

Fast Blast

California Student Aid Commission

From Diana Fuentes-Michel
Executive Director, California Student Aid Commission

November 15, 2007

In support of the Commission's ongoing goal of providing California's financial aid community with proactive and current updates, we are providing this update on programs and projects. Please share this with any interested person who may not have received this newsletter.

Chafee Grants awarded: Additional Grants may be Available

The Commission awarded all available Chafee grants for the 2007-08 academic year. A total of \$13.7 million was offered to 2,880 students.

Occasionally, checks are returned to the Commission for students who are no longer eligible for the awards due to unsatisfactory academic progress or not maintaining at least half-time academic status. The Commission will re-award these limited state and federal funds to other students in need.

Chafee grants assist youth who are or were in foster care. Students may receive up to \$5,000 a year for job training or college.

2008/09 GPA Verification Forms

Cal Grant GPA Verification forms for the *March 2 filing deadline can now be downloaded from the CSAC website at www.csac.ca.gov/doc.asp?id=1177. We encourage all schools to upload their GPAs electronically to help us reduce the number of paper GPAs we process.

To order a large number of forms for shipping from the CSAC Warehouse, please use the EDFUND school forms and publication ordering system under the schools tab at www.edfund.org. Look for the Cal Grant GPA Verification Form - March 2. - G-4

** March 2, 2008 falls on a Sunday, so GPA forms will be accepted if postmarked by Monday, March 3, 2008.*

APLE Nominations Still Available

The Commission is still accepting nominations for the Assumption Program of Loans for Education (APLE) for the 2007-08 academic year.

APLE is a competitive teacher incentive program designed to encourage outstanding students, district interns and out-of-state teachers to become California teachers in subject areas where a critical teacher

shortage has been identified or in designated schools meeting specific criteria established by the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Schools are encouraged to fill their allocations to assist upcoming students interested in a teaching career. APLE assumes up to \$19,000 of a student's loan debt in return for four years of paid teaching service in either a designated subject area or a designated school.

APLE applications for the 2007-08 academic year can be obtained from a school APLE coordinator or on our website at www.csac.ca.gov.

Cash for College Workshops

High schools, community colleges, university campuses and community groups may visit www.calgrants.org to register for financial aid workshops for the 2008 series beginning in January through the *March 2 Cal Grant deadline.

The Cash for College program is a partnership effort that offers hands-on, line-by-line assistance for low-income and first generation college-bound students and their families in applying for Cal Grants and other financial aid.

High school seniors who attend a workshop and complete a Cal Grant application by the *March 2 deadline may qualify for a \$1,000 scholarship.

The location of upcoming Cash for College workshops in your area will be posted at www.calgrants.org in mid-November.

The Commission Speaks To Legislators

The Commission held a Legislative briefing at the State Capitol on November 8 to share information on the affordability and access challenges facing California students today and the impact these challenges may have on our state economy tomorrow. Given the current college going rates in California, it is important that our policy makers are aware of the benefits of the financial aid programs administered by the

Commission and the support we receive from our stakeholders.

We informed the Legislators on Cal Grants, Chafee, Cal-SOAP, Cash for College, loan forgiveness and our specialized programs. We also highlighted the importance of delivering financial aid information to students, parents, high school counselors and financial aid administrators through our award-winning Public Awareness Campaign.

We were honored that special guests, Assemblywoman Fiona Ma and Assemblyman Hector De La Torre, joined us and spoke about the importance of the Commission's programs and how legislation can help maximize Cal Grants and financial aid opportunities for our State's students.

I want to sincerely thank those of you who attended the conference as our stakeholders are an important part of the success of our programs.



Cal Grant Campaign wins Prism Award

The Commission's 2007 Cal Grant Campaign was recognized in Hollywood at the annual PRSA-Los Angeles *Prism Awards* for the Best Public Education Campaign.

The Commission strives to make education beyond high school financially accessible to all Californians. Each year our Public Awareness Campaign reaches out to parents and young adults and provides information by crafting and delivering Cal Grant and financial aid messages to increase the number of students signing up for Cal Grants and other financial aid.

The Campaign features television and radio advertising, interactive web activities and outreach to California high schools and institution segments. The Campaign also provides College Cash Boxes for high school counselors and financial aid administrators that contain informational tool kits to assist them in helping students apply for Cal Grants and other types of financial aid both in English and Spanish.

This year's campaign is under way and runs through the Cal Grant March 2 deadline.

Cash boxes are expected to be sent to schools the week of November 19.

New Look to Our Web Site

Click on to www.csac.ca.gov and you will see a new look to our Web site as part of the Governor's initiative to implement new standards for all State department sites.

The new look is just the first step in our overall Web site redesign. We have introduced three new features: tab navigation, a site map and a Google search appliance that will let you search our site, as well as all state government agency Web sites. We will make additional changes to the content and navigation over the coming months to make it easier for students and parents, schools, partners and other visitors to find the information they are seeking.

Talk with us- The Commission appreciates any comments or feedback you may have regarding the *Fast Blast*. Please forward your comments to fastblast@csac.ca.gov. If this message reaches school staff who are not currently on the Commission's ListServ and wish to be added, they can log on to csac.ca.gov and click on Links and CSAC List Services.

