

Information/Action Item

California Student Aid Commission

Report of the Dream Act Committee - Update on the Dream Act Application, including presentations from the University of California, California State University and California Community Colleges

The California Dream Act of 2011, authored by Assembly Member Gil Cedillo, allows AB 540 students to apply for and receive state-funded financial aid, such as institutional grants, community college fee waivers, Cal Grants and other programs.

The California Student Aid Commission (Commission) uses the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), together with the student's grade point average, as the application for Cal Grants. The FAFSA requires the applicant to have a Social Security Number (SSN). However, many AB 540 students do not have SSNs and are unable to use the FAFSA. To enable AB540 students to apply for Cal Grants, we have to develop an application similar to the FAFSA.

We began meeting last year with representatives from the public segment offices, student focus groups, and other stakeholders to discuss the development of the California Dream Act Application for Cal Grants. The initial plan was for the application to be available on January 1, 2013, the beginning of the application period for Cal Grants for the 2013-14 academic year. This would coincide with the release of the 2013-14 FAFSA.

However, the California State University (CSU) and the University of California (UC) indicated that institutional aid for AB 540 students was authorized as of January 1, 2013, rather than beginning of academic year 2013-14. They thus required a Dream Act application before January 2013 to determine financial eligibility for institutional aid.

UC and CSU asked for our assistance to develop a Dream Act application for institutional aid. They indicated that they lacked the means to develop the application, especially with an abbreviated deadline. They said that they needed an application by April 2012, so that they could make institutional aid decisions at the beginning of the 2012-13 academic year, though institutional aid could be paid only for terms beginning on or after January 1, 2013.

Despite our concerns about our own resources, we agreed to rearrange our priorities to develop the Dream Act Application for UC and CSU AB 540 students applying for institutional aid for the spring term of the 2012-13 academic year. We met weekly with segmental representatives in the development of this first phase of the Dream Act Application, which was successfully launched by the April 2012 institutional deadline.

Over 9,300 applications have been successfully submitted to date. Both CSU and UC campuses have used the data from the Dream Act application we developed to qualify students for institutional aid.

The Dream Act Committee, chaired by Commissioner John R. McDowell, Jr., originally reported to the Commission during the Commission's May 17, 2012 meeting that the Committee had reviewed the plans for, and discussed issues arising from, Dream Act application implementation.

As a result of Commission discussion, Committee Chair McDowell invited UC, CSU and the California Community Colleges to share their experiences with the Dream Act application at the September Commission meeting. Each public segment graciously accepted the invitation and a representative from each will make a presentation at this September Commission meeting.

We continue to work to develop the Dream Act Application for Cal Grants, which we identify as Phase 2. We hold regular meetings with segmental representatives to continue identifying issues and develop recommendations for additional processes, such as verification.

No less important, we are planning extensive outreach to AB 540 students about Cal Grants. Attached is a list of the outreach events at which we are planning to promote the 2013-14 California Dream Act Application.

Responsible Person(s): Catalina Mistler, Chief
Program Administration & Services Division

CALIFORNIA *DREAM IN ACTION* OUTREACH

(Activities as of September, 2012)

Fall 2012

- Collaboration on materials with Educators for Fair Consideration and the College Board
- 21 events from October thru November – 2012 California High School Counselor Training Workshops. Training on the CA Dream Act .
- October 3-4 - Los Angeles Cash for College, College & Career Convention
- October 11-13 - Univisión Es El Momento Event & CollegeWeek LIVE College Fair
- October 27 – Steps to College Conference – Hancock College
- 50 ***Dream In Action*** Cash for College Scholarships to be awarded by November, 2012.

Beginning January 2013

- Jan. 1 to March 2 - AB 540 students attend Cash for College workshops across California to apply for CA Dream Act Aid. Partnership with Educators for Fair Consideration & Dream Act networks
- Feb. 2 - Northern CA 2nd Annual Steps to College Feria - Mexican Consulate , Sacramento

