



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 22, 2019
CONTACT: Parshan Khosravi, 916-442-8280

Student Groups and UC to Co-Sponsor SB 461 for Summer Cal Grants

Oakland, CA – The University of California Student Association (UCSA) and University of California Office of the President (UCOP), alongside the partnership and leadership of the Coalition for a Better UC (CBUC), are proud to co sponsor Senator Richard Roth’s recently introduced Senate Bill 461. Motivated by California’s alarming college graduation deficit, this piece of legislation will enable low income students across the University of California and California State University graduate in a timely manner creating a Summer Cal Grant program which will cover tuition for up to 9 units of enrollment per term for two summer terms.

UCSA chose to assist the grassroots movement led by the CBUC in support of this legislation due to the glaring deficiencies prevalent in our higher education system. Over 70 percent of California State University students do not graduate within 4 years. Even in the UC system, which boasts better graduation rates, the majority of first generation black and brown Pell Grant recipients still fail to graduate on time. These issues are further compounded by their economic impacts, highlighted by the fact that California will experience a 1.1 million college graduate deficit by the year 2030 if current trends persist. However, research conducted by the federal government shows that students who take courses over summer are more likely to graduate on time. Although the federal government expanded the Pell Grant to summer based on this research, students are still reluctantly avoiding summer courses because insufficient aid which makes summer courses unaffordable.. SB 461 will help remedy this problem by allowing low income students, who are most vulnerable to late graduation, to take the summer courses they need to pursue a degree in a timely manner.

Kuvimbanashe Edwin Chikukwa, chair of CBUC, also notes that besides having the support of all the public higher education student representative bodies and their administrations, the Summer Cal Grant solution is also supported by the California Student Aid Commission and multiple higher education advocacy groups. “That kind of consensus and coalition building did not happen by accident,” Chikukwa said, “it means multiple respectable organizations calculated and came to the same conclusion we believe the state will come to, that SB 461 will help alleviate California’s dismal graduation deficits.” Cal State Student Association President **Mia Kagianas** said about the issue: “Reforming financial aid is necessary to support California’s low-income students, in which Summer Cal Grant is a pillar of need as well.”

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About the UC Student Association: The University of California Student Association is the official voice of 275,000 undergraduate, graduate, and professional students from all ten UC campuses. It is our mission to advocate on behalf of current and future students for the accessibility, affordability, and quality of the University of California system.



Oakland Office

385 Grand Ave, Suite 302
 Oakland, CA 94610
 [o] 510.834.8272
 [f] 510.834.8286

Sacramento Office

1020 12th Street, Suite 232
 Sacramento, CA 95814
 [o] 916.442.8280

www.ucsa.org

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