

Information Item

California Student Aid Commission

Consideration of terms for Commission officers

Questions have been raised about the length of the term for Commission officers elected at the November 2012 Commission meeting.

Education Code section 69512 provides that “[t]he members of the commission shall annually elect a chairperson from the members of the commission.”

The Commission previously held elections for Commission officers during Commission meetings held in June, for one-year terms beginning on July 1 through June 30 of the following calendar year.

However, the Commission deviated from this process beginning in October 2008. The previous Governor withdrew the appointment of his appointee, who had been elected Chair, due to disagreement over the proper oversight of EdFund and the federal student loan guarantee program. The Commission then elected a new Chair at its October 23, 2008, meeting.

The previous Governor then proposed to decentralize the Cal Grant program as part of his 2009 Budget, putting the continued existence of the Commission and Commission programs in issue. Rather than elect new officers in June 2009, the Commission extended the terms of the existing Commission officers “until the Commission elects new officers after the State Budget issues involving decentralization and consolidation are resolved.” (California Student Aid Commission Meeting Minutes, June 30-July 1, 2009.) The decentralization proposal ultimately failed.

The Commission, however, did not hold elections in 2010 or 2011 due to the uncertainties involving the then-Governor’s attempted sale of, and superseding action by the federal government over, the student loan guarantee program. The resolution of that issue, together with the current Administration’s new appointments to the Commission, provided the stability that led to the Commission’s elections of new officers at the November 15-16, 2012, meeting.

The length of the term was discussed only in passing during that meeting. A Commissioner asked “How long are these terms?” The Executive Director replied: “Typically, we did one year. There have been times where the Commission as a matter of consensus and timing has decided to delay election because of -- there is no term limit for the Chairmanship.”

Former Chair Keene, describing the reasons for his four-year tenure as chair, stated: “Also candidly, nobody wanted the term. So the term extended and extended and we missed elections. And the election we have today should have happened in midyear. But how could we do that when nobody knew anybody? You know, so now things are getting stable and it's going to be different.”

There was no action by Commissioners affirming, denying or changing the one-year term. The only other comment specifically about the length of the term was from a Commissioner stating: “Actually, one year seems really short to get rolling.”

Responsible Person(s): Keith Yamanaka
Chief Deputy Director