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## Action/Information Item

### *California Student Aid Commission*

#### Consideration of Ratification of Commission's Contract with COMSYS for Services Related to Implementation of Phase I of the Grant Delivery System Service Oriented Enhancements in the Amount of \$432,000

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The Executive Director must obtain approval from the Commission prior to entering into a contract or executing a contract amendment of over \$100,000. However, in the event an emergency approval is necessary for a contract of over \$100,000, the Executive Director may approve such contract with simultaneous notification to the Commission. Such emergency approval shall be ratified at the next regularly scheduled Commission meeting, and if not ratified, the contract shall be canceled.

The Executive Director requested that the Chair of the Commission authorize the execution of this contract as an emergency. The Commission Chair directed staff to present this contract to the Fiscal Policy and Long-Range Planning (Fiscal) Committee for consideration prior to authorizing emergency approval. At its September 25, 2006 meeting, the Fiscal Committee took the following actions:

1. Approval of the recommendation that the Commission Chair authorize the Executive Director to enter into the contract with COMSYS for \$432,000 on an emergency basis in order to provide the Commission's Information Technology Services (ITS) Division with the capability to continue operating on a day-to-day basis while working on the real-time enhancement of the Grant Delivery System (GDS), and
2. Approval of the recommendation that the Commission ratify the COMSYS contract at the November 29, 2006 meeting.

Background information is enclosed for your information.

**Recommended Action:** Ratification of the Commission contract with COMSYS for \$432,000.

**Responsible Staff:** Janet McDuffie  
Chief, Management Services and  
Acting Chief, Federal Policy & Programs

John Bays  
Chief, Information Technology

**Commission Contract with COMSYS for Services Related to  
Implementation of Phase I of the Grant Delivery System Service Oriented  
Enhancements**

**Background**

In 2005-06, the Commission's Feasibility Study Report (FSR) for the Grant Delivery System (GDS) Service Oriented Enhancements was approved by the Department of Finance (DOF). The Commission's Budget Change Proposal (BCP) for additional resources for the implementation of Phase I of this real time database enhancement in 2006-07 was also approved.

As noted in the approved FSR and BCP, experienced in-house personnel will be utilized to develop, test and implement the application modifications for Phase I. To provide coverage for enhancing and fixing the GDS during the project period, it is necessary to contract for experienced programmers to backfill staff working on the project.

Commission staff utilized the California Multiple Award Schedule (CMAS) process to solicit information technology companies for the services of programmers. COMSYS was selected to provide these needed services. The contract amount of \$432,000 will provide the Commission with three programmers at an average of \$80 per hour over a twelve-month period. Funding is included in the 2006-07 budget for this contract.

This contract needs to be initiated in order to meet the project schedule outlined in the DOF-approved FSR. Delay in release of the project resources means slippage of the schedule. If the 12-month schedule slips more than 1.2 months, a Special Project Report (SPR) must be submitted to DOF requesting approval of the schedule slip. An SPR is a staff-intensive three-to-six month process, during which (according to the State Administrative Manual) the project will be suspended until approval of the SPR. This could cause the project to be canceled and further erode credibility.

The interviews and evaluations of the prospective respondents to our CMAS request occurred in mid-August and staff have been attempting to complete the contract. Unfortunately, the timing of events precluded the contract from being included in the last Commission meeting held on September 7, 2006.