

# Exhibit 18

## Information Item

### Discussion of website improvements

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This item was prepared upon request of the Student Impact Committee.

The California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) faces numerous challenges in maintaining a website that meets the needs of the various stakeholders which it serves. As a regulatory and administrative body, CSAC needs a website that can organize large amounts of data, training, policy resources and regulatory updates for institutions and researchers. As a student serving organization, CSAC needs an up-to-date website that enables students to quickly find the resources necessary to apply for aid and manage their WebGrants account. The current website is built on top of an antiquated framework that limits our ability to effectively integrate many of the modern features present on other websites, and which will be available as part of the redesigned Grant Delivery System. It is also cumbersome, requiring more work to accomplish the same task than a more modern framework.

Commission staff has analyzed the basic requirements of the website and begun the process of evaluating websites designed to provide equally complex audiences with complex information and services. A survey has been designed for staff to visit a number of the identified sites and provide feedback on what elements are most usable.

Staff has determined that the best solution is to deploy a modern Content Management System (CMS). A CMS effectively separates content from presentation, allowing subject-matter experts to quickly update pages with up-to-date information without needing skills in web design or programming.

Once an appropriate CMS is selected, a theme and templates would be developed and the website designed on top of the new CMS framework. We are exploring ways that this can be done from within existing budget resources. Once deployed, aside from maintenance and new features, a CMS is easily maintained and updated by users. This would remove a major bottleneck in older systems, where updating content requires knowledge of web design, since the content is integrated into the webpage code.

Staff will be available to discuss this further and to respond to questions at the April 16-17, 2015 meeting.

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