

Information Item

California Student Aid Commission

Executive Director's Report

Enclosed for review is a written report from the Executive Director of the California Student Aid Commission.

Recommended Action: For information only. No action required.

Responsible Staff: Diana Fuentes-Michel,
Executive Director



**Executive Director's Report
July 17, 2007**

Dear Commissioners,

The Commission staff looks forward to the Joint Workshop of the Commission and the EDFUND Board of Directors next week. At the time of this report, the Governor and the Legislature have not yet reached agreement on a State budget for Fiscal Year 2007-08. Commission staff will provide an update on the State Budget at the Joint Workshop to update you on any new developments at that time.

Selection of Advisory Committee on the Grant Delivery Enhancement Project

Since the last Commission meeting, the Commission's staff has completed the Cal Grant C award process. We now await final budget decisions in the funding of the State's grant programs. However, our Program Administration and Services Division and Information Technology Services Division (ITSD) staff are now focused on completing the work of Phase I of our Grant Delivery Enhancement Project. As you will recall at our last Commission meeting, the Commission approved the initial contracts for Phase II development and asked that the staff focus on the selection of the technical advisory committee and consultation process.

To date, ITSD headed by John Bays, has recruited eight members for the Advisory Committee, who will coordinate the development of standard web services and to solicit school and vendor requirements and priorities for desired web services automation. ITSD staff is presently requesting participation from the major Financial Aid Management system vendors and segmental representatives. The Commission staff is working to identify the core membership of this advisory committee this week, however, will remain open to accepting new participants as the advisory committee moves forward.

The advisory committee anticipates meeting monthly from July 2007 through July 2008. However, the time may be extended or reformulated as the project evolves. It is expected that extensive communications will occur through various channels including emails, minutes published on a designated web-site, web conferencing, teleconferencing, face-to-face meetings (approximately every three months) and communications with customers via Fast Blast (the Commission's executive director's electronic newsletter), Operation Memos, Special Alerts and ITSD contact list.

The schedule for the advisory committee meetings and expected benchmarks for external consultation and input are provided below:

- July 2007 - Confirmation of initial committee membership
- July 2007 – The first meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 18th at 3:00 p.m. Discussion will be an overview of charter and the advisory committee process.
- July 2007 - Solicitation of participating schools and/or vendors in Phase II integration and development.
- August 2007 - Finalization of initial Web Services specification to be supported and confirmation of participating schools and/or vendors.
- September 2007 - First draft of specification standards and process.
- Oct 2007 - First draft of implementation strategy
- December 2007 - Second draft of implementation strategy
- January 2008 - Completion of implementation of first Web Service with school/vendor
- February 2008 – Joint Application Development (JAD) on enhancements for future.
- March 2008 - Final Web Services specifications published
- April 2008 - Final implementation strategy published.
- May 2008 - Final enhancements for future.
- June 2008 – Feasibility Study Report for future enhancements
- July 2008 - Web Services Available.

In addition to the establishment of this important advisory committee that will guide the implementation of Phase II of the Grant Delivery Enhancement Project, Commission staff has also been involved in preparations for this coming week's Joint Workshop Meeting, as well as preparation for development of the 2008-09 State budget. Each August, the Commission receives budget instructions from the Department of Finance regarding the coming budget cycle. The Commission staff has been involved in closing the 2006-07 State fiscal year, as well as preparing for the upcoming budget changes that are anticipated with the Governor and Legislature's budget agreement.

Cal Grant Entitlement awards show another increase

The Commission continues to make more Cal Grant Entitlement awards each year. This spring, we offered 73,080 Cal Grant Entitlement awards to students, an increase of more than five percent from the 69,190 awards made last year.

National Guard-Assumption Program of Loans for Education (NG-APPLE)

NG-APPLE is a state-funded program that authorizes us to provide up to \$11,000 in loan assumption benefits for Californians in the National Guard, the State Military Reserve or the Naval Militia. Enacted in September of 2003, no funds were authorized to support the program until AB 1801 was signed into law on June 30, 2006, authorizing 100 awards for the 2006-2007 award year.

This June, we selected 100 NGAPPLE applicants. Participants must provide four consecutive years of satisfactory military service. After each year of eligible service, participants may receive an annual payment. Congratulations to this year's recipients and Commission staff for their successful implementation of this program!

IPA discussions to resume at the July 19th Grant Advisory Committee (GAC) meeting

Work continues this summer to finalize Institutional Participation Agreements for the upcoming school year, and to tackle remaining issues for next year's agreement. The IPA is the contract between the Commission and the institutions that administer the Cal Grant program. Commission staff, the Grant Advisory Committee and interested stakeholders have continued to meet this summer in hopes of completing recommendations for the Commission meeting in September.

And finally, we have been focused on our work with the Commission's Ad Hoc Committee on the Oversight of EDFUND. The Results Group has met with Federal Policy and Program Division staff, as well as Senior Management and is now preparing a draft for the Commission to consider at its September meeting.

I look forward to seeing you at the Joint Workshop and Commission meetings on July 26th and 27th.



Diana Fuentes-Michel
Executive Director