California Receives Low GPA in New Higher Education Report Card

“New report card by The Campaign for College Opportunity measures state’s ability to fill shortage of 1.7 million degrees by 2025”

(Sacramento, CA)—Today, the Campaign for College Opportunity released their new “2017 California Higher Education Report Card,” which reveals California is failing in terms of ensuring more Californians have the opportunity to go to college, that college remains affordable for low and middle income families, and that our colleges and universities are producing enough graduates to meet workforce demands. The report card is based on a study conducted by the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) and calls on lawmakers to create new promise of higher education for the next generation of Californians.

The Report Card shines a spotlight on the state of college attainment in California. The grades in the Report Card reflect annual progress toward an overall goal of improving adult college attainment from 48% to 60% by 2025. In order to reach 60% college attainment, California will need to produce an additional 1.7 million degrees or credentials to meet growing workforce demands.

The Report Card gives California a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 1.17 for progress between the academic years of 2013-14 and 2014-15. This GPA reflects California’s annual performance across critical markers that will help the state reach 60 percent by 2025. The results show:

- **On College Preparation**, which measures how prepared California's high schools graduates are to engage in college-level courses, California receives a B-.
- **On College Access**, which measures the percentage of recent high school graduates as well as adults in the workforce that are enrolling in college, California receives an F.
- **On College Completion**, which measures the rates of students enrolled in college who successfully complete a program of study, California receives an F.
- **On College Affordability**, which measures the annual reduction in the financial aid gap borne by students in each sector – Community College, California State University, and University of California systems, California receives a C.

Additional findings from the Report Card include:
● Only 43% of high school graduates were eligible for admission to the CSU and UC systems,
● Less than half of college-going age Californians enrolled in college,
● Low-income community college students have the highest unmet financial aid needs to cover the true cost of attending college.

“When the California Master Plan was created, it made college affordable and accessible for Californians, opening up limitless opportunities for our residents and strengthening our state’s economy. It was a shining example of what a bold vision for higher education coupled with strategic planning and investment could do to prepare an entire generation to contribute economically and civically to our state,” said Michele Siqueiros, President of The Campaign for College Opportunity. “However, our needs today are vastly different than they were 60 years ago. Our Report Card shows that we have neglected to plan for changing economic needs. It’s time we invest in a new vision for higher education and work together to Raise the Grades.”

The Report Card recommends that California adopt the 60% college attainment goal for adults so the state can close growing workforce gaps by 2025. In addition, the Campaign for College Opportunity calls on lawmakers to create a plan that gets us to that 60% goal, along with the infrastructure and funding to enforce that plan. Additionally, the plan should include measures to close equity gaps and keep college affordable for California’s lowest-income families.

The report card was produced based on the findings of the NCHEMS paper titled “Grading Educational Attainment Improvement in California-Progress to 60x25.” It serves as a baseline for monitoring the progress of California’s higher education system in meeting changing economic and demographic trends in the State.

"For so many Californians, the California Dream was based on hard work, dedication and an accessible and affordable college education that led to a good job. This promise helped California produce a record number of graduates that brought with them innovation, contributed to our state's growing economy, and strengthened our state's civic life,” said Rob Lapsley, President of the California Business Roundtable. “The new Report Card by the Campaign for College Opportunity tells us that the next generation needs a new college promise if we are going to remain an economic powerhouse and the hub of innovation."

To view the report card and full study, please click HERE.