

Exhibit 15

Information/Action Item

Update on the 2015 Governor's Budget

Legislative hearings on the 2015 Governor's Budget are likely to begin in March. We will provide an oral update at the February 19-20, 2015 meeting.

The Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) has opined with respect to revenue estimates in the 2015 Governor's Budget that "2014-15 General Fund revenues are likely to exceed the administration's new projections by \$1 billion to \$2 billion and perhaps more, barring a sustained stock market drop between now and June."¹ The LAO has also remarked that "[v]irtually all of the higher 2014-15 revenue likely will have to be spent on schools and community colleges under the state's Proposition 98 school funding formula and existing policies."²

Finally, as we noted at the January 16, 2015 Commission meeting, the 2015 Governor's Budget has proposed to replace expiring federal funding with state funding of \$7 million for the Student Opportunity and Access Program (Cal-SOAP), and \$586,000 for Cash for College, two of the Commission's critical outreach programs. During last year's legislative budget process, the concept of evaluations of Cal-SOAP and Cash for College was discussed in anticipation of the Commission's future request for state funding. Although the evaluations were not expressly adopted as a budget requirement or condition, there was a general expectation that the Commission would prepare evaluation reports on the programs to support continuation of the programs with state funding.

A draft of the evaluation report for Cal-SOAP will be sent under separate cover.

Staff anticipates providing a draft of the Cash for College report at the April 16-17, 2015 meeting.

Responsible Person(s): Keith Yamanaka
Chief Deputy Director

¹ See Legislative Analyst's Office, *January 2015 General Fund Revenue Collections* (February 9, 2015), accessible at <http://www.lao.ca.gov/LAOEconTax/Article/Detail/54>.

² *Id.*



DRAFT

**Cal-SOAP:
Putting Disadvantaged
Students on the Path to
Higher Education**

February 2015

California Student Aid Commission

Since its creation by the Legislature, in 1955, the Commission has continued to operate as the principal state agency responsible for administering financial aid programs for students attending public and private universities, colleges, and vocational schools in California. The Commission has never wavered from its central mission to *make education beyond high school financially accessible to all Californians*. In addition, the Commission provides financial aid policy analysis and leadership, in partnership with California's colleges, universities, financial institutions, and financial aid associations.

The Commission's primary administrative responsibilities include the State's largest intersegmental postsecondary education financial aid program, the Cal Grant program, as well as several targeted grant, scholarship, loan assumption and work-study programs. Among the Commission's outreach efforts are the California Student Opportunity and Access Program (Cal-SOAP) and Cash for College workshops.

Executive Director Diana Fuentes-Michel

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Introduction

The California Student Opportunity and Access Program (Cal-SOAP) has a long history of helping the State's most economically disadvantaged and ethnically diverse students understand their higher education options and take the necessary steps to apply for and enter college. Because California faces a future where post-secondary learning is more vital than ever for a job-ready workforce and a vibrant economy, it is critical that all students have the opportunity to reach their full potential. **Cal-SOAP is a statewide outreach program with a track record of success in targeting the students who are historically underserved by the higher education system and who need the most assistance to maximize their opportunities.**

Cal-SOAP stands out not only for its ability to reach students and their parents at decision-critical times during their K-12 years, but also for the strategy behind its operations:

- Structured as a consortium of broad-based education agencies within a region, each Cal-SOAP encourages collaboration on initiatives that will be most effective in the local area, based on local needs and resources.
- By bringing in key local education players to select, design and implement initiatives, Cal-SOAP avoids duplication of services and prioritizes how resources are used.
- Because members of the consortia are required to match Cal-SOAP funds dollar for dollar, the program leverages both public and private partnership funding to increase resources available to assist disadvantaged/underserved students and their families.
- The program avoids adding new layers of bureaucracy by working through established education organizations (in each consortium, the organization that is designated the lead fiscal agent acts as the human resources administrator and employs any necessary Cal-SOAP staff).

Despite its success, Cal-SOAP has been hampered by federal grant reductions during recent years. This not only has caused a cutback in services but also has stymied efforts to expand the program to address growing unmet needs. **Nonetheless, Cal SOAP has been highly effective, reaching almost 200,000 students and parents with general services and more than 25,000 students with intensive services during the most recent reporting period (April 2013 through April 2014).**

As the program transitions from the now-expired federal grant program back to a General Fund-supported program, California's policy makers have the opportunity to assess Cal-SOAP and support its success by expanding the program. The following report provides background information both on the national focus to increase higher education opportunities for disadvantaged students and on Cal-SOAP's history. This is followed by an analysis of Cal-SOAP achievements, as well as information about recent improvements in data collection that will make tracking the program's success easier in future years.

Background

With an economy that increasingly requires a post-secondary education for a living-wage job, improving the number of high school graduates who go to college is critical. In California, about 400,000 students graduate from high school each year. More than one-third of them fail to continue their education. Enrolling in college does not guarantee success, and attaining a certificate or degree can be a struggle for many students. But getting high school graduates through the higher-education door is a crucial first step to improving their chances for productive participation in the economy of the future.

Cal-SOAP has proven to be an effective way for the State of California to increase college-going rates. One strength of the Cal-SOAP approach is that it provides support without pre-determining a single-shot solution that may not be appropriate for a local region. By working through consortia of broad-based interests (K-12 schools, post-secondary institutions, education support organizations and private partners), Cal-SOAP ensures that each region designs a service plan that will leverage state dollars and maximize impact for the students in that geographic area who are most in need of support.

The Cal-SOAP story of success begins with the number of students reached: In 2013, close to 200,000 students and their parents received services. While not directly comparable since it includes parents, this number can be placed in context with the 325,000 high school graduates that year who were classified as socio-economically disadvantaged.¹ The success story continues with the college-going rate for Cal-SOAP service recipients – an average of 85% in recent years compared to a state-wide college-going rate of about 60%.²

These indicators of success will be documented further in the Cal-SOAP Achievements section of this report. To put these achievements in context, this Background section provides information that underscores the need for California to reach out to students from low-income families, those who are from traditionally underserved ethnicities and race, and those who are the first in their family to go to college. Also provided is a history of Cal-SOAP, including its recent financial constraints during a time of growing need for its services.

National Context

Since 1972 when Congress created what would later become known as the Pell Grant program, there has been a national focus on ensuring that low-income students are not precluded by their financial circumstances from attending college. Over the ensuing decades, new federal programs were added to provide both grants and loans to students facing

¹ Data from the State Department of Education for the 2012-13 graduating class, <http://www.cde.ca.gov/nr/ne/yr14/yr14rel42att.asp>

² See Table 1 on page 13.

the rising cost of a college education. In addition, both states and institutions of higher education stepped up with their own programs to meet financial need.

Nonetheless, each year hundreds of thousands of high school graduates fail to pursue a postsecondary education. All too often they are young adults who come from impoverished circumstances, or are among the ethnicities traditionally underserved by colleges, or lack family role models for applying to and attending college. **As a 2014 presidential report notes, while half of all young adults from high-income families have a bachelor's degree by the age of 25, only one in 10 from low-income families do.**³

The difference is critical to the economic mobility and future success of these young people. A 2008 Brookings Institution study found that without a college degree, children whose parents are in the bottom fifth of income earners have a 55% chance of escaping the bottom quintile but only a 5% chance of making it to the top fifth. Those who earn a college degree dramatically increase their chances of moving out of the bottom quintile to 84% -- and of making it to the top to 19%.⁴

Of particular concern over the past few years has been the education attainment gap for underserved ethnicities/races. Although college-going rates have improved greatly for underserved populations when viewed at the national level, there is still a disparity when it comes to degree attainment.

A 2014 Pew Research Center report found that nationally blacks and Hispanics make up a roughly equal proportion of all high school graduates and all college students: Hispanics made up 18% of high school graduates in 2011-12 and 19% of 18-24 year olds enrolled in college in 2012; for blacks the comparable figures are 16% and 14%. However, both populations earn bachelor degrees at a far lower rate: Only 9% of black and 9% of Hispanic 25-29 year olds had bachelor degrees or higher in 2012. The report attributes the gap to the lower likelihood of Hispanics and blacks enrolling in four-year colleges, attending selective colleges and attending full time, all attributes linked to higher degree attainment rates.⁵

In California, the demographic picture is starkly different. The Hispanic population is much larger compared to national proportions, and many are failing to make it to college. In a K-12

³ "Increasing College Opportunity for Low-Income Students: Promising Models and a Call to Action," p.3, Executive Office of the President, January 2014, http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/white_house_report_on_increasing_college_opportunity_for_low-income_students_1-16-2014_final.pdf

⁴ Ron Haskins, "Education and Economic Mobility" chapter in "Getting Ahead or Losing Ground: Economic Mobility in America," p. 5, Brookings Institution, 2008, http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Research/Files/Reports/2008/2/economic%20mobility%20sawhill/02_economic_mobility_keyfindings.PDF

⁵ Jens Manuel Krogstad and Richard Fry, "More Hispanics, blacks enrolling in college, but lag in bachelor's degrees," April 24, 2014, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/04/24/more-hispanics-blacks-enrolling-in-college-but-lag-in-bachelors-degrees/>

school system with 6.2 million students in 2012-13, Hispanics made up 53.3%, a much higher percentage than the national rate of 18%. Of the 422,200 high school seniors graduating that year, only 47.1% were Hispanic, a reflection of the high dropout rate for these youth.⁶ That year, the undergraduate enrollment in California for Hispanics stood at 35%. While high compared to the national Hispanic enrollment rate of 19%, it leaves a large gap between Hispanics who graduate from high school in California and those who go to college.⁷

In addition, the Campaign for College Opportunity has found that in California blacks in particular struggle to attain degrees. According to the organization's 2013 report, "Blacks are more likely than any other group to go to college but not earn a degree." Statewide for adults 25 and older in 2011, 32% of blacks had some college but no degree, compared to 25.6% for whites and 17.9% for Hispanics. The report also found blacks have the lowest completion rates in all three sectors of public institutions (community colleges, California State University and University of California).⁸

Why is the path to a degree so difficult for disadvantaged students? Although the cost of going to college is high, money is not the sole barrier to college access and degree attainment. According to "Increasing College Opportunity for Low-Income Students," these students "often lack the guidance and support they need to prepare for college, apply to the best-fit schools, apply for financial aid, enroll and persist in their studies, and ultimately graduate."

Other studies note that high schools provide different cultural environments regarding college-going expectations, and that teenagers without knowledgeable family support leading up to and during the application process may be impacted by procrastination and lack of self-control.⁹

⁶ Educational Demographics Unit, California Department of Education, <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/cb/ceffingertipfacts.asp> and <http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/GraduateReporting/GraduatesByEth.aspx?cTopic=Graduates&cChoice=StGrdbByEt&cYear=2012-13&level=State&cType=All&cGender=B&cGroup=G12>

⁷ Excelencias in Education, <http://www.edexcelencia.org/gateway/download/6191/1422195813>

⁸ "The State of Blacks in Higher Education in California," The Campaign for College Opportunity, December 2013, pps. 2 and 5, http://collegecampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/State_of_Higher_Education_Black-1.pdf.

⁹ Abstract, "Promoting College Enrollment among Disadvantaged Students: A Randomized Controlled Evaluation of Two Low-Cost Interventions," p. 1, <http://11.ccpr.ucla.edu/papers/VSOURCE-Milestones-ProjectDescription.pdf>

Currently, there is also a focus on finding the best college fit for students, particularly for low-income, high-achieving students who are less likely to enroll in institutions that provide support (financial aid and academic assistance) that enhances the prospect of degree attainment.¹⁰

California Background

Recognizing the multiple barriers to college attendance, California has created programs not only to provide financial support for students (Cal Grants) but also to offer an array of services to help students make the transition from high school to college. Established in 1978,¹¹ the California Student Opportunity and Access Program (Cal-SOAP) operates in 14 locations throughout the state and is administered by the California Student Aid Commission.

The purpose of Cal-SOAP is to provide greater access to postsecondary education for students from low-income families, those who would be the first in their families to attend college, and those from schools or geographic regions with documented low-eligibility or low college participation rates (these are often rural areas or areas with high proportions of non-white students). The goals are to:

- Increase the availability of information about postsecondary education.
- Improve students' access to postsecondary education by raising their achievement levels.



¹⁰ Caroline Hoxby and Christopher Avery, "The Missing 'One-Offs': The Hidden Supply of High-Achieving, Low-Income Students, March 2013, http://www.brookings.edu/~media/projects/bpea/spring%202013/2013a_hoxby.pdf.

¹¹ California Education Code Section 69560.

- Reduce the duplication of services by coordinating outreach efforts with other outreach and pre-college programs operating in different regions of the state.

To fulfill these goals, Cal-SOAP provides services to K-12 students, parents, high school administrators, and community college students. The projects provide academic tutoring, peer mentoring, college and career advising, college access and admissions support, SAT/ACT test preparation, college tours, and grants for college. In addition, at least 30% of each local Cal-SOAP budget is set aside for stipends for college students who serve as positive role models and mentors for high school students.

Cal-SOAP consortia also play a significant role in making complex financial aid opportunities more transparent for low-income students and their families. By sponsoring approximately 220 of the 800 Cash for College workshops last year, Cal-SOAP consortia expanded the reach of a program that provides financial aid information to students and assists families in completing the federal paperwork process to qualify for grants and loans. A large majority of students who attend these workshops indicate in post-workshop surveys that they would not have been able to complete the federal FAFSA form and apply for financial aid without the help provided.

Member organizations form the governing boards of the Cal-SOAP consortia, and provide administrative and organizational leadership as well as matching resources (the consortia must match their state Cal-SOAP allocation at a minimum 1:1 ratio). The consortia receive reimbursement contracts from the State based on an annual program plan that is approved by the California Student Aid Commission.

Cal-SOAP projects coordinate services and implement their programs through partnerships with the Advancing Via Individual Development program (AVID), the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP), the Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement

Connecting with Students

Connecting with Students

Cal-SOAP consortia connect with students well before they are ready to graduate from high school – and the impact they have carries on long after students enter college. Here are three examples of how Cal-SOAP impacts the lives of students:

- The North Coast Consortium wants every student to begin thinking about college long before high school. In the 2013-14 school year, every fourth grader in Del Norte County (297 students) visited the College of the Redwoods / Del Norte Campus as part of the “I’m Going to College” event. Every seventh grader (1,154 students) in Humboldt County visited the College of the Redwoods / Eureka campus, and all of the eighth graders in Humboldt County visited Humboldt State University.
- In the Central Coast Consortium, staff become advocates for students when necessary. A Dream Act student was dismissed from the Art Institute of California when it was discovered she did not qualify for federal and state loans. The school was attempting to collect \$10,000 from her for her two-month enrollment. Due to the assistance of the Cal-SOAP director and the student’s local congresswoman, the school dropped the charges and refunded the student’s money.
- The San Diego Consortium tracked the success of its student staff. It found that 90% graduate from college and 50% go on to seek advanced or professional degrees.

(MESA), Migrant Education, and numerous local community-based organizations (CBOs).

The staff who provide local administration and program services are employees of a member institution of the governing board. The fiscal agent, chosen by the governing board of each consortium, is responsible for the management of the state allocation and the matching resources of the Cal-SOAP project. Fiscal agents can be a school district, county office of education, college, or another member of the consortia. The fiscal agent also acts as the human resources administrator, and Cal-SOAP staff are employees of the fiscal agent.

As noted in the Introduction of this report, the consortia structure of Cal-SOAP provides the benefit of collaboration and regional flexibility to meet local needs. Because a broad cross-section of education agencies are involved, resources can be prioritized and duplication of services is avoided. The fund matching requirement leverages resources to provide maximum assistance to disadvantaged students. And added layers of state personnel are avoided by having local agencies administer the program and employ any needed staff.

Cal-SOAP Financial History

From its inception, Cal-SOAP was supported by the State General Fund. However, in 2002-03 the funding source became the State's Student Loan Operating Fund. At that point, Cal-SOAP was allocated \$8.6 million annually.

In 2007-08 because of changes in the student loan guarantee program in California, the Student Loan Operating Fund was no longer a viable source of funding, so Cal-SOAP was returned to General Fund support. However, because of competing financial demands, the funding was reduced 27% to \$6.3 million.

When a new federal College Access Challenge Grant Program was offered in 2008-09, the California Student Aid Commission applied and qualified for funding to cover Cal-SOAP, Cash for College and other programs. Beginning in the 2009-10 fiscal year and continuing for an additional three years, the State received \$7.349 million, covering the \$6.3 million baseline spending for Cal-SOAP and \$1 million for Career and Technical Education (CTE) spending.

In 2013-14, the federal sequester resulted in a 5.1% reduction in funding, bringing California's total allocation to \$6.7 million. However, in the same year, the State budget included \$500,000 for Cal-SOAP outreach for the new Middle Class Scholarship Program. With the added funds, the 2013-14 Cal-SOAP allocation was \$7.2 million. The amount remained the same in 2014-15, the final year of funding from the federal Challenge Grant Program.

The continuation of Cal-SOAP services relies on the program returning to General Fund support for the 2015-16 fiscal year and beyond. In its Budget Change Proposal for the 2015-16 year, the California Student Aid Commission sought funding that would return Cal-SOAP consortia to the \$8.6 million level in place from 2001 through 2007. This restoration would offset higher costs, maintain technological advances, and return to the level of service delivered to students earlier.

In addition, the Commission sought an added \$1.85 million to expand Cal-SOAP programs to parts of the state that are not now fully covered. The expansion would provide services to the City of Los Angeles, the Inland Empire and parts of Northern California, including El Dorado and Placer counties. Each new consortium could potentially aid approximately 10,000 students based on yearly averages, for a total addition of services to 30,000 students.

Without the Student Loan Operating Fund or the federal Challenge Grant to provide support for Cal-SOAP, it is vital that this important program once again be fully provided for under the General Fund so that the Cal-SOAP consortia can continue to operate. As the next section of this report demonstrates, Cal-SOAP provides critical services that are in line with the Education Master Plan pledge to make “quality education available and affordable for every Californian.”

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Cal-SOAP Achievements

As noted earlier, during the most recent federal reporting period (April 2013 to April 2014), Cal-SOAP consortia provided general services to 190,390 students and parents. These included workshops (College: Making It Happen, Transfer: Making It Happen, College Information Day fairs), financial aid application assistance, parent outreach, and A-G coursework classroom presentations. In addition, the consortia reached 25,237 students with more intensive activities, such as campus tours, one-on-one meetings, mentoring phone calls, academic tutoring, field trips to explore career opportunities, and college peer advising. In addition, 16,680 students and parents received assistance in applying for financial aid through Cal-SOAP's independent efforts (as opposed to those who received help during Cash for College events, which are sometimes sponsored by Cal-SOAP consortia).

These outreach numbers are impressive on their own, but they do not reflect important measures of success, such as do more students enroll in college because of Cal-SOAP services? Do they find the right academic fit, which will provide the support they need at a price they can afford? Are they able to persist and obtain degrees?

Like many other programs across the nation, Cal-SOAP does not have perfect answers for these questions. But there are a variety of data, both generally acknowledged by national researchers and specific to Cal-SOAP, that indicate services of the type provided can be highly effective in increasing college attendance and degree attainment for disadvantaged students.

A 2014 report by the Executive Office of the President offered this round-up of effective interventions around the nation:¹²

- The Expanding College Opportunities project, which provided information packets and fee waivers to high-

¹² Executive Office of the President, op. cit., pps. 5 and 8.

Data Collection Technology

Data Collection Technology

For the past decade, the State's ability to measure Cal-SOAP success has been limited by an antiquated database system that was difficult to use, not uniform across all consortia, and not designed around the needs of the program. Last fiscal year, funding was allocated to hire information technology experts to establish a new uniform data collection program that could capture standardized data and track a broader array of activities.

Estrada Consulting conducted extensive interviews with all of the consortia and visited six of the 14 sites before settling on a system design that meets the reporting needs of the program and is easily scalable as Cal-SOAP grows.

"The system they had before was not user friendly and level of detail available varied greatly from consortium to consortium," says consultant Mark McDonell. "Now they can collect data uniformly, generate a number of reports that are either consortium-specific or at the statewide level, and provide detailed information down to the student level."

Training was conducted on the new system in August 2014, and it was launched in October. By the end of March 2015 further phases of the project will be complete, although other enhancements will have to await further funding. Data collected by the new system should add to Cal-SOAP's ability to document success in the coming years.

achieving, low-income students increased the number of college applications by 19%.

- A 2013 study by the Center on Education Policy and Workforce Competitiveness found that text message reminders between high school graduation and the beginning of fall semester to college applicants to remind them to enroll increased two-year college enrollment by 3 percentage points.
- The National College Advising Corps trained recent college graduates to provide counseling that would help students register for exams and apply to college. Seniors who met with the trained advisors were 40% more likely to take the ACT or SAT, 98% more likely to take college workshops, and 67% more likely to be accepted to college.
- College Possible, an AmeriCorps organization, also trains recent college graduates to provide college advising services to low-income students. A randomized, controlled trial found that the students who were counseled were more than 15 percentage points more likely to enroll in a four-year college right after high school.
- The H&R Block FAFSA experiment increased FAFSA completion by 40% and college enrollment by 29%.

In California, Cal-SOAP has earned praise over the years. In 1996, the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) concluded that Cal-SOAP was among the State's most effective student academic development programs. CPEC found that 3,707 high school seniors receiving Cal-SOAP services had a college-going rate of 68% compared to 55% for all students statewide.

Eighteen years later, Cal-SOAP has grown from nine consortia to 14 and is still a key underpinning of efforts to open college doors for disadvantaged students. For example, research conducted by The College Access Foundation of California found that Cal-SOAP is highly effective in helping students understand and obtain financial aid. Of those high school students graduating in 2012 who were served by Cal-SOAP, 94% received a Pell Grant, 76% received a Cal Grant and 97% received a Board of Governors fee waiver (community college).¹³

¹³ "Foundation-Supported Cal-SOAP Scholarship Recipients," College Access Foundation of California, presentation to CSAC in November 2013.

Staying with Cal-SOAP

Staying with Cal-SOAP

Students whose lives are touched by Cal-SOAP often return to the consortia to help the next generation. The following are statistics from several of the consortia:

- **East Bay Consortium:** Currently, four of the six professional staff are alumni from the consortia's Pre-Collegiate Academy; one was also a participant as a fifth grader in the "I'm Going to College" program. In addition, all six professional staff began working at the consortia as student advisors and/or tutors during their college years.
- **San Diego Consortium:** Currently, 25% of the professional staff are former Cal-SOAP participants and 30% of the student staff were Cal-SOAP participants before high school graduation.
- **San Jose Consortium:** Currently, one of the six professional staff is a former Cal-SOAP services recipient. During the past three years, 15 student staff were Cal-SOAP participants before enrolling in college.

One important measure of success is how many students provided with intensive one-on-one services follow through and actually enroll in college immediately following high school. Table 1 on the next page demonstrates the effectiveness of Cal-SOAP by comparing data compiled from graduating seniors that completed exit surveys at each of the consortia with statistics reported by CPEC on the percentage of graduates who enrolled in each county in the 2009-10 academic year.¹⁴

As Table 1 below indicates, based on a three-year average (2009-2012), graduating seniors served by a Cal-SOAP consortia are going to college at an astounding 85% rate versus the state average of 62%. The largest consortium, San Diego, posted a 79% rate during the 2009-10 year compared to San Diego County’s overall rate of 40%.

Table 1: Cal-SOAP College-Going Rates (CGR)

Cal-SOAP Consortium	2011-12		2010-11		2009-10		County CGR
	Number of Students	Cal-SOAP CGR	Number of Students	Cal-SOAP CGR	Number of Students	Cal-SOAP CGR	
Central Valley	155	94.51%	37	97.37%	286	91.96%	N/A
East Bay	309	81.75%	390	89.86%	210	87.50%	49.00%
Long Beach	332	98.81%	168	95.45%	92	98.92%	52.90%
Los Angeles	16	100.00%	93	97.89%	434	94.14%	52.90%
Merced	84	91.30%	N/A	N/A	149	92.55%	41.00%
North Coast	95	87.96%	97	82.91%	84	79.25%	33.60%
Sacramento	392	72.86%	464	80.56%	398	58.88%	52.70%
San Diego	2,509	82.51%	1,916	85.35%	1,518	78.82%	40.00%
San Francisco	153	85.47%	196	100.00%	191	84.14%	N/A
San Joaquin	603	87.90%	504	92.14%	245	93.51%	41.90%
Santa Barbara	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	53.30%
San Jose	228	100.00%	349	100.00%	665	100.00%	44.02%
South County	385	94.13%	382	90.09%	287	91.40%	45.85%
Central Coast	98	87.50%	28	93.33%	61	80.26%	54.32%
Aggregated CGR	5359	85.24%	4624	88.46%	4620	83.73%	State Average 61.70%

¹⁴ Not all students complete an exit survey, so the Cal-SOAP data is based solely on those who did.

Although college-going rates are an important indicator of success, the ultimate goal is that every college student persist in their studies and ultimately graduate with a degree. Cal-SOAP does well by this measure, according to at least one study. The College Access Foundation of California started a scholarship program in 2006 for college-bound seniors who received Cal-SOAP intensive services. In 2008, the Foundation monitored 463 scholarship recipients attending 4 year colleges in California and tracked their progress every year. From their study, the results from Table 2 show that persistence and continued enrollment rates are on par with the rest of California. The data reflects that the 4-Year graduation rates at the UC (39%), CSU (12%) and Private (35%) are also about the same as the other students in California. Perhaps the most significant deduction from the Foundation study is that when provided the college access services like tutoring, financial aid counseling and college preparatory advisement from Cal-SOAP, students from disadvantaged communities perform just as well in comparison to the rest of California.

TABLE 2: CAFC COHORT CLASS OF 2008

Graduation/Continued Enrollment													
	Matched Students	Year 3	3-yr rate	Year 3 grads	3-yr grad rate	Year 4	4-year rate	4-year grads	4-year grad rate	5-year	5-year rate	5-year grads	5-year grad rate
Class of 2008													
Overall	463	385	83%	5	1%	245	53%	118	25%	115	25%	79	17%
Starting at UC	215	191	89%	3	1%	97	45%	81	38%	37	17%	35	16%
Starting at CSU	211	163	77%	1	0%	131	62%	25	12%	69	33%	41	19%
Starting at Priv.	37	31	84%	1	3%	17	46%	12	32%	9	24%	3	8%

Financial aid awareness remains one of the greatest challenges in California, especially in low-income, disadvantaged areas. Cal-SOAP increases the financial aid opportunities to first-generation college-goers and low-income students by acquainting them with the various state and federal financial aid programs and helping them complete what can be a tedious and confusing process.

As part of that effort, last year Cal-SOAP consortia sponsored approximately 220 of the 800 Cash for College workshops statewide. In addition to these financial aid outreach events, Cal-SOAP consortia also provide individual counseling and follow up with students who have not submitted their applications in advance of important deadlines.

Table 3 on the next page shows the financial aid completion rates of the FAFSA for students who receive services from Cal-SOAP consortia. The aggregate FAFSA completion rates for the high schools within each consortium average 60% for the 2013-14 application year. Comparatively, California’s overall FAFSA completion rates the last two years have been 50% and 55% respectively.

Table 3: 2013-14 FAFSA COMPLETION RATES

Consortium	Submitted Applications	HS Senior Enrollment	Percentage
Central Coast	1,725	3,316	52%
Central Valley	490	1,152	43%
East Bay	3,037	5,529	55%
Long Beach	3,684	6,344	58%
Los Angeles	6,699	10,133	66%
Merced	2,185	3,444	63%
Northcoast	427	730	58%
Sacramento	3,646	5,667	64%
San Diego	7,728	12,760	61%
San Francisco	1,887	2,804	67%
San Jose	5,785	10,410	56%
Santa Barbara	1,140	1,518	75%
South County Gilroy	1,298	2,379	55%
South San Joaquin	1,885	3,073	61%
TOTAL	41,616	69,259	60%

The final table, Table 4 below, indicates the diversity of students that Cal-SOAP consortia serve. Cal-SOAP has a strong focus on providing services to disadvantaged students, including those with low college participation rates – in particular blacks and Hispanics, those who are first in their families to attend college, and those in areas that are underserved educationally. As the table indicates, Cal-SOAP students provided services in the last two years of high school include a large concentration of Hispanics and blacks, as well as young male students

Table 4: Student Population Receiving Cal-SOAP Services, 2012-13

Students Served	Students	Males	Females	Percentage of Total
African American	5,738	2,339	3,399	12.0%
Asian or Pacific Islander	6,827	2,864	3,963	14.3%
Caucasian	8,827	3,822	5,005	18.7%
Filipino	877	411	466	1.8%
Hispanic	22,295	9,820	12,475	46.6%
Native American or Alaskan Native	547	225	322	1.1%
Other	1,537	736	801	3.2%
No Response	1,121	603	518	2.3%
Total	47,769	20,820	26,949	
Percentage of Gender		43.6%	56.4%	100.00%

Conclusion

The services provided by Cal-SOAP consortia are a critical driver of college enrollment and degree attainment for disadvantaged students in California. By both raising general awareness about college and career options and delivering intensive individual services, Cal-SOAP makes a difference for the hundreds of thousands of students and families it touches each year, helping to open college doors and a brighter future for these young adults.

That difference is also critical for California. As studies have indicated, the state's future economic prospects depend on having an educated workforce that can meet the needs of sophisticated businesses and demanding consumers. Experts have projected that California's median income, a significant indicator of a healthy growing economy, will fall below the national average by 2020 if college-going and degree-attainment rates do not improve. **By working with students prior to high school graduation, Cal-SOAP is playing a vital role in increasing the number of young people who aspire to a higher education, find the right college fit, enroll and attain a degree.**

Because of multiple transitions in funding sources and reductions in resources at both the federal and state government levels, Cal-SOAP has seen its financial support diminish over the past decade even as the need and demand for its services has risen. By restoring its past funding baseline and adding further resources for expansion, policy makers have the opportunity to invest in a program that has proven its value to both individual students and the future of the state as a whole.