

FAST BLAST

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



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

MARCH, 2011

A MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DIANA FUENTES-MICHEL



The March 2 Cal Grant application deadline is now behind us. As of this writing, Commission staff reports that application submissions are 22,000 ahead of last year. 2011-12 Cal Grant A and B Entitlement awards are at 86,419, compared to 63,501 for the 2010-11 academic year.

This overwhelming response can be attributed to the dedicated work of teachers, counselors and volunteers who devoted their personal time to assuring that low income students were aware that help was available and encouraged them to fill out the FAFSA and submit their GPA's.

In addition to the important individual support at the institution level, we are also proud of the growth of the *Cash for College* workshop program. This year more than 600 workshops were held in 50 counties throughout our state (compared to more than 500 last year!) We are, again, grateful to school administrative staff for their help and extend an additional thank you to the many volunteers from our community based partnerships who contributed to the success of this interactive bi-lingual program.

The Commission recognizes that the volume of applicants articulates the critical financial need of students during these challenging economic times for California. The positive message that help is available clearly resonated throughout our state. Commission members and staff, and students and parents, clearly realize that an educated workforce is vital for fiscal recovery.

As you are aware, budget hearings and discussions related to proposed resolutions to the current deficit are continuing. Commission staff is attending all meetings relevant to Cal Grants and higher education. We will provide updates as more information is known.

Diana Fuentes-Michel
1975-1979 Cal Grant B Recipient

Arthur Marmaduke High School Counselor Award

The Arthur Marmaduke High School Counselor Award, named after the first California Student Aid Commission Executive Director, honors excellence in student counseling. Recipients are determined based on nominations submitted from high school principals or their designee. For further information and application information, please visit the Commission's website or click on the following link: <http://www.csac.ca.gov/doc.asp?id=1425>.

Nominations are due March 30, 2011!

Legislative Update



On February 24, 2011 the Commission met and took positions on the following bills:

AB 9 (Portantino) requires the Office of the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges to establish a voluntary pilot program to increase student participation in state and federal financial aid programs; requires the Legislative Analyst to report to the Legislature on the results of the program and make recommendations for statewide expansion of the pilot program.

Position: SUPPORT

AB 130 (Cedillo) enacts the California Dream Act of 2011 and allows a non-resident pursuant to AB 540 law (who has attended, for three or more years, and graduated from a secondary school) to apply for and participate in all institutional student aid programs administered by the UC, CSU, and, CCC, including the CCC Board of Governor's fee waiver. The number of aid awards to California residents may not be diminished as a result of this provision.* **Position: SUPPORT**

AB 131 (Cedillo) allows a non-resident pursuant to AB 540 law (who has attended, for three or more years, and graduated from a secondary school) to apply for and participate in any student financial aid program administered by the state to the full extent permitted by federal law and requires the Student Aid Commission to establish procedures and forms that enable those persons who are exempt to apply for all financial aid programs.* **Position: SUPPORT**

* AB 130 and 131 have since been amended. AB 130 now only allows AB 540 eligible students to apply and receive institutional scholarships derived from non-state funds. AB 131 allows AB 540 eligible students to apply for and participate in all applicable state aid programs, the CCC Board of Governor's fee waiver, and all public institution aid programs.



KEEPING UP WITH THE COMMISSION

In an effort to provide timely information and operational updates to our constituents, and reduce paper and mailing costs, the Commission utilizes electronic technology in the forms of Operations Memos, Policy Bulletins and Special Alerts. Following is a synopsis and links to the most recent communications. To begin receiving these valuable publications, sign up through CSAC List Services. From the CSAC home page, select "[Links](#)" and then select "[CSAC List Services](#)."

Operations Memo's (Grant Operations Memo's/GOM)

GOM 2011-08, issued 3/3/2011, provided information on spring term payments for the Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship program.

GOM 2011-07, issued 2/23/2011, announced the initial 2011-12 Cal Grant selection process for the High School Entitlement cycle.

Special Alert's (Grant Special Alert/GSA)

GSA 2011-08, issued 3/10/2011 explained and announced the 2011-12 Child Development new and renewal processes which provides a grant award of up to \$2,000 per year per eligible student.

GSA 2011-07, issued 3/7/2011, announced the Commission's intent to seek adoption of an emergency regulation defining "Mandatory Systemwide Fees" for purposes of the Cal Grant Program. Time sensitive, 3/12/2011.

GSA 2011-06, issued 3/2/2011, promoted Cash for College "[CollegeWeekLive](#)", an online event for students and parents to interact with financial aid professionals regarding financial aid.

GSA 2011-05, issued 2/17/2011, provided an update regarding pending Cal Grant Disbursements for 2009-10 and a reminder regarding 2010 interest remission requirements.

GSA 2011-04, issued 2/16/2011, provided a reminder about the 4/1/2011 deadline for the 2011-12 Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship applications. This is a federal award of \$1,500 annually for up to 4 years for eligible students.

Read all GOM's at

<http://www.csac.ca.gov/secured/operationmemos/2011.asp>

Read all GSA's at

<http://www.csac.ca.gov/secured/specialalerts/2011.asp>

AB 1129 (Portantino) allows the federally designated student loan guaranty agency for California to access Employment Development Department (EDD) information for purposes of contacting delinquent and defaulted borrowers. The guaranty agency may only have access to EDD data as long as it has a valid operating agreement with the California Student Aid Commission. **Position: SPONSOR**

AB 760 (Alquist) makes technical, non-substantive changes to the Donahoe Higher Education Act. **Position: SPONSOR ****

***This is currently a spot bill, but Commission staff is working with Senator Alquist to achieve her desire for additional oversight and reporting in the Cal Grant program.*

The Commission has taken a position of WATCH for the following:

AB 970 (Fong) amends current Cal Grant law to provide step increases in the number of Cal Grant B students receiving tuition and/or fees in their first academic year over the next four years from 2% in 2011-12, to 25% in 2012-13, to 50% in 2013-14, to 75% in 2014-15, and finally increasing to 100% in the 2015-16 academic year and beyond.

SB 181 (Liu) prohibits any increase in the mandatory systemwide fees charged to resident undergraduate students enrolled in the UC or the CSU from being effective before three months have elapsed after the date on which the fee increase is adopted and requires the UC Regents and the CSU Trustees to develop methodologies for the "gradual, moderate, and predictable" adjustment of fees in accordance with a prescribed procedure.

AB 1273 (Grove) states that it is the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation that would codify Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's "*Governor's Reorganization Plan 1: Reforming California's Boards and Commissions*" from 2004.

Commission Contact Information

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*Please direct mail to one of the following branches:

- Executive Office
- Administration & External Affairs
- Program Administration & Services
- Information Technology Services
- Federal Policy & Programs
- Legal & Audit Services



PLEASE NOTE!

March 2011 Call Center Hours Are 1:00 PM until
4:45 PM, PST (888.224.7268)