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Information/Action Item

CAL-SOAP Advisory Committee

Approval of June 30, 2006 Meeting Minutes

The committee is asked to review and approve the minutes of the June 30, 2006 meeting.

CALIFORNIA STUDENT AID COMMISSION
California Student Opportunity and Access Program
Cal-SOAP
Advisory Committee Meeting
June 30, 2006

Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Cal-SOAP Advisory Committee was called to order on Friday, June 30, 2006 at 9:12 a.m. The meeting was held at 3300 Zinfandel Drive, Rancho Cordova, CA.

Committee Members in attendance:

R.W. Hicks, Committee Chairperson
Kathy Degn, California Community Colleges Representative
Michele Dyke, Commission Liaison
Yvette Gullatt, UC Representative
Robert Oakes, ICCU Representative
Thomas Russell, CDE Representative
Stacy Wilson, CPEC Representative

CSAC Staff in attendance:
Diane Fuentes-Michel, Executive Director
Steve Caldwell, Chief, Governmental Affairs and Research Division
Kim Taylor, Manager, Outreach Unit

Introductions

The Committee Chair, R.W. Hicks, introduced the two new Committee member, Stacy Wilson from CPEC and Kathy Degn a representative of the California Community Colleges system. Mr. Hicks asked the new members to introduce themselves and to provide their background information.

Chair's Remarks

Mr. Hicks announced his retirement from Humboldt State as of July 4, 2006. He expressed his enthusiasm over outreach and his desire to continue to work in the field, even after retirement. Mr. Hicks stated that he will continue to be a part of the Advisory Committee as long as he is in California. He is looking at the possibility of moving "some place north of the border". Mr. Hicks was not sure whether or not this would be his last Committee meeting.

Mr. Hicks commented on his time with the Committee and stressed the importance of understanding outreach. Mr. Hicks recommended an orientation for new Committee members so that they could gain a concept of the Committee and its purpose.

Since there is no quorum this is an informational meeting, until other Committee members arrive. All items will be taken as information only.

AGENDA ITEM 1 – APPROVAL OF JUNE 17, 2005 MINUTES

Chairman Hicks asked if there were any comments or recommendations for the approval of the minutes from the June 17th meeting. Since there is no quorum, no action could be taken on the minutes.

Committee Member Russell commented on the minutes and Agenda Item 9 Discussion of Options for future meetings. Mr. Russell expressed his concern that the Committee would only meet once a year if the Committee did not find it necessary to hold another meeting. In his opinion he found it more beneficial to meet twice a year. Kim Taylor, Outreach Manager informed the Committee that planning future meetings was a topic of discussion in the agenda items. Because there has not been a quorum, meetings have been difficult to schedule. Comments were heard regarding the meeting issue and Executive Director Fuentes-Michel suggested having teleconferences.

This issue will be addressed again when there is a quorum to take action on this agenda item.

AGENDA ITEM 2 – EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive Director Fuentes-Michel thanked Mr. Hicks, on behalf of staff, the Committee, and the Commission, for his service on the Cal-SOAP Advisory Committee. She also thanked the Cal-SOAP Project Directors for attending the meeting.

Executive Director Fuentes-Michel commented that it is possible that the budget would be signed today and that the Cal-SOAP budget has stayed intact. The bad news is that there is no new funding.

Executive Director Fuentes-Michel recommended that Cal-SOAP go forward with a budget change proposal to present to the Commission that defines the priorities of Cal-SOAP. Executive Director Fuentes-Michel suggested working closely with Commissioner Dyke to communicate what Cal-SOAP needs to the Commission.

Executive Director Fuentes-Michel recommended reaching out to the four new commissioners, Dan Friedlander, Joseph Yew, Alice Perez, and Michael Ortiz, and inviting them to visit the individual projects so that they can become acquainted with the projects and understand what they do.

Executive Director Fuentes-Michel also discussed the new programs that the Commission may get next year. 1) an APLE-like program for nurses, which would provide loan forgiveness for nurses; 2) a supplemental grant program for low income students that transfer from a community college to a four-year institution; 3) a public interest attorney program for students who are interested in becoming public defenders; 4) a National Guard Program that would provide an additional 200 competitive Cal Grant awards for students who are in the National Guard; and 5) a National Guard APLE Program.

Executive Director Fuentes-Michel discussed the $1.6 million in the budget that is to be used to start phase one of the Grant Delivery System enhancement. In July the system will be migrated from the TEALE Data System to EDFUND. EDFUND will do all of the

production of awards letters. The Executive Director also mentioned the implementation of the IVR (integrated voice response) System for the call center. The call attrition rate has gone down from 23% to about ten percent.

Executive Director Fuentes-Michel talked about the new unit, School Services that provides training for schools. She encouraged the Committee and projects to work with staff to get a presentation so that they can understand what the School Services Unit does.

AGENDA ITEM 3 – PROJECT DIRECTORS' REPORT

Ms. Sonia Ramos from the San Jose Consortium spoke on behalf of the project directors. Ms Ramos introduced Katie Tremper from the South San Joaquin Cal-SOAP. Ms. Tremper is the newest project director.

Ms. Ramos encouraged the Committee members to look at all of the activities each consortium is doing. She also encouraged the Committee to visit their local projects so that they could see them in action. Ms. Ramos stressed the importance of the Cal-SOAP in the financial aid and Cash for College statewide effort and their participation with intersegmental groups. With regards to the activity reports, Ms. Ramos stated that the project directors will form a committee to look at ways to report their activities more consistently so that the information can easily be read and interpreted.

Executive Director Fuentes-Michel inquired about going forward with a budget change proposal, about the uniformity of collecting data for the number of students served, types of activities, and a quantitative assessment of satisfaction. Ms. Ramos stated that through the project director committee that has been formed they will address the data collection issue and suggest changes to the data collection method so that it can be extracted and better used to formulate reports. Executive Director Fuentes-Michel suggested that the project directors work with Commissioners Gullat and Wilson who have had experience with effectiveness reports. Director Fuentes-Michel also recommended having the new research manager from CSAC, Paula Rockwell, involved with the conversation, possibly at the new Committee meeting.

Committee member Russell commended the projects on all of the activities they conduct. Outreach and Public Awareness Chief Steve Caldwell also thanked the project directors and staff for the work with the Cash for College statewide effort.

Committee member Gullatt asked how the Advisory Committee could be helpful to the Consortia in thinking through what an evaluation or an outcome approach to Cal-SOAP reporting would look like. Ms Ramos stated that providing feedback and support with regard to outlining some clear objectives, some measurable objectives with regard to the way data is collected and what is reported out, ensuring that the projects are in alignment with those measurable objectives. Director Fuentes-Michel suggested putting together a workgroup, with a deadline, to focus on these areas. Marcy Manning from the North Coast Cal-SOAP asked that the Advisory Committee help the project directors figure out what information would have the most influence on a statewide level, because each project knows what is important in their own area, but they differ by each project. What information would help to make the budget change proposal successful?

Outreach Unit Manager Kim Taylor commented that whatever the measurable objectives, goals and reporting elements that are agreed upon another issue that needs to be addressed is the Cal-SOAP policy manual and the Cal-SOAP statute and whether or not they are supportive of the objectives. There is some concern with regard to the statute, when it was written versus today's climate and the reality of the projects' functions.

Director Fuentes-Michel was concerned that by making the reporting of the projects uniform you would lose the individuality of the projects. The Director suggested establishing some kind of process that allows the projects to articulate the general goals as well as what is happening regionally within the project.

Ms. Deborah Daniels-Smith commented on the uniqueness of the projects and suggested that the Advisory Committee members could help Cal-SOAP by going back to their individual organizations and being an advocate for Cal-SOAP.

Another issue raised by Ms. Ramos was the changing of the statute's definition of first in family so that eligibility for the program could be expanded. Chairperson Hicks stated that he had brought the issue before the Commission but that he had not heard any decisions on the matter.

Ms. Ramos also commented on the project directors working with CSAC staff regarding the site visits and how they would like to be kept informed of the reporting out process and participate in discussions with the Advisory Committee or the Commission that result from the site visit reports. The project directors would like to work with CSAC staff in developing recommendations for change.

Ms. Ramos commented on the budget reports in the agenda and on the amount of services the projects provide with minimal program funding. Ms. Ramos mentioned the increase in staffing expenses which have an impact on the overall program budget.

Ms. Ramos expressed concern on behalf of the project directors on the compliance review summary report. The project directors were concerned that the information had not been conveyed to them prior to it being published in the agenda, especially since some of the findings had been corrected and the summary made it appear as if the project was not in compliance. Director Fuentes-Michel suggested using an "as of" date for reports, in the future, so that everyone can know when the reports were done.

Outreach Manager Kim Taylor addressed the issue and stated that the approach being used with Cal-SOAP is to communicate and work with the projects to resolve any issues. Ms. Taylor also stated that she could not speak on the details of the report as it was completed by Charles Woods, and it is a summary of the site reviews from the compliance perspective.

Discussion was raised regarding putting forth a bill that would change the first in family definition so that more students could be served by Cal-SOAP. Director Fuentes- Michel cautioned against policy changes that may have fiscal effect because that is what the Legislature weighs. Director Fuentes-Michel suggested putting together another workgroup to focus on this area. Chairperson Hicks recommended having the

workgroup that was already established take on this task as well. Dates for the workgroup to meet will be established once the Committee has determined their future meeting dates. Director Fuentes-Michel recommended doing teleconferences that will be paid for by the Commission so that the workgroup can start working. Chairperson Hicks requested that the workgroup have recommendations to present to the Committee by the next meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 4 – PROGRAM UPDATE FROM CSAC STAFF

Kim Taylor, Outreach Manager for CSAC provided an update on the program policy issue to change the definition of "first in family". The issue was presented to CSAC attorney, and it was determined that it was not within the authority of the Commission to change the definition, it requires a statutory change. Ms. Taylor recommended that this be one of the issues addressed regarding the statute.

Ms. Taylor also discussed Transfer Making It Happen (TMIH). The requirement for projects to participate in this program expired in January of this year (2006), and since there was no action to amend the statute, the projects are not required to provide this service. However, during the site visits it was found that some of the projects are still heavily involved with transfer activities.

Ms. Taylor talked about the site visits and their purpose. Charles Wood's perspective of the site visit was to follow up on the compliance reviews whereas Ms. Taylor's was to interview the project directors and get some insight into each region, receive input as to how each project is operating, and to gather information that you cannot obtain from the Annual Program Plan. Ms. Taylor stated that she had reported to the Commission on the site visits and that she was putting together a report that would give a better picture of how the programs are implemented.

The Advisory Committee was given two handouts. The first was a Consortia Profile that provided basic information about each consortium such as; state budget, membership, schools served, regions served, governing bodies and partners. The handout was developed to provide a glimpse into the make up of each consortium.

The second hand out, in draft form, was a simple view of each consortium's involvement with the statewide Cash for College effort. Ms. Taylor stressed what a large part Cal-SOAP plays in the Cash for College effort and how it is often overlooked. Ms. Sonia Ramos, Project Director, San Jose Cal-SOAP, suggested having the individual projects work more closely with Despina Costopoulos, the Cash for College Coordinator, and starting earlier to provide more organization for Cash for College events within each region. Chairperson Hicks mentioned "Super Sunday" and the effort that the CSU system is making by addressing communities at different churches. Director Fuentes-Michel suggested putting Ms. Taylor in contact with the coordinators of this program so that Cal-SOAP can work with the CSU system to get the word out about financial aid, the FAFSA and Cal-Grants. Director Fuentes-Michel recommended having a meeting with the project directors specifically for the purpose of Cash for College. Another issue raised from this was to ensure that the Cal-SOAP projects received the priority schools list so that they can be sure to target the low income students within the schools.

Linda Doughty, Project Director, San Diego Cal-SOAP, requested information on how to receive information on the students that do not follow through on their FAFSA and GPA verification. Director Fuentes-Michel was reminded of a postcard effort that had been done previously and asked Ms. Taylor to follow up with John on the postcard project to see if there was a way the names could be pulled and whether or not the data could be shared.

AGENDA ITEM 5 – CAL-SOAP PROJECTS STATUS REPORTS

Kim Taylor, Outreach Manager, reviewed the budget reports. The budget reports included information on the expenditures for the 04-05 fiscal year as that is the last year that has been completed so far. Ms. Taylor stressed that although the state funds for the program are $8.56 million, with the matching resources the program is actually about $25 million. Ms. Taylor expressed concern that staffing and benefits take up close to 60% of the Cal-SOAP budget, excluding matching resources. Ms. Taylor urged the Advisory Committee to take a look at the growth that is going on within the projects and to do what they could to influence those who make decisions about funding of the program. Another budget report included information on the minimum 30% of the budget that is to be used for student stipend expenditures. The next report, expenditures up to the 3rd quarter for the 05-06 fiscal year was a point of discussion. Project directors were provided the opportunity to speak on their individual budgets, expenditures and reports.

AGENDA ITEM 6 – COMPLIANCE REVIEW REPORT

Charles Wood, Manager, Program Compliance was not available to attend the meeting. Kim Taylor, Outreach Unit Manager will relay to Mr. Wood all the concerns and the information that had been discussed regarding the findings in the report.

AGENDA ITEM 7 – 2006-2007 ANNUAL PROGRAM PLANS AND FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff had recommended to the Commission that the funding levels remain the same for each project for the 2006-2007 fiscal year. Kim Taylor, Outreach Unit Manager discussed how she was able to explain the structure of Cal-SOAP to the new Commissioners at the Commission meeting, and explain why the projects are funded so disparately. Accordingly, the Commissioners did approve the Cal-SOAP funding of 8.56 million for the 2006-2007 fiscal year.

Ms. Taylor discussed the review of the Annual Program Plans. Ms. Taylor explained that once the reviews were completed each project would be notified individually of any corrections that needed to be made so that a contract could be issued. Once the contract is signed by the project and CSAC it will be sent to the Department of General Services for final approval.

Chairperson Hicks urged all of the Committee members to review the abstracts that had been submitted by each project so that they could get an understanding of what each project does.

Sonia Ramos, Project Director, San Jose Cal-SOAP requested that CSAC, as they have in the past, send a memo to each project's fiscal agent explaining that funding levels will remain the same and that CSAC is moving forward with the contracting process. Kim Taylor, Outreach Unit Manager stated that she will send a memo out to the projects.

AGENDA ITEM 8 – LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Steve Caldwell, Chief Governmental Affairs and Research Division, was called away to attend another meeting. As Mr. Caldwell was unavailable to give his report, he offered to provide the legislative updates in writing. Outreach Unit Manager Kim Taylor stated that the updates would be provided to the Committee as well as the project directors.

AGENDA ITEM 9 – SELECTION OF NEW COMMITTEE CHAIR AND FUTURE MEETING DATES

Since there was not a quorum of the Committee a new chair could not be selected. Kim Taylor, Outreach Unit Manager suggested holding a teleconference for the purpose of selecting a new Chair. Ms. Taylor was assigned the responsibility of setting up the teleconference for the Advisory Committee to select a chair, select future meeting dates and approve the minutes from the previous Advisory Committee meeting.

A last point of clarification was for the subcommittee that had been established with the project directors and representatives of the Advisory Committee. Ms. Ramos would be in contact with the subcommittee members so that they can begin discussion on the issues that had been addressed earlier.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.