

**Information/Action Item**

***California Student Aid Commission***

Report of the Distance Education Committee and discussion of the subjects to be examined by the Committee

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The Distance Learning Committee, chaired by Commissioner Dontae Rayford, met on June 4, 2012. Commissioners Alexander Gonzales, Terri Bishop, and Ishan Shah participated in the meeting. This summary has been prepared by staff.

Chair Rayford initially suggested that the Committee pursue its examination of distance learning issues by focusing on four general topics that he identified as quality, utility, access, and readiness.

Subjects within the “quality” topic could include examining the assessment of the quality of the educational materials, as well as the organizations and standards used to review and approve the on-line programs offered to students. “Utility” could encompass how students can actually use the credits or certificates that they’re being given by programs that they are completing.

“Access” could examine where distance learning is being offered; comparing free models and paid models; and how Cal Grant funding can or should actually be used toward these courses or programs. “Readiness” could explore whether distance learning prepared students for the work place. Inquiry from a student perspective could address whether the rigors of online classwork were clearly defined for students.

The Committee discussed these topics at length. However, while recognizing that Cal Grant funding for students involved in distance learning justified the Committee’s inquiries, the Committee concluded that the scope of its role was unclear and that further guidance from the Commission was necessary.

The Committee was uncertain about the appropriate level of oversight on which the Committee is to base its examination of distance learning. This, in turn, would affect the subjects the Committee could examine.

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