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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Event calls attention to \$5.3 billion California could leave on the table by not producing enough college graduates to meet workforce demands, strengthen state economy

'One Million More' event to focus on dire need to produce 1 million additional college graduates by 2025 to enable state to earn \$5.3 billion ROI. Event will honor over 13,000 California students and 200 scholarship winners who participated in "Save Me a Spot in College" contest and recognize Champions for College Opportunity.

The Campaign for College Opportunity will host a "One Million More" Southern California reception at the California State University, Northridge, on Friday, July 30, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. The event, which will take place in the Orange Grove Bistro at the University Club, launches the "One Million More College Graduates by 2025" (1MM) campaign, an unprecedented effort that rallies Californians in support of increasing college-going and graduation rates.

At the event, The Campaign will kick off its 1MM Campaign by having participants sign a pledge urging the next Governor of the state to put forward a specific plan to produce 1 million more college graduates by prioritizing and investing in higher education in order to produce jobs, meet the state's workforce needs, and strengthen its economy. A ceremonial check of \$5.3 billion will be presented to state leaders, documenting the return on investment that California can receive by producing 1 million more college graduates by 2025.

"The next Governor needs to have a plan for improving the state's economy and creating jobs," said Michele Siqueiros, executive director of The Campaign for College Opportunity, "and that will require a plan to invest in college opportunity and increase college graduation rates."

The event will also provide an opportunity to recognize several Champions for College Opportunity, including State Senator Alex Padilla, the College Access Foundation of California, and The California State Student Association for their efforts to further higher education in the state.

"I am honored to receive the 'Champion for College Opportunity' award," said Senator Padilla, Chair of the Senate Select Committee on College and University Admissions and Outreach. "I am greatly encouraged by The Campaign for College Opportunity's 'One Million More' campaign. To meet the

growing demand for skilled workers, we must dramatically increase the number of students who transfer from community colleges and graduate from four-year universities."

Another highlight of the day will be the awarding of \$150,000 in scholarships to over 300 middle and high school students from throughout the state who were selected as winners of this year's *Save Me a Spot in College* scholarship contest. Each of these students will be holding a mock \$1 million bill, reflecting the \$1 million more that they will earn over their lifetime if they earn a college degree versus their peers who only graduate from high school.

During the past five years, more than 53,000 students have made their voices heard by participating in the scholarship contest, which provides students from throughout California the opportunity to create written word, posters, and TV ads calling on state leaders to save them and their peers a spot in college. The scholarship contest is supported by major funding from the College Access Foundation of California.

"Higher education is the fuel that feeds the economic engine in our state and helps Californians realize the American Dream," Siqueiros said. "We need to let all Californians know about the vital role higher education plays in creating jobs and strengthening our economy while ensuring that our children have even greater opportunities than we have had."

What: One Million More Southern California Reception

When: Friday, July 30, 2010, 10:30 am PDT

Where: Orange Grove Bistro at the University Club, California State University, Northridge

Who: State Senator Alex Padilla

Julia Lopez, President and CEO, College Access Foundation of California

Miles Nevin, Executive Director, California State Student Association

Christopher Chavez, President, California State Student Association

Dr. Vance T. Peterson, Vice President for University Advancement, California State University,
Northridge

Michele Siqueiros, Executive Director, The Campaign for College Opportunity

Middle and high school students and their families from across the state

About The Campaign for College Opportunity: The Campaign for College Opportunity is a broad-based, bipartisan coalition, including business, education and labor leaders, and is dedicated to ensuring the next generation of Californians has the opportunity to go to college. The Campaign works to create an environment of change and lead the state toward effective policy solutions. It is focused upon substantially increasing the number of students attending two- and four-year colleges in the state and significantly impacting the rate that students succeed and achieve their post-secondary education objectives. For more information, visit: www.collegecampaign.org.