

Information /Action Item

CAL-SOAP Advisory Committee

CSAC Update

CSAC Staff will update the Committee on activities in Cal-SOAP including the project site visits that have been conducted over the last year and plans for continuing the program assessment. Staff will discuss the amendments that have been made to the Cal-SOAP contract, and, CSAC Counsel's response to the policy recommendation the committee voted on at its last meeting.

Responsible staff: Kim Taylor, Outreach Manager
Outreach and Public Relations
Division

CSAC Update

Program Policy Issue

At the last Cal-SOAP Advisory Committee Meeting, held June 17, 2005, committee members discussed the statutory eligibility criteria for Cal-SOAP. The California Education Code provides three criteria for Cal-SOAP eligibility: 1) Students who are from low-income families or 2) Students who would be the first in their families to attend college or 3) Students who are from schools or geographic regions with documented low-eligibility or college going rates. Specifically, members discussed the definition of “first in the family to attend college,” and voted to make a recommendation to the Commission to change the definition.

The current definition in the Cal-SOAP Policies and Requirements manual states: “...a student is first in the family to attend college if the student’s parents or siblings never attended college.” The Committee recommended that definition be changed to the following: “A student is first in the family to attend college if the student’s parents have not completed a baccalaureate degree.”

The Committee’s recommendation was submitted to Catherine Brown, the Commission’s legal counsel. Ms. Brown’s response stated that the Committee’s recommendation is in conflict with the statute. She confirmed that “... the statutory language limits participation to students who are the first in their families to ‘attend’ college.” She also explained that the Commission is responsible for implementing the statute as it is written and it cannot interpret requirements in a manner that is contrary to the language of the statute. Ms. Brown suggested that if the Cal-SOAP Advisory Committee wants to recommend expanding eligibility for the program, the appropriate course would be to seek a legislative amendment to the statute.

TMIH – Transfer: Making It Happen

The statutes that required Cal-SOAP to implement the TMIH program sunset on January 1, 2006. Consequently, the Commission can no longer implement TMIH as a required Cal-SOAP activity. However, some Cal-SOAP projects provide substantial transfer support services and expend significant resources on preparing and advising Cal-SOAP students for the transfer process. In addition, the Commission continues to administer the Transfer Entitlement Cal-Grant award. In light of established project activities and our efforts to continue consistent and comprehensive support of the Commission’s programs, the Cal-SOAP contract has been amended. The reference to TMIH has been deleted and the following language is included:

In accordance with Education Code Section 69561(d), Community College Transfer assistance services must be included in the Consortium’s Annual Program Plan. Each Consortium’s efforts will include, as part of its services, use of the Commission’s Cal Grant Entitlement and Transfer Entitlement Award information.

Each consortium was asked to clearly document in their 2006-2007 APPs any planned changes to their community college transfer support activities.

Cal-SOAP Site Visits

Compliance Manager, Charles Wood and Outreach Manager, Kim Taylor, will complete site visits to all the Cal-SOAP projects after an anticipated visit to the Northcoast project in July. The site visits are the first step in gathering information to assess the statewide program implementation and develop recommendations for improvement. In consultation with the Cal-SOAP Advisory Committee, staff will develop recommendations to clarify the statutory requirements of the program, develop criteria for continued program monitoring and evaluation, develop guidelines for consistent and pertinent program services, and assess project funding.

As the next step in the assessment process, staff will compile the information gathered through the site visits and provide a report to the Cal-SOAP Advisory Committee at its next scheduled meeting. Information gathered in the site visits will help determine project implementation in areas including:

- Student access strategies
- Models of student contact in providing services
- Types of student and program data
- Data collection capabilities
- Staffing resources
- Governing Board participation and support
- Regional collaboration and resources

As a result of this assessment process, any changes in the Cal-SOAP developed, recommended, and implemented by the Commission, may result in amendments to the Cal-SOAP statutes, the Policies and Requirements Manual, and the State Contract.

Informational Reports (Handouts)

Cal-SOAP – Consortia Profiles

Provides a summary of each project including governing board membership and schools served.

Cal-SOAP Participation in the Cash for College Statewide Effort

Provides detailed information on Cal-SOAP participation in the statewide Cash for College Effort for the 2005-2006 financial aid award cycle. Includes number of events, number of students and parents served, types of service participants received, and level of Cal-SOAP participation.