

## Memorandum

**Date:** January 31, 2012

**To:** CASFAA Executive Council

**From:** Bryan Dickason  
CSAC CASFAA Executive Council Liaison

**Re:** CSAC Update

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### **AB 131 – The Dream Act**

AB 131 provides the opportunity for students who meet the eligibility criteria for AB 540 to apply for and receive Cal Grants and other state funded financial aid. The Commission has been actively working on the various components required to implement the Dream Act. Numerous conference calls and meetings have been held with campus and segmental representatives as well as AB 540 and other student advocacy groups to develop a comprehensive understanding of the issues to be addressed in the implementation.

Earlier this month, the California Dream Act website was released at [www.caldreamact.org](http://www.caldreamact.org). At this time, this website displays information on the Act but will eventually be expanded to contain the actual Dream Application. The Commission is interested in any feedback you may have on the current content and what additional information needs to be included to give students, parents, high schools, colleges and advocacy groups what they need to understand the Act and how the it will be implemented.

The Commission is currently developing the first phase of the Dream Application to allow eligible students to apply for state institutional grants and community college fee waivers. This application will be available by April 1. Completed Dream Application will be processed using the federal needs analysis formulas. Campuses will be supplied a California ISIR (Cal ISIR) in the same file layout as the federal ISIR including the student's primary EFC, all preliminary calculations and accompanying secondary EFCs, reject codes and applicable assumptions.

The second phase of the project effective January 1, 2013 allows students to apply for Cal Grants and schools to update the Cal ISIR for students, parents and schools. Then, the Commission will use the Cal ISIR to make Cal Grant award determinations. Awardees will be placed on the Cal Grant rosters for payment by the schools in the same manner as for current Cal Grant participants.

A referendum to repeal the California Dream Act will **not** appear on the state ballot this November after volunteers working to overturn the act fell short of the 504,760 valid voter signatures they needed to gather. Assembly member Tim Donnelly, R-Twin Peaks, who lead efforts to put a repeal referendum up for a vote, acquired only 447,514 signatures and therefore could not submit them to state counties for approval.

## **AB 451**

The Commission has submitted a Budget Change Proposal (BCP) to comply with Chapter Senate Bill 451 (SB 451) that requires the Commission to give priority in selecting Cal Grant C recipients to eligible students pursuing occupational or technical training in areas with high employment, high demand and high growth potential.

At this time, the Commission anticipates adding the score priorities to the existing Cal Grant C scoring. CSAC will use data supplied by the Employment Education Department Labor Market Data Library to assist in selecting those occupations that meet the priority requirements.

## **Feria Pasos A La Universidad**

The California Student Aid Commission (Commission) is partnering with various local community and higher education organizations to inform Latino families and students about the expanding opportunities available to navigate a successful path to college at the Steps to College 2012 Fair (Pasos A La Universidad) to be held at the Sacramento Office of the Mexican Consulate on Saturday, February 4, 2012 from 8:30 AM to 3:00 PM.

The Commission encourages Latino high school juniors and seniors and current college students to register and attend the college fair. Counselors can also register groups of students by going to the registration link at [www.stepstocollege2012.org](http://www.stepstocollege2012.org). AB 540 high school seniors who attend may qualify for a Cash for College "Dream in Action" scholarship.

Student registration for the event is on the website which also has more information on the Steps to College Fair 2012 and a downloadable event flyer.

## **Chafee Program**

The California Student Aid Commission (Commission) is pleased to announce that the Spring term payments were mailed to schools in mid January. The 2012-13 Chafee Foster Youth Grant Application and the Need Analysis Report is now available on the Commission's Website at <https://www.chafee.csac.ca.gov>.

## **Non-SSN GPA**

The Commission has established a protocol for transmission of Cal Grant high school GPAs without Social Security numbers.

This protocol will be necessary to collect GPAs for AB 131 candidates but also will allow high schools and high school districts that do not collect Social Security numbers to send GPAs and bypass the workload required to contact and collect the SSN from students. This submission method is currently functional.

## **How to Talk to Legislators**

These suggestions came from Lori Nezhura, CSAC's our legislative liaison.

Create a one-page, simple-to-read document that you can hand out to legislative members. It should state the goal that legislative members should oppose the Cal Grant cuts in the Governor's 2012 Proposed Budget (or list the particular cuts that they are opposing).

It should then provide no more than 3 ways in which the cut(s) will affect students in the member's district, supported by facts. Here's an example using the cut to private college Cal Grant amount.

1. the reduction in private awards will affect all of a private schools ### Cal Grant recipients by slashing their awards almost in half. Each of those students is also receiving need-based university aid, and the University will not be able to increase that in order to backfill the (\$\$\$ of Cal Grant reduction) in cuts. Therefore, the students will have to take out more (private) loans, increase work hours, or drop out.
2. The school graduates XXX students annually, many of whom fill local industry needs. Because the cut to private awards will turn away some new students and cause renewal students to drop out, the number of graduates entering local companies will decrease.
3. The university accepts XXX transfers from [put local community colleges here] annually. Because of the reductions in the Cal Grant award amount, many of those students will perceive the school is inaccessible to them. The transfers will languish at the community colleges or drop out.

Schedule visits with your local district representatives. A 20 min-half hour is all you will get. Be concise. With democrats, you can state your request to oppose the cuts and ask for their views. For republicans, if you ask for the legislator to oppose the cuts, you will be asked where the money should come from. If you mention the Governor's tax initiative, just remember that the republicans have signed a no-tax pledge. You could mention other unproductive programs or inefficiencies that you have noticed in the district (prisons? transportation?...) If you have nothing, then you can respectfully and compassionately say that it is his job to find the money, but it is very important to these students' futures and to our state's future that these students not be impeded in their access to the higher education they need to be gainfully employed (and paying taxes!).

If you want to take a Cal Grant recipient with you, choose one who is well-spoken, and has a story that shows that she never could have made it to and through college without the Cal Grant. The student should share what high school she attended (hopefully in the member's district), their major is, what their goals are after graduation. The story should take no more than 4 min.

Be prepared to take questions from republicans. Be prepared if democrats asks what you can do to help get votes for the tax initiative.

Finally, you can get students and college employees to write and call their representatives. Provide folks with their representative's address, fax number, and phone number. It is best if you can provide them with a letter template they can put their name into. Remember that you should represent yourself as a member of the public, unless you have permission from your management to represent the college. You can be a very powerful voice for Cal Grant recipients.