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Student Aid Commission Praises Gov. Newsom and California Legislature's Commitment to Cal Grant Program in Budget Agreement

"Commission commends state leadership for supporting Cal Grant funding"

SACRAMENTO, Calif., June 30, 2020 – The California Student Aid Commission commends Governor Newsom and the California legislature for supporting equity and access by protecting Cal Grant funding and financial aid that makes education beyond high school affordable for students across the state, especially in light of the COVID-19 crisis.

The 2020-21 Budget maintains the Cal Grant program without reductions to the number of grants available or amount of aid received by students, while also repurposing previously allocated funds to provide disaster relief aid to undocumented students at public colleges and universities who had been barred from accessing assistance provided under the CARES Act.

Marlene Garcia, Executive Director of the California Student Aid Commission, said, "I am pleased that Governor Newsom and our legislators recognize the value of investments in financial aid. COVID-19 has exacerbated the affordability challenges faced by so many students pursuing postsecondary education, so it is imperative that this budget prioritized maintaining access to financial aid."

Commission Chair Catalina Cifuentes said, "By ensuring continued support for the Cal Grant and critical college affordability programs, our elected leaders in Sacramento send a clear message to prospective and current students that support is available as they pursue higher education. We know that today's students are the workforce of tomorrow and this budget reflects the important role of state financial aid in helping California recover from COVID-19."

Commission Vice-Chair Jamillah Moore added, "Students were already struggling to meet their basic needs and cover housing, food, and other expenses before COVID-19 created additional challenges to overcome. Ensuring that our students can continue to rely on their state-based aid, as well as identifying new means to provide disaster relief aid to students who did not receive an emergency grant, will help more students stay enrolled despite these unprecedented circumstances."

The Commission will continue to partner with policymakers to respond to student needs and ensure that financial aid remains accessible to students throughout the COVID-19 crisis.

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The California Student Aid Commission administers the state's \$2.8 billion portfolio of student financial aid programs and services, including the Cal Grant, the Middle Class Scholarship, and the California Dream Act Application. The Commission serves as a resource for policymakers and the public on college affordability and

financing issues, and advocates for policy changes to eliminate cost as a barrier to any qualified California student pursuing a higher education.

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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.