



Fast Blast From the California Student Aid Commission

December 2006 Fast Blast from the Commission

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



In support of the Commission's goal of providing the most current information on issues and projects facing financial aid directors and staff, we are initiating the "CSAC Fast Blast" to schools around the state. You will receive the Fast Blast each month with the latest updates from the Commission. Please share this with any interested party who may not have received this newsletter.

As we all approach the college application/financial aid season, I want to update you on recent legislative actions and provide you with program updates.

Cal Grant Transfer Entitlement maximum age changed

New legislation raises the maximum age for Cal Grant Transfer Entitlement awards, giving older students more chances to qualify for a Cal Grant Transfer Entitlement award. Assembly Bill 2813, passed and signed into law this year, raises the maximum age to receive a Cal Grant Transfer Entitlement award to up to age 28. Beginning in January 2007, when the bill takes effect, eligible students transferring from a California Community College to a four-year institution in California may be eligible for a Cal Grant Transfer Entitlement award if they are under age 28 by December 31 of the award year. The previous maximum age limit had been under age 24. All other previous requirements apply to all Cal Grant Transfer Entitlement award recipients. If you have any questions about the new legislation, contact Darrine Distefano at the Commission at (916) 526-8295.

Cal Grant Public Awareness Campaign has new look and some new materials

The Commission's Cal Grant Public Awareness Campaign is in full swing now. The College Cash Box for 2007 has been shipped to schools and colleges. The Box and some of the materials inside have a new look, developed with input from several focus group sessions with students and parents. The new design is black and yellow and features a "ticket" with the message "Where will it take you?"- a phrase that should get the attention of your students and remind them to apply for financial aid in general and a Cal Grant in particular.

Some materials are familiar- including the popular Lesson Plan, Top Ten Things lists for students and parents in English and Spanish, an expanded FAFSA Tip Sheet, and the DVD containing four Cal Grant videos-for students and parents, also in English and Spanish. Some materials are new-including a student leaders' packet of materials. It contains items such as an introduction letter, a sample press release, small flyers, a banner, and decals that student leaders can use to create an event or campaign to generate awareness and interest in applying for a Cal Grant. If you have any questions or comments about the Cal Grant Public Awareness Campaign materials, contact Carole Durante, the Commission's Manager of Public Relations, at (916) 526-7991.

Calgrants.org is updated and has a new look

In order to improve service to students, parents and the financial aid community that we serve, the

Commission updated the look, feel and navigation of the calgrants.org Web site. The new calgrants.org was launched in early December, just in time for students and parents to use as they search for financial aid, and for organizers and volunteers to sign up for workshops (see below). We are now developing a Spanish-language version of the Web site, which will be finished soon.

We hope this improved service will allow easier navigation through the Commission's many Cal Grant programs, forms and services. Your feedback is important to us, so check out *calgrants.org* and let us know what you think. You can email Cheryl Lenz at *clenz@csac.ca.gov* with your suggestions.

More workshop sites for 2007 Cash for College program

As always, the Commission's Cal Grant Public Awareness Campaign is working with the Cash for College program, which helps students apply for financial aid, and assists counselors and others with staffing financial aid workshops. Encourage your students and parents to logon to calgrants.org to find a workshop nearby. Once again, we're offering even more \$1,000 scholarships for high school seniors who attend a workshop and complete the financial aid process by the March 2 Cal Grant application deadline.

To host a Cash for College workshop, visit calgrants.org and click on "Workshops," then "For Organizers." For questions or information on Cash for College, contact Despina Costopoulos, Statewide Coordinator, at *cashforcollege@csac.ca.gov*.

Emergency regulation for schools' late submission of student grade point averages (GPA)

The Commission recently issued an emergency regulation extending the grace period for a request to submit late GPAs for Cal Grant Entitlement award applicants for the 2006-07 award year only. The Commission will consider all school requests on behalf of Entitlement award applicants, if the requests were received from schools by August 31, 2006, and the requests certified that the students were not at fault for the late submission of GPAs. School principals recently received a letter from the Commission explaining the emergency regulation.

The Commission is currently processing these GPAs and will make Cal Grant Entitlement awards as appropriate. Students will be notified individually by the Commission whether or not they are awarded a Cal Grant. If you have any questions, contact Sanjay Singh at (916) 526-8254.

Commission continues valuable stakeholders meetings

The Commission's executive director and managers will continue sessions with new legislators, financial aid and school officials over the next few months to ensure the Commission responds to key concerns from the field, strengthens existing partnerships and builds new relationships. "It is our ultimate mission to maximize student access to financial aid for higher education," said Executive Director Diana Fuentes-Michel. "We cannot do it alone, and we wish to continue to look for new and creative ways to team together to accomplish our shared goals and benefit our partners' program efforts." New communications and partnership strategies and opportunities will be shared next year, so stay tuned! To join in this effort, please call Tom Mays, the Commission's public affairs director, at (916) 526-8019 or email *tmays@csac.ca.gov*.

Regulations for new programs

The Commission is preparing regulations for three new programs:

- SNAPLE or the State Nursing Assumption Program of Loans for Education,
- NGAPLE or National Guard Assumption Program of Loans for Education, *and*
- SFAPLE or State Facilities Assumption Program of Loans for Education.

The SNAPLE allows students who wish to teach in nursing programs in California to apply for state assumption of loans for an education that leads to a nursing teaching credential. NGAPLE is a loan assumption program established to provide an incentive for persons who seek a degree or vocational

diploma to enlist or reenlist in the National Guard, State Military Reserve or Naval Militia. The SFAPLE is a loan assumption program for clinical registered nurses who are employees of specified state facilities that have high staff vacancy rates.

Look for Commission *Operations Memos* in the future regarding the finalization of regulations for each of these programs. If you have questions regarding these new programs, contact the Commission toll-free at (888) 224-7268.

Welcome new Commissioners!

Several new Commissioners have joined the Commission recently. I am pleased to introduce:

Chad G. Charton - appointed in August 2006. He currently attends California State University, Northridge as an undergraduate in pursuit of a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration with concentrations in both finance and real estate. Mr. Charton served as the immediate past chairman, president and chief executive of the Associated Students, Inc. at California State University, Northridge and other leadership roles.

Daniel Friedlander - appointed in April 2006. Mr. Friedlander is director emeritus of the California Senate Fellows, a graduate fellowship program jointly sponsored by the California Senate and the Center for California Studies at California State University, Sacramento. Previous positions held by Mr. Friedlander include chief of staff to former state Senator Quentin L. Kopp, assistant to the president at Sonoma State University, senior consultant to the California Legislature's Joint Committee on Postsecondary Education, and associate consultant to the Joint Committee on the Master Plan for Higher Education.

Dennis Galligani - appointed in October 2006. Dr. Galligani is the executive director of Alliance for Regional Collaboration to Heighten Educational Success (ARCHES). He served the University of California as assistant vice chancellor of academic affairs and later as associate vice president of student academic services in the Office of the President at UC Irvine. Previously he was assistant dean of students for Quincy College.

J. Michael Ortiz - appointed in March 2006. Dr. Ortiz has served as the president of California State Polytechnic University, Pomona since 2003. He was previously provost and vice president of academic affairs for California State University, Fresno and associate provost and professor of special education. He has also served as interim and associate provost at the University of Southern Colorado, and dean of continuing education and director of the University summer school.

Alice D. Perez - appointed in May 2006. Ms. Perez is vice president of the Sacramento Municipal Utility District's Residential Services programs, serving more than 500,000 residential customers. She was previously vice president of U.S. Bank's national Multicultural Banking initiatives, providing guidance on financial services to Hispanic and other multicultural markets. In addition, she coordinated the bank's national outreach efforts and developed strategic partnerships to provide Hispanic, African American and Asian communities enhanced access to financial services.

Talk with us- The Commission appreciates any comments or feedback you may have on the *Fast Blast*. Please forward your comments to fastblast@csac.ca.gov.



**On behalf of the Commission and Commission staff,
I want to wish each of you a wonderful Holiday Season.**

December 14, 2006