



California Community Colleges Student Financial Aid Administrators Association

www.cccsfaaa.org

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Decentralization of the Cal Grant Programs

California Student Aid Commission Meeting

April 16, 2009

The California Community College Student Financial Aid Administrators Association (CCCSFAAA) represents nearly 500 members who are primarily financial aid administrators from the 110 community colleges in California. As an association, we are supportive of the discussions regarding decentralization. Without a specific detailed proposal, in the form of a legislative bill, we cannot take a position at this time.

However, we would like to highlight several key concepts that should be kept in mind in any discussions regarding decentralization of the Cal Grant Program. In addition, CCCSFAA will raise some pertinent questions that warrant further investigation.

Key Concepts

- Any change to the current delivery model should be designed to better serve students. We believe students are interested in a process that reduces the agencies or institutions that they need to interact with as well as having clear and complete communication regarding their aid eligibility.
- With respect to institutions that administer the Cal Grant Program, there needs to be a program that recognizes the importance of following other aid delivery models. With the increasing complexity in the federal financial aid programs, having a state grant program that is similar to other programs we administer warrants some consideration and may in some cases provide for some efficiencies.

Questions

Without a specific detailed proposal, the association cannot comment on how decentralization may or may not work. We will however pose a few questions to consider when discussing any fully decentralization model without some type of central authority.

- Eligibility for Cal Grants is currently based on a student's high school GPA in some cases. California community colleges are not allowed to collect high school academic transcripts as part of the college application process per California Education Code. How would community colleges collect this high school GPA information if there was no central entity?



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- Students are currently restricted to a time limit on how long they receive the Cal Grant. The current grant is “portable” in that it is a statewide award that can be moved from one school to another. How would this aspect of the program be continued under a decentralized model?
- The Competitive Cal Grant Program has a limited number of awards and is distributed to students across the segments of higher education. Our question is how a decentralized delivery model could change these patterns of awards since community college students receive a disproportionate amount of these awards by design.

Our primary concern in any discussions of decentralization must be the question of what best serves the students. The Cal Grant Program is an important part of access and choice for students pursuing post secondary education in California.

CCCSFAAA members welcome the possibilities presented with a new delivery model but we request the opportunity to be part of any discussions that help shape or design any system. We feel the expertise of those that administer the program daily is vital to designing a cohesive and coherent system of delivery.