

Information Item

***California Student Opportunity Access Program (Cal-SOAP)
Advisory Subcommittee***

Update on the Status of Cal-SOAP Funding Allocation Methodology

At its June 21, 2007 meeting, the Commission directed staff to develop a method for allocating funding for the 2008-09 state fiscal year for the California Student Opportunity Access Program (Cal-SOAP). The Commission also requested that staff seek advice and comments from the Cal-SOAP Advisory Committee and the Cal-SOAP Project Directors in developing an evaluation process. A Cal-SOAP Advisory Subcommittee joined the Project Directors meeting on March 17, 2008 to discuss the staff's proposed minimum requirements, evaluation criteria, and scoring process. While not necessarily in agreement with staff's proposal, those in attendance did provide constructive suggestions that staff used to develop a proposal. The final staff recommendation, however, wasn't finalized and distributed until just before the Commission's Programs, Planning and Budget (PPB) Committee meeting on March 28, 2008.

CSAC staff, the chair of the Cal-SOAP Advisory Committee, a representative of the advisory committee's ad hoc subcommittee, and several project directors were in attendance at the March 28, 2008 PPB meeting. A number of project directors also participated via telephone.

At the PPB meeting staff explained the proposal for evaluating the Cal-SOAP Annual Program Plans (APP) and allocating funding for 2008-09. The proposed evaluation criteria are based on statutory requirements; however, all agreed that there is some subjectivity involved in the evaluation process. Staff also proposed a specific weighting of the criteria and scoring process utilizing staff evaluators. This process is similar to how the state processes requests for proposals (RFPs).

The PPB Committee then asked the advisory committee members and the project directors for their comments. The advisory committee members and project directors indicated they were concerned with establishing the reliability of an evaluation tool and ensuring transparency in the scoring and funding process. They also recommended that there be sufficient time to further develop and norm the evaluation and scoring process and that it not be used for the 2008-09 funding allocations.

The PPB Committee concluded that there was insufficient opportunity & time for consultation and norming with regard to the scoring process in order to base 2008-09 allocations on the established criteria.

With the shift in Cal-SOAP funding from the General Fund to the federal College Access Challenge Grant (CACG), the budget gap due to the federal funds not being available

until August 2008, the State 2008-09 Budget Act appropriating \$1 million for CTE and staff reductions and turnovers within the Commission due to budget reductions, no further discussion on funding allocations and evaluations has taken place.

As indicated in Tab 1, we are still in the process of implementing the CTE funding for 2008-09 and will have to begin the application process for 2009-10 funding allocations in the near future. The funding for Cal-SOAP in 2009-10 will again be from the federal CACG Program and funding beyond 2009-10 is not guaranteed.