

Memorandum

Date: March 11, 2010
To: CASFAA Executive Council
From: Bryan Dickason
CSAC CASFAA Executive Council Liaison
Re: CSAC Update

2010-11 Cal Grant Entitlement Processing

As of this date, more than 59,000 High School Entitlement (E1) Cal Grant awards have been offered to students. Students are notified of their offer via an automated e-mail message directing the student to view the new electronic California Aid Report (CAR) located in WebGrants for Students (WGS). Students must have a WGS account to view their award information. Students who did not list an e-mail account on their Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) will receive a paper CAR.

Students who have not yet received an electronic CAR can also establish a WGS account and check their status. The Commission will continue to run weekly award cycles and provide electronic or paper CARs to applicants.

Please encourage students to check their e-mail accounts listed on their 2010-11 FAFSA and urge them to open WGS accounts to monitor their Cal Grant status at www.webgrants4students.org

2008-09 Year Cal Grant Payments

The Student Aid Commission has received confirmation from the California State Controllers Office (SCO) that the remaining 2008-09 year Cal Grant payments will be released by March 19.

Payments for the 2009-10 year have not, as yet, been affected by shortfalls but it is possible that later in the year the same delays may occur for 2009-10 year funding. Questions on Cal Grant payments can be made to Tom Panages at (916) 464-2645.

AB 187 Report

Assembly Bill 187 to establish a Cal Grant pilot alternative delivery system was enacted as an urgency statute and chaptered by the Secretary of State on November 5, 2009. The bill requires the Commission to adopt regulations establishing a pilot program for an alternative Cal Grant delivery system. The legislation prohibits the Commission from implementing the pilot alternative delivery system until the Commission meets prescribed conditions, including receiving commitments from at least 30, but not more than 35, qualifying institutions electing to participate in the alternative delivery system.

Costs associated with developing and implementing the pilot alternative delivery system would be paid by participating institutions.

On December 3, 2009, the Commission convened an Advisory Task Force and created a technical subcommittee to formulate the pilot program technical and data requirements. At its January 20, 2010 meeting, the subcommittee discussed the functionalities of the current Cal Grant delivery system, the alternative delivery system, and the processes of the systems which could continue and minimize costs to institutions to best serve students.

The Commission staff and the technical subcommittee developed a survey to determine the technical capabilities of participating Cal Grant institutions and the Financial Aid Management systems currently used by those institutions. This survey will provide useful data on how to best proceed in designing the pilot program. Completion of the survey from all participating institutions and returning it to the Commission by March 15, 2010 will be greatly appreciated. Coordinated responses within each campus will minimize duplication of surveys. We have used the online survey tool, Survey Monkey, to allow easy completion of the survey. The survey can be taken by following this link: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/AB187Survey>

If you have any questions or concerns, contact Bryan Dickason at 916.464.8919 or bryand@csac.ca.gov.

WebGrants for Students Access

Students who filed a 2010-11 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) can check the status of their Cal Grant application by logging on to www.webgrants4students and creating an account.

This secure site will allow students to view the status of their Cal Grant or Chafee application, update their address, view payment history or tell us if they are changing their school. Please encourage your students to use WebGrants for Students.

2009-10 APLE Change Expands Eligibility

Changes in state law affecting the APLE Program became effective January 1, 2009. These changes apply to all applicants who submitted and signed their applications on or after January 1, 2009, and were explained in Grant Operations Memo GOM 2009-21 on July 2, 2009.

The statutory change expands program eligibility, broadens the scope for leave of absences, and changes the requirements for a participant to receive additional loan assumption funds. Additionally, credentialed teachers who are not in the APLE program but are teaching at a public school ranked in the lowest 2 deciles on the Academic Performance Index, will now be eligible to participate beginning the 2010-11 academic year.

The APLE Credentialed Teacher awards for the 2010-11 academic year will be distributed to 400 students among 58 participating California counties.

The Commission encourages schools to continue submitting Assumption Program of Loans for Education (APLE) applications before the September 30, 2010 deadline. APLE applications are located at www.csac.ca.gov.

This March edition of the Fast Blast provides you with updates of the status of this year's application cycle for the Commission's programs and recent legislation affecting state financial aid programs. Specifically, I would encourage you to share this electronic publication with your colleagues who work with students on financial aid issues. If you have any suggestions or ideas on how the Commission might better inform you, please let us know at fastblast@csac.ca.gov. As required by AB 187, the Commission is developing a pilot alternative Cal Grant delivery system program to allow participating institutions to voluntarily administer Cal Grant Entitlement and California Community College Transfer Cal Grant Entitlement awards. Emergency regulations for the program are to be adopted by July 1, 2010.

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Chafee Program News

In December, the California Department of Social Services (DSS) informed the Commission that they would be reducing funding for 2009-10 Chafee grants by 12%. As a result, the issuance of additional new 2009-10 Chafee awards was impacted until the Commission could evaluate funding availability.

The Commission is pleased to report the full recovery of the 12% reduction and that processing of additional eligible awards for the 2009-10 academic year has begun. Awards for 2009-10 will continue to be processed on a weekly basis until all available funds are expended.

Thank you for your attention and assistance in returning checks for ineligible Chafee participants. The timely return of these funds assisted in expediting the reconciliation process to make funds available for the issuance of new Chafee awards.

If you have any questions regarding the Chafee grant, please contact the School Support Services Branch at schoolsupport@csac.ca.gov or at (888) 294-0153.

Legislative Update

The Commission is watching several bills in the 2010 Legislative Session. Following are summaries and statuses of those bills. If you would like to listen to the hearings you may do so at the following links:

www.assembly.ca.gov/defaulttext.asp (for Assembly committees) or
www.senate.ca.gov/~newsen/schedules/files.htm (for Senate committees).

If you would like to testify in support or opposition to a bill, you may attend the scheduled hearings.

AB 1703 (Knight) Nursing Assumption Program of Loans for Education

STATUS: This bill will be heard in Assembly Higher Education Committee on Tuesday, March 16 at 1:30 p.m. in room 437.

SUMMARY: AB 1703 expands the assumption of qualifying loans under the SNAPLE program for a participant that completes qualifying clinical registered nursing service at a state-sponsored veterans home. The bill provides for additional loan assumption beyond the currently authorized four years, with a maximum loan assumption amount equal to the participant's total outstanding loan debt.

CSAC POSITION: The Commission has taken a **Support if Amended** position and is asking for amendments to alleviate the administrative burden of tracking a participant indefinitely.

AB 1761 (Fong) Cal Grant B Awards: Award Amount

STATUS: This bill will be heard in Assembly Higher Education Committee on Tuesday, March 16 at 1:30 p.m. in room 437.

SUMMARY: AB 1761 amends current law to provide step increases in the number of Cal Grant B students receiving tuition and/or fees in their first academic year over the next four years from 2% in 2010-11 to 25% in 2011-12, to 50% in 2012-13, to 75% in 2013-14, and finally increasing to 100% in the 2014-15 academic year and beyond.

CSAC POSITION: The Commission has taken a **Co-Sponsor** position with the California State Student Association on this bill.

AB 2447 (Furutani) Student Financial Aid: Cal Grant Program

STATUS: This bill is not currently scheduled for a committee hearing.

SUMMARY: AB 2447 prescribes a minimum funding level for the Cal Grant Program and that funding in any fiscal year be subject to the annual Budget Act.

CSAC POSITION: None. Commission staff is working with the author and the University of California Student Association, the bill's sponsor, to amend the bill to achieve the desired result of stabilizing Cal Grant funding through the annual budget process.

SB 957 (Price) Student Financial Aid

STATUS: This bill will be heard in Senate Education Committee on Wednesday, March 24 at 9:00 a.m. in room 4203.

SUMMARY: SB 957 requires the Commission to consult with "appropriate state and federal agencies, employers and businesses, representatives of organized labor, and occupational and technical training providers" to periodically update the approved occupational program list for the Cal Grant C program, and it requires the Commission to give priority in granting Cal Grant C awards to students pursuing occupational or technical training in high-need, high-growth, and high-pay occupations as determined annually by the Employment Development Department.

CSAC POSITION: None. Commission staff is analyzing the provisions in the bill prior to bringing it before the Commission with recommendations.

SB 1460 (Cedillo) Student Financial Aid: Eligibility

STATUS: This bill is not currently scheduled for a committee hearing.

SUMMARY: SB 1460 enacts the California Dream Act of 2010 and allows AB 540 students to receive institutional and state aid, including Cal Grant.

CSAC POSITION: None. Commission staff is analyzing the provisions in the bill prior to bringing it before the Commission with recommendations. Note: the Commission has supported various iterations of the California Dream Act in the past.

HR 3221 (Miller, George) Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act

STATUS: This bill has stalled behind the discussion of health care reform in the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee.

SUMMARY: HR 3221 creates the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2009, proposes changes to the federal student loan program, federal Pell grant, student aid methodology, veterans educational grants and loan forgiveness, funding for college access and completion, cooperative education, civil legal assistance attorneys loan repayment, grants for public school facilities renovation and repair, charter schools, green schools, the early learning challenge fund, and a graduation funding initiative for the community colleges.

CSAC POSITION: The Commission has taken a position of **Support if Amended** on this bill and is asking for more specificity with regards to the future method of collecting asset data. The Commission is also asking the California Congressional Delegation to support the expedited movement of this bill through Congress as it contains vital funding for the Commission's Cash for College and Cal-SOAP programs.

For more information about state financial aid legislation, please contact Lori Nezhura, CSAC Legislative Liaison, at 916.464.2158.