonio R. Flores  
President and CEO

cc: Members of the House Education and Labor Committee  
HACU Governing Board