For Immediate Release
June 24, 2022

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Statement on Eloy Ortiz Oakley’s Announcement of His Departure as Chancellor of the California Community Colleges

The Campaign for College Opportunity is immensely grateful for Eloy Ortiz Oakley’s six years of service to California students as Chancellor of the nation’s largest and most diverse community college system. As the 10th permanent Chancellor of the California Community Colleges system, Eloy was the first Latino to serve in that critical role.

“Eloy is a champion for our students and our state. As a former Board member of the Campaign for College Opportunity, he collaborated with us on research and policy ideas for ensuring greater racial equity in higher education. We have been fortunate to work with Eloy in advancing some of the most transformative policies to improve student success over the past decade. We know that Eloy will play an important role in realizing Governor Newsom’s vision of a 70% college-attainment goal for Californians, and we look forward to his leadership at the College Futures Foundation,” said Michele Siqueiros, President of the Campaign for College Opportunity.

We are confident that Eloy will continue to prioritize underserved and historically excluded students seeking a college education in California as he becomes President and CEO of the College Futures Foundation this fall. We are also extremely grateful to Monica Lozano and her leadership at the College Futures Foundation for the philanthropic investments and civic leadership she has provided and for her dedication to strengthening higher education and putting students first.

As a former community college transfer student himself, Eloy acted with great urgency to set a bold vision for increasing student success for over two million community college students. His transformative Vision for Success included simplifying and increasing transfer by scaling the Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) pathway. During Eloy’s tenure, he nearly doubled the number of ADTs conferred across the 116 campuses, resulting in over 360,000 ADTs awarded. Together with the Campaign, Eloy also championed efforts to end the use of placement tests at California Community Colleges that disproportionately harmed Black and Latinx students. He has been at the forefront of implementing new placement practices that start students in
transfer-level English and math courses instead of ineffective remedial education courses. In addition, Eloy has led the way in championing and designing a new equity-centered funding model for the California Community Colleges that provides more funding for campuses serving low-income students and increasing completion rates.

Eloy shepherded the country's largest system of higher education with a steadfast focus on equity even as he confronted the impacts of a global health pandemic that has been devastating for all, but especially for vulnerable students and hard-working faculty and college leaders. He oversaw many historic accomplishments but, more importantly, leaves a roadmap for improving outcomes and closing racial/ethnic equity gaps in college access and completion. In his role as a University of California (UC) Regent, he was a vocal critic of ineffective and biased standardized testing, resulting in the historic elimination of the use of the SAT/ACT in freshman admissions. He was also an unwavering champion for expanding access and strengthening the transfer pathway for community college students into the UC.

“As the Board of Governors begins the search for a new Chancellor, we urge them to select a proven California community college campus leader with the experience and track record that demonstrates a true commitment to racial equity and improving student success. The California Community Colleges need a leader that prioritizes student enrollment, given the significant loss in enrollment caused by the pandemic, and who will strengthen the pathways for success through transfer and by implementing strong, equitable placement practices. Students deserve an effective leader who can relate to their experiences and reflects the diversity of the system's student body,” concluded Siqueiros.

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About the Campaign for College Opportunity:
The Campaign for College Opportunity is a California non-profit bipartisan policy and research organization focused on a single mission: to ensure all Californians have an equal opportunity to attend and succeed in college in order to build a vibrant workforce, economy and democracy. For more information, visit www.CollegeCampaign.org / Facebook.com/CollegeCampaign or follow @CollegeOpp on Twitter and Instagram.