

# Exhibit 7

## Information/Action Item

### Update on Dream Act implementation

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#### **2014-15 California Dream Act On-Line Application**

The 2014-15 California Dream Act on-line application (CA Dream Act Application) was successfully released on Monday, January 6, 2014 on schedule. With a completely redesigned user interface, integrated skip logic and other added features to increase ease of use, students are able to navigate and complete the application more efficiently and with minimal errors. College administrators, high school counselors, other practitioners and students have provided positive feedback to staff on their user experience with the new and improved CA Dream Act Application.

The 2014-15 Dream Act Enhancement project was a significant achievement involving a collaborative effort between staff from the Information Technology Division and Program Administration Services Division, who spent countless hours meticulously planning, programming and testing the application, as well as the Dream Act Stakeholders workgroup made up of segmental representatives.

#### **Applications Submitted To Date**

Both new and renewal students began submitting applications on January 6, 2014. A total of **3,109** (1,629 renewals) students, have submitted their 2014-15 CA Dream Act Application as of February 4, 2015. We are expecting a tremendous push from students to submit their applications as we get closer to the March 2 deadline. Commission staff is sending e-mail communications to students to complete and submit CA Dream Act Applications before the deadline. Additionally, Commission staff will continue to work with high schools and colleges to submit non-SSN grade point average information for potential dream act students. We are hopeful that new applications will increase by at least 20% from last year.

#### **Training, Outreach and Resources, Communications**

The following identifies the training/outreach efforts made for the CA Dream Act Application and additional resources made available by staff:

- ✓ **Webinar Training** - Commission staff have offered, and will continue to offer, 18 webinar sessions from December through the end of February geared at high school counselors and college administrators. Each webinar session includes a walk-through of the 2014-15 CA Dream Act Application highlighting key features and tips to complete the application. Participants of the webinars are able to ask questions during the session using the chat feature that are answered by staff.

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- ✓ **Dream Application User Guide** – We released the guide on December 20<sup>th</sup>. It covers a wide range of content from the history of the California Dream Act to submitting CAL ISIR corrections in the WebGrants system to recommending “best practices” in Dream Act Application processing. As administrators and counselors become more familiar with the Dream Act Application process, we hope that the Guide will be a valuable resource that communicates clear and consistent information, especially for assisting students. A new version of the guide is expected for release by mid-February.
- ✓ **Dream Application Demo Site** – A CA Dream Act Application Demonstration and Training site became available on January 22, 2014. This site provides a way to complete a sample CA Dream Act Application, make adjustments and view the confirmation page. This is a great tool for practitioners to become familiar with the application to better assist students in the process. All application data submitted on the training site is erased on a weekly basis.
- ✓ **On-line Dream Act Chat** – This live online chat session allows high schools, colleges, students, parents, community members, and anyone assisting AB 540 students to ask questions and receive immediate answers from staff about the California Dream Act Application (CA Dream Act Application) and the financial aid process. The one-hour live sessions will be offered weekly until the end of March, and then monthly through June 2014.
- ✓ **Partnership Training** – Bryan Dickason, Manager II, and Dianna Ximenez, Associate Governmental Program Analyst, provided CA Dream Act training at CSU Fresno on January 15, 2014. Over fifty participants attended including staff from the financial aid office, high school counselors and other interested parties. The training covered a Dream Act overview and a line by line instruction of the CA Dream Act Application.
- ✓ **E4FC National Educator Conference** -Bryan Dickason and Tae Kang, Manager II, participated in the third annual Educators for Fair Consideration (E4FC) National Educator Conference. The conference was held on Saturday, January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2014 on the UC Berkeley campus. Over 700 counselors, teachers, school administrators and community leaders gathered together for a daylong conference about empowering, supporting and advocating for undocumented people. Bryan Dickason participated in two Dream Act open forum sessions with other financial aid leaders. Tae Kang led two CA Dream Act Application line-by-line sessions. The highlights of the conference were the personal stories shared by various young undocumented students and their journeys as an undocumented youth. Their testaments of courage and triumph served as a reminder on the significance of the Dream Act legislation and the access to financial aid. The keynote speakers inspired the participants and rejuvenated them to continue in this effort.
- ✓ **Communications to Students and Campuses** – We have sent over 4,000 email communications to Dream Act students who were offered a Cal Grant but not yet paid. In addition, we released an Operations Memos to all institutions related to the high number of unpaid Dream Act students and offering solutions to get students paid.

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We will continue to provide the necessary training, outreach and resources so that more administrators, counselors, teachers and outreach staff will become educated on the Dream Act to eliminate miscommunication, dispel any fears and open doors for undocumented youth pursuing their college goals. Staff is offering to provide training to individual campuses who need assistance in processing payments or applications for Dream Act students. We will also continue to monitor Cal Grant rosters and communicate directly with campuses that have large numbers of unpaid students.

## 2013-14 Dream Act Update

Even with the excitement of the enhanced application and beginning of the new academic year, we continue to assess some of the remaining issues from 2013-14 year. Perhaps the most significant is the low “paid” rate for Dream Act students with Cal Grant award offers. In its first year of Cal Grant availability for Dream Act students, we made approximately 7,600 award offers. At the half-way point of the 2013-14 academic year, we have paid only about 50 percent of those offers. The following table shows a segmental breakdown for the 2013-14 year.

In analyzing the unpaid students, staff identified that about 1,000 students still have pending Cal Grant requirements that need to be satisfied, such as high school graduation confirmation. We have sent communications to these students to fulfill these requirements to access their Cal Grant award. In addition, we are contacting the high schools to confirm the graduation.

Segment	Unpaid	Paid	Total	Paid %
Community College	2,365	1,188	3,553	33.4%
University of California	199	1,058	1,257	84.2%
California State University	1,161	1,479	2,640	56.0%
Private, non-profit	107	95	202	47.0%
Private, for-profit	16	9	25	36.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,848</b>	<b>3,829</b>	<b>7,677</b>	<b>49.9%</b>

The Dream Act stakeholder workgroup also identified other reasons contributing to the low paid rate, such as students not completing verification requirements (i.e., selective service, income verification) even after several communications. Another reason may have been that many of the students chose not to enroll or attend college this year. Even with a Cal Grant award offer, there still remains a large financial gap that the student must assume with the high cost of attendance at California colleges. Commission staff plans to partner with E4FC to poll some of these students to identify the core reasons for not utilizing their Cal Grant award.

We issued an Operations Memo on January 29, 2014 urging campuses to find ways to disburse funds to Dream Act students at the same time as other students. The memo also lists best practices and tips for disbursements to Dream Act students to avoid delays and increase the paid rate. Commission staff will continue to monitor disbursement activity for campuses, while looking for more solutions to this problem.

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## **Interconnected Partnerships**

Staff has partnered with E4FC in various outreach trainings and events. Rodrigo Dorado, E4FC Outreach Coordinator, has informed us of issues affecting undocumented students and helped educate us to better understand the barriers these students face. Mr. Dorado will present information during the Commission meeting on the role of his organization and the importance of our partnership in serving undocumented students.

***Responsible Person(s):***

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