

CALIFORNIA STUDENT AID COMMISSION

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Fall, 2009

Dear Cal Grant Students and Parents:

As a former Cal Grant recipient with more than thirty years of experience working with the state's colleges and universities, I want to encourage all students to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Assistance (FAFSA) -- the universal application for all types of federal, institutional and private financial aid.

Whether you are seeking grant, loan or work study assistance, your financial need is determined by first filling out this important document. In addition, to qualify for a Cal Grant, you must also file a GPA with the California Student Aid Commission (go to www.calgrants.org for more information).

Although the financial aid process may appear daunting at times, my message to students and parents is that there is **hope**, and more important, there is **help** available to acquaint you with your options.

This year I am navigating through the financial aid process with my own daughter. This personal perspective, given the challenging economic circumstances confronting California families, has been a learning experience -- even for someone whose daily professional life is committed to student access and achievement!

The importance of Cal Grants for your future, and California's future economic workforce, cannot be understated. The good news is, in the face of massive state budget cuts, all Commission financial aid programs are intact and fully funded.

Financial aid assistance for education is available to all California high school students who qualify and apply. The key is to be proactive and take advantage of the help and resources which are available to you.

In the attached [Senior and Junior Financial Aid Checklist](#) , produced by the California Student Aid Commission, you will find a calendar of activities that will assist you with your efforts in completing the financial aid process for college and career/technical school. This comprehensive document contains useful resources and website references for specific financial aid information.

On behalf of the Commission and its staff, I wish you much success!

Sincerely,

Diana Fuentes-Michel
Executive Director
California Student Aid Commission

