



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: DECEMBER 3, 2012

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**JOHN R. McDOWELL, JR. ELECTED CHAIR
OF THE CALIFORNIA STUDENT AID COMMISSION**

Also elected, Los Angeles Residents Ana Beltran as Vice-Chair and Cris Arzate as Secretary

Rancho Cordova, CA - (2012) – The 15-member California Student Aid Commission has announced John R. McDowell, Jr. as its new Chair. McDowell replaced Senator Emeritus Barry Keene who spent 4 years as the Commission's Chair. Keene led the Agency through a transition from a bank-based, bank-fee system of student loans to a U.S. Treasury Department equity-based program model. This new system has created massive savings that have been placed back into state grant programs around the country. Under Keene's leadership, California benefitted by receiving over \$720 million over a seven-year period that will end in 2015. Senator Keene's actions will be remembered as having protected the long-term viability of the Cal Grants, ultimately aiding both students and taxpayers.

According to McDowell, “In this recessionary era of high unemployment, combined with rising college costs and spiking fees and tuition, nothing is more important than providing students financial aid to help keep the doors open to a college education.” Chair McDowell has been a Commissioner since his appointment by Assembly Speaker John A. Pérez in January 2012. He is a professor of labor relations; and, the founder and director of the Labor Center at Los Angeles Trade Technical College. The Labor Center is the largest community college labor studies program in the United States. McDowell is past-president of the Faculty Association of California Community Colleges (FACCC) where he built grassroots coalitions and advocated on behalf of higher education. He has spent most of his adult life advocating for broad and equitable access to higher education for low- and middle-income students.

Chair McDowell received his Bachelor of Arts in Social Sciences and his Master of Arts in Sociology from Sacramento State University in 1970. He is a long-time resident of the Silver Lake neighborhood in Los Angeles.

The California Student Aid Commission is the state's principal agency that provides financial aid policy analysis and leadership, in partnership with California's colleges, universities, financial institutions, and financial aid associations. For more information, contact Ed Emerson at 916-464-8271.

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