Key Messages: Why Do We Need the GDSM Project?

The California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) receives legislative mandates every year which requires legislation and program changes that affects our current Grant Delivery System (GDS). Because the GDS system was built on business rules and processes that were established in the 1980s and 1990s, the system experiences limitations in scalability, security, performance, flexibility, integration, and business value.

Unfortunately, these limitations also affect students’ ability to receive and take full advantage of their grants. Due to internet browser and device incompatibility, manual processing, and outdated business rules, students are not receiving their awards on time or do not know if they are eligible for grants. Additionally, GDS does not offer “self-service” requests to provide quick answers and address basic demands. As a result, students depending on these financial aid are affected by these delays.

CSAC needs the Grant Delivery System Modernization (GDSM) Project to meet the growing needs of students and to ensure that college education is financially accessible to all Californians.

As a student-centered agency, CSAC seeks to build a system that would be an easily accessible, one-stop shop. Through the GDSM Project, CSAC hopes to develop a system that:

- exemplifies current architectural methods
- integrates multiple programs
- reduces processing from staff
- accommodates changing demands from legislative, regulatory, and operational requirements
- provides interfaces to current technologies

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4 Issues That the GDSM Project Will Resolve

1. Paper processes will be limited as GDSM becomes paperless and fully automated to improve processing status and influence fast turn around.

2. Limited Data Security Risk will change and become more reliable with role based security and history logging to trace account transactions.

3. Obsolete and Disparate Systems will be history as latest technologies are used to fully integrate business rules engine and process management.

4. Responsibility and skills will become more distinct and clear with specific user roles, responsibilities, and modern skill sets.

To inquire more information about the GDSM Project, visit the webpage: [http://www.csac.ca.gov/gdsm_project.htm](http://www.csac.ca.gov/gdsm_project.htm)
The Commission has completed and submitted Stage 2, Alternate Analysis/Market Solution, to the Department of Technology (CDT) and the Department of Finance (DoF). Stage 2 was approved on May 23, 2017 and the project moves along towards Stage 3.

Staff and stakeholders are currently working on Stage 3 requirements for detailed, technical, and functional project requirements. Workshops were completed in June 2017, and the Statement of Work (SOW), Request for Proposal (RFP), and Requirements will be submitted for approval.

Once the planning for Stage 3 has concluded, requirements will be submitted to CDT and DoF for review by November 10, 2017. After review and approval from CDT and DoF, the Commission can then submit a Request for Proposal (RFP) & Contract.

The GDSM Solution Vendor may take up to 24 months for configurations/development of the system. A planned pilot/trial run will be tested before the solution is fully launched in Fall 2020.

This schedule is a tentative timeline for the project delivery. The Commission will actively work on meeting all stage deadlines. To keep you informed with the most recent updates, please subscribe to the GDSM ListServ.

Top Benefits of GDSM

- Step-by-step guides will support students during the financial aid application and renewal process.
- Early enrollment of FAFSA and State Financial Aid Programs gives families and students more time to choose a college based on costs and aid available.
- Students will be able to interact with system to understand which programs are beneficial and what next steps to take based on their specific situation.
- Tools such as calculators, loans, and scholarships will be available to help students determine college funds.
- There will be various ways of contacting the commission through webchat, text, phone, etc.
- The consolidation of all CSAC systems into one will result in better tracking, data management, and work flow efficiency.
- Better system will increase take rate of awards.
- System will efficiently generate metric reports that evaluate the project activities and facilitate campus’ administration program.

*The list above contains planned benefits of GDSM.*
Making education beyond high school financially accessible to all Californians.

Student Portal Interaction

Name: Austin
Program: Cal Grant A Recipient
Education Level & Major: incoming 4th year, Public Policy Major
Favorite Part of College: I enjoy the variety of classes I take. It’s very empowering when I meet new people and hear different ideas and stories.
Hobbies: Swimming, eating, sleeping, hanging out with family and friends
Challenges with WebGrants 4 Students: When I have issues with my Cal Grant, it’s hard for me to log in to my account because I need to use a specific laptop and web browser. This makes it hard for me and some of my friends who don’t have access to these specific requirements.
Improvements You Hope to See: I just wish there is a way where students can use different smartphones, tablets, computers, and laptops to access WebGrants 4 Students. As students, we are always busy and trying to access things “on the go,” so being able to use the website from our phones would be very helpful.

Future Student Portal Interaction

Student Profile
Profiles will provide basic student information, school of attendance, education level, FAFSA/CADAA application status, financial aid, and etc.

Application & Appeals
Portals will have direct links to FAFSA or CADAA website and other sites to file appeals.

Customer Service
Students will be able to automatically communicate with a live representative via webchat, text, social media, email, or phone.

College Cost
Links/tools will be available for students to estimate cost of attendance for colleges.

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