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## **ACTRESS AND ADVOCATE GABRIELLE UNION HELPS LAUNCH THE CALIFORNIA “RACE TO SUBMIT” CAMPAIGN**

*A Graduate of U.C.L.A., Union Inspires Students to Complete the FAFSA or California Dream Act Application*

**(SACRAMENTO, CA)** - The California Student Aid Commission is launching the “Race to Submit” statewide campaign to encourage more high school seniors to apply for financial aid by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or California Dream Act Application (CADAA). A “Race to Submit Kick-off” event is planned for 9:30am on Wednesday, October 4, 2017 at Rancho Verde High School in Moreno Valley, California, located at 17750 Lasselle St., Moreno Valley, CA 92551. Actress Gabrielle Union will make a special appearance at the kick-off event to encourage students to complete a FAFSA or California Dream Act Application. In addition to being an accomplished actress, Ms. Union is a 1996 graduate of UCLA with honors in sociology.

Lupita Cortez Alcalá, Executive Director of the Commission, invited every school district and high school in California to participate in the Race to Submit campaign, noting that, “This campaign is an exciting way to encourage schools to increase their students’ FAFSA and CADAA submission rates. No California student should think that college is not an option for them because they cannot afford it.”

When a student completes the FAFSA or the CADAA, they may be eligible for thousands of dollars of FREE money towards an education at a public or private university or community college. “The federal and state government award more than \$6 billion in grant aid to California students to attend college – this is free money that never needs to be repaid,” said Lande Ajose, Commission Chair. Ajose noted that “There is financial aid available for every qualified student who applies – and the way to get it is to submit a completed FAFSA or CADAA.”

First launched regionally in Riverside County in 2014, the Race to Submit challenges high schools to compete to raise the application rates for FAFSA and Dream Act submissions.

Through a countywide leaderboard, college kickoff events, signing day events, championship banners, and a commendation from President Barack Obama, financial aid application rates have risen by 35% in three years, thereby unlocking greater access to college for hundreds more students in Riverside County.

Dr. Judy D. White, Riverside County Superintendent of Schools said, “The passionate pursuit of educators in Riverside County to connect students with financial aid for college through the Race to Submit campaign is exactly what every family deserves in California.” She added, “When you mix in a little bit of motivational competition, leveraging existing data, and relentless educators committed to eliminating financial barriers to college, it’s a recipe for fueling the college-going rate that all schools should be utilizing to accelerate existing efforts or racing to get started with immediately.”

California’s financial aid application season begins on October 1, 2017 and continues until March 2, 2018. An online Race to Submit Dashboard will soon be available on our website, [www.csac.ca.gov](http://www.csac.ca.gov). The Race to Submit Dashboard will allow high schools, school districts, counties, and local communities to track financial aid application progress and compare their progress to that of other communities.

The Commission’s Cash for College program will continue to provide support to high schools, community-based organizations, colleges, universities, etc. throughout the state who plan to host financial aid completion events to assist high school seniors and their families. Location for free Cash for College Workshops are available at [www.cash4college.org](http://www.cash4college.org).

For more information, contact Patti Colston at 916-206-1285.

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