

Item 1

Information Item

Executive Director's report



Executive Director's Report June 2016

Dear Commissioners,

As my six month anniversary with the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) approaches, I'm proud of the accomplishments of our dedicated and capable staff, the relationships and trust that have been strengthened with our stakeholders, including the California Department of Education, the higher education segments, the Legislature and the Administration, and the enhancements that are being made to improve our Grant Delivery System to meet the needs of early GPA submission and early FAFSA and Dream Act, Oct. 1 submission.

As our 30 year old legacy Grant Delivery System reaches capacity, I'm also delighted to report that for 2016-17, the Department of Finance and the Legislature have recommended a continued investment in a new Grant Delivery System Modernization Project, as well as provided funding for security mitigation. In addition, they have also recognized our need to partner with Foundations to assist CSAC in finding ways to better administer California financial aid, so that more students that are eligible are provided access to higher education. CSAC is also advocating in support of current budget proposals to increase the number of APLE awards and Competitive Cal Grants and expand the Cal-SOAP outreach program to other regions.

At the request of our stakeholders, I have reestablished the Financial Aid Advisory Board (formerly known as the Grant Advisory Committee) that will meet for the first time on June 15. The FAAB will review major proposed and planned program or policy changes and provide advice and recommendations to the Commission. In addition, for the 2016-17 academic year, I will be implementing a 95-percent advanced apportionment for Cal Grants to qualified institutions, so that students are paid their awards immediately.

I continue to build a strong CSAC team, by holding regular Executive and Leadership meetings to foster communication, trust, and establish and build relationships to unite for our mission: to make education beyond high school financially accessible to all Californians. And, we are

California Student Aid Commission

welcoming Gurinder Bains to our Executive Team, as the Chief of the Information Technology Services Division. Gurinder is bringing a strong background in both the public and private IT sectors.

Sincerely,

Lupita Cortez Alcalá
Executive Director
California Student Aid Commission

COMMISSION PROGRAM UPDATES

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION & SERVICES DIVISION (PASD)

❖ Grade Point Average (GPA) Requirement for Public High Schools

- CSAC continues to meet regularly with the California Department of Education to discuss ongoing outreach efforts to public and charter high schools and districts. AB 2160 communication efforts to schools focus on earlier FAFSA completion, GPA submissions, and earlier award notifications.
- Staff continue to inform schools and districts about the statutory requirement to submit GPAs for their senior students, how to obtain WebGrants access, and provide assistance to schools with their GPA upload process.

❖ Training

- Staff are coordinating twenty-four (24) 2016 High School Counselor Workshops (HSCW) which will be held from August 23rd to October 14th.

❖ Financial Aid Advisory Board (FAAB)

- CSAC has instituted the Financial Aid Advisory Board to facilitate effective communication, share best practices and explore potential improvements in financial programs and processes. Staff developed nomination letters and forms that were mailed out to segmental leaders early May. Staff has worked on the coordination of the Advisory Board nominations in preparation for the initial meeting scheduled for June 15, 2016.

❖ Customer Assistance and Processing

- Since the March 2 Cal Grant application deadline, staff have assisted students and their families to prepare financially for their postsecondary education plans. Customer service staff responded to thousands of incoming calls, keyed more than 27,000 forms, responded to numerous email and mail inquiries, and have provided outreach assistance at several events.

California Student Aid Commission

- Call volume is increasing due to mass e-mail campaigns related to Dream Act reminders, APLE Employment and Loan Verification forms, and the Middle Class Scholarship.

❖ **Processing Updates**

2015-16

- Notified the initial cohorts of March 2nd 2016-17 Competitive Cal Grant offered awardees of their award offers and advised them to open a WebGrants for Students account for more information. Over 146,719 students were financially eligible for the statutory amount of 12,875 March 2nd Competitive Awards for the 2016-17 academic year.
- Registered 14,443 eligible Dream Act male students with the U.S. Selective Service.
- Produced key partner data exchanges with Educators for Fair Consideration, the California Employment Development Department, College Futures, EdTrust and the California Department of Education.
- Sent 24,473 High School Graduation Reminder Letters (G8).

2016-17

- Uploaded Admission files from UC and CSU campuses, and notified 137,366 students on their potential Middle Class Scholarship eligibility.
- Launched Transfer Entitlement awards on April 30th which resulted in 31,459 student award offer notifications.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES DIVISION (ITSD)

- Enhancements to the Grant Delivery System, made to allow for earlier 17-18 GPA Submission, will be migrated to production during the week of June 6, 2016.
- Phase 1 of the new Cash for College application will also be migrated to production during the week of June 6.

STRATEGIC POLICY, MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS (SPMC)

❖ **Federal Agency Collaborations**

- The Federal Student Aid Division of the U.S. Department of Education has agreed to provide the Commission with up to 3,000 publications in Spanish and English for use with the state's early FAFSA initiative.

California Student Aid Commission

❖ Organization and Foundation Collaborations

- College Futures Foundation
- CORE Districts
 - Implementation of the FAFSA Release on October 1, 2016 and the use of Prior-Prior Year Tax Information
- PUENTE Advisory Board
 - Community college programming;
 - Overview and discussion of the three new Puente Community College initiatives to significantly expand Puente's impact in California;
 - Introduction to Puente's Statewide Academic Scholarship Award

❖ Media Interviews

News Outlet	Topic
KJLH-Radio (Los Angeles)	FAFSA Completion
EdSource	Feature article on Lupita Cortez Alcalá and the California Dream Act, including the Dreamer award take rate
Los Angeles Times	Federal Student Aid Identification Glitch
Riverside Press Enterprise Newspaper	Race to Submit/Early FAFSA
La Opinión	Dreamers Act Data
KPCC Radio, NPR Los Angeles	Unused Grants for Dreamers

COMMISSION ACTIONS UPDATE

Below is an update of the actions taken by the Commission at its April 7-8, 2016 and May 6, 2016 meetings. No actions were taken at the Commission's May 20, 2016 teleconference meeting.

	ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE COMMISSION	STATUS UPDATE
1	<p>Commission Meeting Minutes</p> <p>On April 7, 2016, the Commission approved the minutes of January 14, 2016 and February 4-5, 2016.</p> <p><i>In Favor: Commissioners Ajose, Anton, Foresti, Graves, Le Grande, Maxie, Moore, Sawyer, Scott and Geiogue</i> Abstained from voting on January 14, 2016 minutes: <i>Commissioners Becerra, Foresti and Valladolid</i> Abstained from voting on February 4-5, 2016 minutes: <i>Commissioners Becerra, Le Grande and Valladolid</i> Absent: <i>Commissioner Solorio</i></p>	<p>The Commission Secretary has signed the minutes.</p>
2	<p>Election of Commission Secretary</p> <p>At its April 7-8, 2016 meeting, the Commission elected Commissioner Sawyer to the office of Secretary.</p>	<p>No action required</p>

California Student Aid Commission

	ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE COMMISSION	STATUS UPDATE
	<p><i>In Favor: Commissioners Ajose, Anton, Becerra, Foresti, Graves, Le Grande, Maxie, Moore, Sawyer, Scott, Valladolid and Geiogoue</i></p> <p><i>Absent: Commissioner Solorio</i></p>	
3	<p>Update on State and Federal Legislation and Issues affecting Commission Programs, including Consideration of Positions on Legislation</p> <p>On April 8, 2016, the Commission unanimously approved the following legislative positions, as recommended by the Legislative, Audit & Budget Committee:</p> <p><u>Support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assembly Bill (AB) 2154 (Medina) • AB 2581 (Medina) • Senate Bill (SB) 62 (Pavley) <p><u>Support with Amendment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AB 1449 (Lopez) • AB 1747 (Weber) • AB 1721 (Medina) • AB 2506 (Thurmond) • AB 2787 (Chavez) <p><u>Support and Sponsor with Amendment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AB 1314 (Block) <p><u>Watch</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AB 1888 (Low) • AB 2766 (Lopez) <p><i>In Favor: Commissioners Ajose, Anton, Becerra, Foresti, Graves, Le Grande, Maxie, Sawyer, Scott, Solorio, Valladolid and Geiogoue</i></p> <p><i>Absent: Commissioner Moore</i></p> <p>At the May 6, 2016 Commission teleconference meeting, the Commission approved the following legislative positions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support AB 1892 (Medina) <p><i>In Favor: Commissioners Anton, Becerra, Foresti, Graves, Le Grande, Moore, Sawyer, Solorio and Geiogoue</i> Abstained: Commissioners Ajose and Salinas Absent: Commissioners Maxie and Valladolid</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support AB 1961 (Baker) and Seek Amendment <p><i>In Favor: Commissioners Ajose, Anton, Becerra, Foresti, Graves, Le Grande, Moore, Salinas, Sawyer, Solorio and Geiogoue</i></p> <p><i>Absent: Commissioners Maxie and Valladolid</i></p>	<p>Staff will notify the bill authors of the Commission's positions.</p>

California Student Aid Commission

ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE COMMISSION	STATUS UPDATE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support AB 2520 (Rodriguez) with Amendment <p><i>In Favor: Commissioners Ajose, Anton, Becerra, Foresti, Le Grande, Moore, Salinas, Sawyer, Solorio and Geiogoue</i></p> <p><i>Abstained: Commissioner Graves Absent: Commissioners Maxie and Valladolid</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support AB 2726 (McCarty) <p><i>In Favor: Commissioners Ajose, Anton, Becerra, Foresti, Graves, Le Grande, Moore, Salinas, Sawyer, Solorio and Geiogoue</i></p> <p><i>Absent: Commissioners Maxie and Valladolid</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch SB 1146 (Lara) <p><i>In Favor: Commissioners Ajose, Anton, Becerra, Foresti, Graves, Le Grande, Moore, Salinas, Sawyer, Solorio and Geiogoue</i></p> <p><i>Absent: Commissioners Maxie and Valladolid</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support SB 1357 (Block) if Amended <p><i>In Favor: Commissioners Ajose, Becerra, Foresti, Graves, Moore, Salinas and Geiogoue Abstained: Commissioners Anton, Le Grande and Sawyer Absent: Commissioners Maxie, Solorio and Valladolid</i></p>	