

Chapter 1

About the California Student Aid Commission

The Commission Vision Statement

Toward a California that invests in educational opportunity, fosters an active effective citizenry, and provides a higher quality of social and economic life for its citizens.

The Commission Mission Statement

Making education beyond high school financially accessible to all Californians.

1.1 Commission History

The California Student Aid Commission (Commission) was created by state law in 1955 as the California State Scholarship Commission. The new agency's primary mission was to oversee the California State Scholarship program, the forerunner of today's Cal Grant program. Since that time, the Commission has grown to administer grant, loan assumption, outreach and other specialized programs that total over \$1.4 billion dollars for 2011-12.

Policy Leadership Role

The Commission's responsibility is to provide leadership on financial aid issues and to make public policy recommendations concerning financial aid programs. To meet these responsibilities, the Commission collects information on student financial aid issues, evaluates the effectiveness of its programs, conducts research assessing California's financial aid needs, engages in long range planning as a foundation for program improvement, and disseminates information to parents, students, California educational institutions, the California Legislature and the Governor.

1.2 Membership, Meetings, Executive Director, Committees

COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Governor Appointees- The California Student Aid Commission consists of 15 members. The Governor, with a two-thirds consent of the Senate, appoints 11 Commission members. By law, these appointments must include:

- Three representatives from the general public
- One representative from a California secondary school
- Two representatives, each of whom must be a student enrolled in a California Postsecondary educational institution (in different segments at the time of appointment)
- One representative from the University of California
- One representative from the California State University
- One representative from the California Community Colleges
- One representative from a California independent college or university, and
- One representative from a public, proprietary or nonprofit California postsecondary school

(C.E.C. 69510)

Chapter 1

Assembly and Senate Appointees- The Speaker of the Assembly appoints two Commission members and the Senate Rules Committee appoints two members. These members represent the general public. (C.E.C. 69510 (a-h))

Most Commission members are appointed to four-year terms, unless they are filling a vacant, unexpired term. In that case, they complete the remainder of the unexpired term. Student members serve two-year terms. (C.E.C. 69511 (a))

ScholarShare Investment Board- One member of the Commission is appointed by the Governor to serve on the investment board of the Golden State ScholarShare Trust. ScholarShare is California's federal and state 529 college savings program administered by the State Treasurer's Office.

Commission Meetings, Correspondence

Commission meetings are usually held five or six times annually and the meetings are open to the public.

Letters and informational materials addressed to Commission members may be sent to the Commission:

California Student Aid Commission
Executive Office
P.O. Box 419026
Rancho Cordova, CA 95741-9026

Executive Director

The Executive Director is the Commission's Chief Executive Officer and is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the Commission. The Commission may delegate authority to the Executive Director to sign contracts and carry out the policies and regulatory directions of the Commission and conduct the day-to-day business of the Commission. The Executive Director and Commission staff welcomes public participation in all student financial aid matters. (C.E.C. 69513 and 69513.1)

Advisory Committees

Note: Under the current fiscal environment and due to severe budget restrictions, the Commission has made the decision to suspend all advisory committee meetings. The Commission staff will continue to communicate program changes and issues with the financial aid community and other higher education partners to obtain feedback and recommendations when necessary.

Grant Advisory Committee

The Grant Advisory Committee (GAC) was created by the Commission in 1986 and is not authorized through statute. The Commission approves the purpose and composition of GAC, appoints the members, and sets appointment terms. The Commission approves the annual goals of GAC and the number and purpose of workgroups that may be formed by GAC.

The composition of GAC is set by the Commission. GAC consists of 20 members appointed by the Commission based on nominations it receives from nominating authorities as follows:

- Ten school representatives: two from each of the five postsecondary segments*
- Five students: one from each of the five postsecondary segments
- One California Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (CASFAA) representative and
- Three K-12 school representatives, one of whom must be a high school counselor

**These segments include the University of California, the California State University, the California Community Colleges, private nonprofit postsecondary education institutions, and private for-profit postsecondary education institutions.*

Chapter 1

California Student Opportunity and Access Program (Cal-SOAP)

The Cal-SOAP Advisory Committee was established pursuant to Section 69562 of the California Education Code, which prescribes the composition and purpose of the committee.

The Cal-SOAP Advisory Committee advises Cal-SOAP project directors and the California Student Aid Commission on the development and operation of the Cal-SOAP projects, as well as other student outreach activities related to the Cal-SOAP program.

The Committee consists of the following members:

- Three representatives of outreach programs, representing the University of California, the California State University, and the California Community Colleges
- One representative of private colleges and universities, appointed by the Association of California Independent College and Universities
- Two secondary school staff, appointed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Two persons representing the general public, one appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly and the other by the Senate Rules Committee, and
- One college campus financial aid officer, appointed by the Commission