The cost of attending CSU includes more than tuition and fees. Students pursuing a college degree also face student-related living costs such as books and supplies, food, housing, and transportation. The total cost of attendance can exceed $27,000 per year.

Most financial aid is linked primarily to tuition and falls short in addressing student-related living costs. Federal, state, and campus-based aid covers roughly 45% of the annual cost of attendance, leaving low-income students to cover nearly $15,000 in expenses.

Addressing students’ unmet financial need is essential to their college success. Policymakers could focus financial aid on the total cost of attendance – not just tuition – to ensure higher education remains affordable and accessible for all Californians.

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