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FROM THE CALIFORNIA FACULTY ASSOCIATION

**The California State University is our ‘ladder of opportunity’
— Let’s not knock it down**

Two studies released today highlight the urgent need to fund – not cut — public higher education, particularly the California State University.

The first, out of Northern California, found a rapid loss of traditional middle class jobs. Emmett Carson, president of the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, which co-sponsored the “2008 Silicon Valley Index,” called for improvement in job training so that potential employees are better prepared for jobs in today’s ever-changing economy.

Doug Henton, president of Mountain View-based Collaborative Economics, which conducted the index research, added that the valley needs to develop "ladders of opportunity" to help people move to better jobs. He said, "We need to be thinking about social innovation, about how to build career ladders."

Meanwhile a report by the Brookings Institution and sponsored by the Pew Charitable Trusts, warned, according to the *New York Times* “that widening gaps in higher education between rich and poor, whites and minorities, could soon lead to a downturn in opportunities for the poorest families. The researchers found that Hispanic and black Americans were falling behind whites and Asians in earning college degrees, making it harder for them to enter the middle class or higher.”

The California State University, which is slated for deep cuts in the governor’s proposed budget for 2008/09, is a key part of the solution to California’s economic downturn and to ensuring access to a strong middle class in our state.

The California Faculty Association released the following statement today:

“The situation in Silicon Valley shines an even brighter light on the drawbacks to the Governor’s proposed budget cuts to higher education. Silicon Valley companies are desperate for highly trained workers as the baby boom generation prepares to retire and they are calling for help.

“The California State University is the ‘ladder of opportunity’ that the Silicon Valley is asking for. Our 23-campus public state university educates exactly the kind of people the Silicon Valley needs.

“The CSU confers the majority of the state’s four-year degrees and credentials to engineers (51%), teachers (87%), and business professionals (65%).

Likewise, the CSU is a primary path to the middle class for tens of thousands of students each year. The CSU alone grants 51% of all four-year college degrees conferred each year in California. More than any other four-year institution in California, it educates low-income students and veterans.

The CSU grants the majority of four-year degrees to California students who are Latino (58%), African-American (52%), and Native-American (53%).

“Yet the Governor has proposed cutting the CSU budget, leaving the system another \$386 million in the hole. Instead of ramping up efforts to produce more skilled workers, the CSU is faced with the need to turn away students, hike student fees yet again, eliminate classes, lay off teachers and increase class sizes.

“CSU students, faculty, and administrators agree with the business community that higher education is the solution to our economic challenges, not the problem. We will continue to fight the Governor’s proposed budget cuts because it is the right thing to do for the future of California.”

To learn more about the 2008 Silicon Valley Index report, go to:

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2008/02/19/BUI2V2SGD.DTL&type=tech>

http://www.siliconvalley.com/news/ci_8302244?nclick_check=1

To learn more about the study on economic mobility, go to

<http://economicmobility.com>

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/19/us/19cnd-mobility.html?_r=1&scp=2&sq=eckholm&st=nyt&oref=slogin

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