

Dear Members of the Assembly,

On behalf of the students of the CSU, we would like to thank you for your continuing support for the public university system. As this system educates over 450,000 students across the state, your support is not just for the schools but also for the future generations of the California workforce. This letter is to urge you to continue to support students by voting “Yes” on Assembly Bill 1038.

AB 1038 has been introduced by Assembly Member Rob Bonta and is a vital step towards providing a free college education for California students in compliance with the Master Plan. This bill is a step forward in the education of students for a better California in which students do not need to sell out their futures in order to obtain a degree. Tuition at the CSU has increased by over 900% since 1985 and student debt across the nation is currently over 1.4 trillion dollars. At some point, the system must step in and stop selling out students who are trying to improve their lives. Our students’ budgets simply cannot afford continually rising tuition rates. A recent study has shown that the average CSU student works 20 hours a week or more while going to school yet 1 in 10 are homeless. Further, the average CSU student leaves school with over 18,000 dollars in debt. This system cannot sustain itself and it is an issue that will affect all the people of California, not just the students.

A “Yes” on AB 1038 will begin the process of figuring out how the state can better serve its constituents by providing them with an affordable education. An educated populace is vital for a functioning democracy, and the state of California must step up and begin looking at ways to ensure we can have an educated populace that is not also in crushing debt. We also need to address the rapidly-growing population of students who study for exams without homes and without food. The dream of achieving a college degree is what drives many of our students. They should not have to be forced into poverty in order to do so. Affordable education is not just a benefit for students as each dollar spent on students of the CSU comes back many-fold once students go on to become employees. Thus, funding the CSU is a complex, structural issue that should be considered at the highest level of our state government in order to offer long-term solutions for this systemic problem (which is what Assembly Member Bonta’s bill does). We need to push Governor Brown to adequately fund our California Higher Education system. Students cannot bear the burdensome costs of a higher education any longer. The middle class is at stake. Our student’s families are at stake. We need to vote “Yes” on AB 1038.

Sincerely,

Students for Quality Education