

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-7020

January 13, 2015

The Honorable Arne Duncan  
Secretary of Education  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202-3100

Dear Secretary Duncan,

I am writing in support of the College of Southern Nevada's (CSN) waiver request as part of their application to become a federally designated Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). CSN submitted its application for HSI designation in December 2014.

The College of Southern Nevada is the largest and most ethnically diverse institution of higher education in Nevada and the only community college in the southern half of the state. The college meets all Title V HSI requirements, with the exception of the needy student threshold, which was increased by 10 percentage points this past year. CSN was three percentage points shy of meeting the new 45 percent needy student threshold for public four-year institutions.

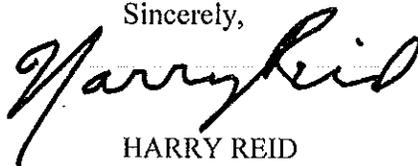
I have reviewed CSN's waiver application and am hopeful you will agree that the college meets three of the six waiver options. The growing number of programs CSN provides to support minority and low-income students demonstrate CSN's commitment to helping traditionally underrepresented populations succeed. College faculty, staff and students are collaboratively engaged in student-success initiatives, including Achieving the Dream, to gather data and implement pilot projects based on national best practices for retention and graduation.

It is important to note that CSN would qualify for Title V HSI designation without a waiver if it were allowed to apply as a community college. Fewer than one percent of its students are enrolled in upper credits in niche four-year bachelor-degree programs, which the college offers because they are unavailable elsewhere in the area and were highly sought credentials in their respective fields.

The majority of Latino undergraduates in Nevada attend CSN and designation as a Hispanic Serving Institution would be significant for this population and all of Nevada, where it would be the first postsecondary institution to achieve this milestone.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. As always, please contact me if you have additional questions.

Sincerely,



HARRY REID  
United States Senator