In response to the California Student Aid Commission's (CSAC) request for feedback on emergency assistance to best help our students during the current crisis, the California Community College Student Financial Aid Administrators (CCCSFAAA) and California Association for Student Financial Aid Administrators (CASFAA) have worked together to create the following recommendations.

With a priority towards student access and success, we hope that the following can provide you with the assistance to ensure that the needs of all students are met.

- **Consistency with Federal guidance:** continue to align State awarding practices as closely as possible as set forth by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, and electronic guidance provided by the Department of Education. This includes:
  - **Minimize funding criteria:**
    - Open funding to **all** students including Undergraduate, Graduate and Professionals, and not require restrictions tied to financial aid application status and Cal Grant eligibility. All students in the State of California are affected in various ways by the current crisis. By allowing each institution to determine the eligibility requirements for state funding, this supports student equity.
    - **Provided funds are routed directly to student:** Not all students and schools share the same needs. The most effective way to determine the neediest of students are the Financial Aid professionals at each institution who work with students daily. Financial Aid Administrators have the most experience and knowledge to ensure that the funds are disbursed equitably to those facing the most immediate financial difficulties, and struggling to meet basic needs.
  - **Maximize regulatory relief as allowed under State law:**
    - Minimize reporting requirements on any new funding.
    - Allow any State Emergency stimulus funding to not count as Estimated Financial Assistance (EFA) or the student Estimated Cost of Attendance (COA).
    - Exclude the current payment period from the Cal Grant 4 year duration limits, which will also align with the Department of Education guidelines for federal programs.
  - **Leverage existing infrastructure and technology to improve processes and expedite awarding funds:**
    - Use existing infrastructure when allocating State stimulus funds to schools, and if processes are not available work directly with the school to allow for student funds access.
    - For the Chafee program use existing electronic structure to award funds versus paper checks. In support of both student and staff health and safety concerns in handling checks, we strongly recommend using this opportunity to move to an online disbursement process, which will allow it to be as effective as the Cal Grant program.
- **Supplement versus Supplant:** Encourage California Campus Leadership to supplement versus supplant existing financial aid awards.

- **Staff relief and students first:** Extend or reschedule CSAC Audits until later in the calendar year. This will allow financial aid staff to focus on the higher priority of assisting our students through the COVID-19 crisis.

We look forward to continuing to partner and support CSAC in the weeks and months to come.
If you have any questions please feel free to use us as a resource.

Sincerely,

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4/6/2020