September 20, 2010

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the nation’s 1,173 community colleges, I urge you to make the necessary votes to pass the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act as an amendment to the Department of Defense Authorization Act, which is under Senate consideration this week.

Community colleges are open access institutions that serve as the only feasible gateway to higher education for millions of American students. Nearly half of our students are the first generation in their families to go to college, and community colleges are the most culturally diverse sector of higher education. Our members continually strive to increase access to higher education, which is now necessary to living the “American dream.”

For this reason, the DREAM Act is a top legislative priority for AACC. It would remove some of the federal barriers to higher education that now exist for thousands of children who have grown up in this country, attend our schools, and have the desire and ability to make vital contributions to our society. Higher education institutions, particularly community colleges, are being called upon to produce significantly greater numbers of Americans with college credentials. By providing eligible students with conditional legal status, the DREAM Act helps and encourages the approximately 65,000 undocumented students that graduate from our high schools or obtain a GED each year (as well as thousands of others who have already done so) to continue their educations and make greater contributions to society, both economically and socially.

The DREAM Act returns authority over in-state tuition policy for undocumented students to the states, where it should be. It does not require any particular action on their part, states will chart their own course.

The past, present and future community college students who would benefit from the DREAM Act, which in turn would benefit all of us, cannot wait any longer to start the rest of their lives. Please vote for the DREAM Act.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

George R. Boggs
President & CEO