

FAST BLAST

OUR MISSION: "Make education beyond high school financially accessible to all Californians."

DIANA FUENTES-MICHEL, Executive Director, California Student Aid Commission



JANUARY 14, 2011



A Message from Executive Director, Diana Fuentes-Michel

The Governor released his 2011-12 budget on January 10. While the Cal Grant program remains intact, I wanted to provide our stakeholders a synopsis that identifies the changes to the Commission's funding sources and operations budgets.

As a reminder, the Governor's budget is the initial step in the budget development process. This year's proposal seeks to close a \$28 billion deficit through reduction of a number of state programs. The Commission is acutely aware of the unprecedented budget crisis facing our state. For over 50 years, we have offered opportunities for affordable postsecondary access and education to thousands of students, and look forward to continuing this valuable work.

The successes of Cal Grant recipients are significant. Since the inception of the program over 50 years ago, students have passionately demonstrated they are willing to work hard to achieve an education beyond high school in order to build a foundation for their future and make a valuable contribution to California's workforce.

The new administration faces many challenges. As partners with the Legislature's efforts to achieve solvency for our state, we recognize that difficult decisions are facing all of us. The Commission's efforts to provide continued access for our future leaders who have earned and deserve an optimistic employment future will continue.

As we navigate through the budget approval process, we will continue to advise you regarding any changes to the following proposals. On behalf of the Commission and staff, we thank you for your hard work for California students and wish you a prosperous new year!

PROPOSED BUDGET OVERVIEW

There are no proposed reductions to Cal Grants or Specialized Programs. The following funding increases reflect Commission staff projections:

2010-11 Current Year: A proposed increase of \$147.2 million to support revised estimates for larger numbers of Cal Grant recipients and a 5% mid-year fee increase by CSU.

2011-12 Budget Year: A proposed increase of \$369.5 million to reflect revised estimates that includes greater numbers of Cal Grant recipients and fee increases by CSU and UC.

In addition:

A \$946.8 million shift in Cal Grant Program funding from the General Fund to the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (TANF) through a reimbursement from the Department of Social Services was proposed. (Similar concepts were rejected by the Legislature in 2009-10 & 2010-11.)

A \$30 million decrease in General Funds for Cal Grants is proposed in anticipation of receiving \$30 million for Cal Grant program costs from ECMC, utilizing the Student Loan Operating Fund.

\$889,000 was identified for loan assumption payments for John R. Justice Grant Program recipients for the current and budget year. An inter-agency agreement with CalEMA provides \$52,000 to administer awards for a program designed to attract and retain individuals to serve as public defenders and prosecutors.

The proposed budget eliminated an allocation of \$1.2 million and nine positions received in 2010-11 to reestablish services previously provided by EdFund due to services now being provided by ECMC. Six additional positions were eliminated due to the workforce cap.

2010 COMMISSION UPDATE

Each year the Commission strives to improve its services for our stakeholders. We are pleased to share these 2010 achievements with our valued partners!

The Cal Grant Program: A Record Year!

- Over 93,310 High School entitlement awards were processed for 2010-11, an increase of 18 percent from 2009.

A New Partner: Improved Student Services

- The successful completion of the ECMC/CSAC Operating Agreement resulted in improved communication services and program enhancements for California students.

Technology: Enhanced Innovation and Efficiency

- WebGrants for Students (WGS) provides 24/7 service to more than 400,000 active users.
- WGS hits surpassed 750,000 in 2010!
- WGS implemented an improved and simplified password reset for students.
- Account Reset Screen (E): students can now reset their accounts if they have expired.
- Critical and time sensitive messages are updated timely on the WGS home page. Students can go online 24/7 and view early notification of significant events.
- Account Identifier: Schools are able to see if a Cal Grant applicant has created a WGS account.
- Implemented in 2009, Cal Grant C applicants can submit their application online in WGS.
- Successful testing was completed for a GPA File upload without Social Security numbers.
- A new and useful report for high schools was created to identify the number of GPA's submitted to the Commission for their school by method of submission (electronic or paper). This report also includes the number of awarded Cal Grants.

Beyond Cal Grants: Specialized Programs

- The California National Guard Educational Assistance Program was launched with the California Military Department and provides an educational incentive to up to 1,000 active service members in the California National Guard and State Military Reserve.
- Chafee Program: 1,079 new and 1,564 renewal Chafee awards were given, a state and federal combined total of more than \$11.6 million.
- APLE: Credentialed teacher awards were initiated.
- John R. Justice Program: In partnership with CalEMA, this program repays educational loans for federal public defenders and local and state prosecutors.

CAL GRANT ALTERNATIVE DELIVERY SYSTEM PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

The Commission is providing a five-day public comment period on the regulations for the Cal Grant Alternative Delivery System (ADS) Pilot Program beginning Wednesday, January 12, 2011. This period allows interested parties to comment on the proposed re-adoption of emergency regulations. Please direct questions to Kathy Spencer at (916) 464.3021 or at kspencer@csac.ca.gov.

High School Shout Out

Our new publication, "High School Shout Out", was created to enhance Commission communication with college advisors, counselors and outreach staff who provide guidance to their students as they navigate the often confusing process of applying for and receiving financial aid to pay college expenses. Shout Out can be located at: <http://www.csac.ca.gov/doc.asp?id=1422>.

To begin receiving a copy, sign up for our List Service:

- Go to the CSAC main page, click on "Links" on the left-hand side, and click on "CSAC List Services - Click here to subscribe." Please select "Professional."
- Enter the following Username and password:
Username: students
Password: 1SEC2001 (case sensitive)
- Type in your e-mail address, and choose the list from which you want to receive messages. Click submit.



FUND YOUR FUTURE

More than 400,000 English & Spanish workbooks have been ordered since November!

This **free** workbook and brochure is focused on helping students and their parents prepare for college and apply for financial aid. Major financial aid programs at-a-glance and a basic steps checklist maximize financial aid options to access higher education. Order now!

TO COMPLETE AN ORDER FORM:

- Go to www.csac.ca.gov, select the "Publications" tab and then select the "Publications Order Form"
- Call **916.526.7282** or fax the form to **916.526.8838**



CHECKING IN ON CAL GRANT STATUS

During this critical financial aid application period, several options are available to students to easily learn more about their Cal Grant status:

✓ WebGrants4 Students

24/7 on-line access is available after a student creates a WebGrants4Students account by clicking through to <https://mygrantinfo.csac.ca.gov/logon.asp>. After opening an account, students can view their award status, make changes, or correspond with Commission staff.

✓ E-Mail

Students and parents may submit e-mail questions to studentsupport@csac.ca.gov.

✓ Call Center

Our Call Center staff can be reached at 888.224.7268 between 10 a.m. and 12:00 noon, and between 1:00 p.m. and 4:50 p.m., Pacific Standard Time.

Chafee and Byrd Disbursements

Each term, the Commission releases Specialized program funds through a check disbursement process for the Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship and Chafee Grants.

In order to assist institutions with their planning, early notification will now be made to participating institutions through an Operations Memo or Special Alert.

We anticipate that we will be able to inform you of the disbursement timing within one week of the receipt of the check at your institution.



FAFSA ON THE WEB WORKSHEET

The FAFSA On The Web Worksheet is now available to help students prepare and complete the FAFSA online.

The 2011-12 Worksheet is available at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/fotw1112/pdf/fafsaws12c.pdf>

When the worksheet is complete, fill out and submit the FAFSA on line at www.fafsa.ed.gov.

The deadline for submission
of a FAFSA and GPA is

March 2, 2011

California Student Aid Commission Addresses

Our mailing address:

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*Please direct mail to one of the following branches:

- Executive Office
- Administration & External Affairs
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