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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE OF INDEPENDENT COLLEGES ORGANIZES STUDENT RALLY FOR FINANCIAL AID

(April 5, 2006) West Hartford, CT - On behalf of its member institutions, the Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges (CCIC) today held a student rally in support of increasing state funding for need-based financial aid.

Noting that the Connecticut Independent College Student Grant Program (CICS) and the Connecticut Aid to Public College Student Grant Program (CAPCS) are critical components of financial aid packages for Connecticut students attending Connecticut colleges and universities, almost 200 students gathered to make the case for increased funding. Holding a banner that said, "Fund Connecticut's Future...Increase Financial Aid," the students wore shirts and hats from their respective schools and marched across Capitol Avenue from the State Library to the Capitol to meet with local legislators about the issue.

The group pointed out to legislators that the independent sector in Connecticut awards 50% of all degrees including 60% of all four year and above degrees awarded to minority students and 50-70% of degrees in key economic cluster areas. The average cost to the state per four-year degree in the independent sector is only \$894 while each degree awarded by a public institution costs the state \$49,220. There are more first generation students, more at risk students and lower median incomes in Connecticut's independent sector than in its public four-year sector.

Because of cuts in the program a few years ago, the average grant of \$3,634 going to 4283 students is actually less than was given out in 2002 even though the need of Connecticut students is greater. In the meantime, Connecticut's independent colleges and universities have strained their budgets by increasing the institutional dollars going into financial aid to over \$300 million.

"We understand that in today's economy, the relationship between income and employment and educational attainment has strengthened such that higher education is far more important to the economic welfare of individuals than it has ever been. Yet, qualified low-income students attend four-year institutions at half the rate of their comparably qualified higher-income peers," stated Judith Greiman, president, CCIC.

Ms. Greiman further noted, "Connecticut's workforce is not growing. Our future economic stability depends on each of our learners being properly prepared for and then graduating from college with a degree. Financial aid programs strengthen our economy while helping students achieve their dreams.

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For more information on the Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges (CCIC) and the CICS Grant Program, or to schedule an interview with CCIC President Judith Greiman, call 860-402-5998.

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Founded in 1932, the Connecticut Conference of Colleges (CCIC) represents 17 accredited nonprofit independent colleges and universities in Connecticut including Albertus Magnus College, Connecticut College, Fairfield University, Goodwin College, Lyme Academy College of Fine Art, Mitchell College, Quinnipiac University, Rensselaer at Hartford, Sacred Heart University, Saint Joseph College, Saint Vincent's College, Trinity College, University of Bridgeport, University of Hartford, University of New Haven, Wesleyan University and Yale University. These institutions are bound by a common commitment to quality instruction and dedicated to collaborative efforts that strengthen the independent sector of higher education in Connecticut. CCIC serves its member institutions through government relations, public policy development, research analysis, communications and coordinated member services.

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