



## California Student Aid Commission

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### **Executive Director Discusses the State of College Affordability at Annual Meeting of California Financial Aid Administrators**

Sacramento, CA (2018) – Lupita Cortez Alcalá, Executive Director of the California Student Aid Commission (Commission) was a featured speaker at the California Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (CASFAA) annual conference in Palm Desert, California, today. She spoke about the State of College Affordability during the morning general session of the 4-day event held annually to provide training and updates to college financial aid professionals.

“With everyone, from individual Commissioners, segments of higher education, policy advocates and legislators, we have an opportunity right now for significant financial aid reform,” Ms. Alcalá told the financial aid group. “This next two-year legislative session promises to see proposals that will try to address the questions of fairness and of equity and of inclusion for all students.”

Her speech identified several key steps taken by the Commission to improve the delivery of financial aid to students. The Commission has proposed increasing the Cal Grant B Access award to address factors such as housing and food insecurity experienced by students. The Commission, based on a recommendation by a report it solicited from The Century Foundation, will be pursuing to establish an innovation fund to support alternative methods of financial aid administration. And, joining with the California Policy Lab this past year, the Commission has already developed earlier and clearer communications with students about their awards and the potential costs of college.

At the November 29-30 Commission meeting, Ms. Alcalá, said the Commissioners will undertake larger questions about how to revamp the entire Cal Grant program and consider proposals recently released by the Board of Governors for the Community Colleges and The Institute for College Access and Success, in addition to The Century Foundation Report recommendations.

Ms. Alcalá also reported on other areas of activity, including the Commission’s launch of the survey of college students in the Student Expense And Resource Survey (SEARS), that helps establish the true cost for students attending college. The Commission also increased training opportunities this past year and recently honored 35 high schools with the highest FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)/CADAA (California Dream Act Application) completion rates in the Race to Submit competition.

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*The California Student Aid Commission is the state’s policy leader in the administration of financial aid for higher education, making education beyond high school financially accessible to all Californians. California Student Aid Commission serves the needs of not only*

today's college students but tomorrow's students, guiding them through the application process. Information and tools are available online for the parents of tomorrow's college and career technical students, a fully staffed call center answers questions and the California Student Aid Commission provides workshops and funds grants to organizations that provide access opportunities for students who are first in their family to attend institutions of higher education. For more information on how the California Student Aid Commission serves to educate, inform, and support students, their educational institutions, and the professionals who assist them please visit our website at <https://www.csac.ca.gov> or follow us on Twitter (@castudentaid) and Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/CSAC.StudentAidCommission/>.

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