

**Action/Information Item**

***Governmental Relations Committee***

Proposed Governmental Relations Committee Charter

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The Committee is asked to review the proposed Governmental Relations Committee charter.

***Recommended Action:*** Review, discuss and approve the proposed Charter.

***Responsible Staff:*** Steve Caldwell, Chief Governmental and Public Affairs Division.

**DRAFT****CALIFORNIA STUDENT AID COMMISSION  
GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE CHARTER  
AUGUST 2006****PURPOSE**

- The mission of the California Student Aid Commission (Commission) is to make education beyond high school financially accessible to all Californians. The Commission is dedicated to implementing and maintaining the integrity and value of the Cal Grant Entitlement Program and ensuring that all California students learn about the program and apply for its benefits.
- The Governmental Relations Committee is the primary body within the Commission that promotes these principles with the Legislature, the Governor's Office, Congress, organizations associated with the federal government, and other various external entities.
- The state's continued commitment to improve the availability and amount of financial aid is crucial to ensure educational access for all California students and strengthen the state's economic well-being by educating California's future workforce. To this end, the Committee's responsibilities include:
  - Working with Commission staff to develop and recommend official Commission positions to the full Commission on Legislation that would affect the Commission's programs.
  - Working with Commission staff to develop and recommend legislative proposals to improve Cal Grant and other specialized programs Commission programs in accordance with the approved legislative principles.

**PRIMARY OBJECTIVES**

- The Committee is committed to working with the Legislature and external partners to promote the following objectives:
  - The Commission should continue to advocate for legislative recognition and funding to implement and improve the Cal Grant Program.
  - The Commission should continue to advocate maintaining the Cal Grant program's integrity and for increases in the value of all Cal Grant awards to help defray the cost of obtaining a postsecondary education.
  - As part of the Cal Grant Entitlement program, the Commission should advocate for increases in funding to help reach all graduating high school seniors with a goal of having them obtain, complete, and return a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

**LEGISLATIVE PRINCIPLES**

- Legislative and Executive branch support for student financial aid has resulted in creating and funding the expanded Cal Grant Entitlement Program, and expanding Commission outreach efforts to provide Cal Grant information to parents and teachers. Continued support as an investment in California's continuing economic recovery is vital as the State's economic future is tenuous.

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- Recognizing the critical need to maintain Legislative and Executive support for postsecondary educational issues, the Committee adopts the following general statement of principles to guide staff in consideration of legislation and related policy issues during the current and future legislative sessions:

**Foster Educational Access and Affordability**

- The Commission and the State should advocate for increased higher education opportunities for all California students.
- The Commission should strive to ensure that financial aid to the growing number of needy California college students continues to expand and not erode as the cost of completing a postsecondary education continues to rise.
- The Commission should cultivate legislation and budget actions, which would protect, strengthen, and increase the state's General Fund commitment to student financial aid.
- The Commission should encourage continued bipartisan support for the Cal Grant programs and promote growth in program funding.
- The Commission should pursue state budget support that continues to build on the Cal Grant Programs.
- The Commission and State should promote expanded educational and transfer opportunities for students transferring from community colleges to four-year colleges.
- The Commission should support legislation that will enhance the benefits to those participating in state or federal tuition savings plans that encourage saving while offering tax relief incentives, such as ScholarShare.

**Preserve the Flow of Financial Aid**

- The Commission should advocate for continued enhancements and improvements to the Grant Delivery System to promote transparency and ease of use in the system while maintaining speed and accuracy.
  - The Commission should promote the uninterrupted flow of student financial aid to enable students to achieve their educational goals.
  - The Commission should advocate federal and state actions that result in sufficient and effective financial aid for California students. The process of applying for and receiving student aid should be as simple as possible for students and their families, educational institutions, and other program participants.
  - The Commission should advocate policies that promote the cost-effective and timely administration of student financial aid programs.

**Ensure Adequate Support and Flexibility for Commission Operations**

- The Commission should ensure that its administrative functions are sufficient to: fulfill its essential mission and responsibilities; administer its programs effectively and efficiently; expand the use of advanced technological services and streamlined operations; provide high quality financial aid services to its customers and Californians at large; and retain a qualified, professional workforce.
- The Commission should seek to preserve the opportunity established through AB 3133, (Statutes of 1996), the legislation authorizing the establishment of EDFUND, to maintain

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the flexibility needed to respond to the competitive loan guarantee environment and provide stable loan guarantee services to all Californians.

**AUTHORITY**

The Governmental Relations Committee was established by the Commission to further the Commission's mission in relation to the Legislature and Congress. The Committee has the authority to discuss legislative proposals, advocacy for Commission programs and proposals and to recommend legislative positions and advocacy activities to the full Commission.

**COMPOSITION**

The Committee is a permanent standing committee of the Commission consisting of at least three members of the Commission. The Chair of the Commission appoints the members of the Committee annually, and designates a Chair and Vice Chair for the Committee.

The Chief of the Governmental and Public Affairs Division is the staff liaison to the Committee and is responsible, in consultation with the Committee Chair, for developing and presenting agenda items for the Committee meetings and for keeping members informed of Governmental Relations issues.

**MEETINGS**

The Committee will meet at least four times annually, with authority to convene additional meetings, as circumstances require. All Committee members are expected to attend each meeting, in person or via-teleconference. The Committee will invite members of management, auditors, or others to attend meetings and provide pertinent information, as necessary. It may meet periodically with management, internal auditors and external auditors.

All Committee meetings must be publicly noticed in accordance with the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act whenever three or more of the Committee members will be present. Formal minutes will be produced for each meeting.

**REPORTING RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Committee shall:

1. Regularly report to the Commission about Committee recommendations and staff analyses and reports

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The Governmental Relations Committee Charter is adopted by:

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Chair, California Student Aid Commission: James Fousekis      Date

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Chair, Governmental Relations Committee: Daniel Friedlander      Date

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Executive Director: Diana Fuentes Michel      Date