

# High School Shout Out !!



## News and Updates for High School Counselors from the California Student Aid Commission

RANCHO CORDOVA, CA

JANUARY 2011

### A MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DIANA FUENTES-MICHEL



Happy New Year!

This is our third edition of "Shout Out", and we have been pleased with the positive comments received from you! Our monthly newsletter was created for the Commission to communicate with California's talented high school college advisors, counselors and outreach staff your perspective is vital as this publication evolves.

2011 brings us a new year, a new administration and new challenges. For over 50 years, we have offered opportunities for affordable postsecondary access and education to low income students and look forward to continuing this valuable work. In the Governor's proposed 2011-12 budget released on January 10, all Commission programs remained intact. The budget also includes the funding for fee increases in the Cal Grant program.

The Governor's budget is the initial step in the budget development process. This year's proposal seeks to close a \$28 billion deficit through reduction of a number of state programs. However, the Cal Grant program continues to be funded.

Historically, the successes of Cal Grant beneficiaries are remarkable. Many notable state and national leaders have received assistance and acknowledged that a Cal Grant was a significant influence on their educational progress. Thousands of other Cal Grant recipients have made valuable contributions to our public and private work sectors. You and your colleagues have mentored many of those individuals and provided them opportunity. We, and they, thank you.

Diana Fuentes-Michel  
(1975-1979 Cal Grant B Recipient)



### 2011 Cash for College Workshops Launched

Nearly 500 FAFSA completion workshops in 48 counties are being offered through the March 2 Cal Grant deadline.

Send your high school seniors to a Cash for College workshop and they may cash in on an extra \$1,000 scholarship! Students can find nearby locations using the workshop locator at [www.calgrants.org/workshops](http://www.calgrants.org/workshops). If you are interested in hosting a workshop, registrations are being accepted for late January or February.

### *2011 Cash for College \$1,000 Scholarship Continues!*

We are excited to share that the 2011 Cash for College Scholarship program will continue to offer one \$1,000 scholarship per qualifying workshop.

The scholarship is available through a recent partnership between the California Student Aid Commission and ECMC, a company designated by the federal government to assume responsibility for California's federal Family Educational Loan (FFEL) Program.

The scholarship program will continue to require high school seniors attend a CFC workshop, complete an exit survey, and submit the FAFSA and a verified Cal Grant GPA by the March 2 deadline. For a third year, AB 540 eligible high school seniors attending workshops are also eligible to participate in the scholarship program.

### *"Cash for College California" is on Facebook!*

Become a Fan of Cash for College on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/cashforcollegecalifornia](http://www.facebook.com/cashforcollegecalifornia). Help connect your seniors to information about workshops, what students need to bring to a workshop, and messaging about deadlines and next steps.

## FAFSA: FACTS and FILING

The FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) is the primary application for federal and state student financial aid. FAFSA applications for the 2011-2012 year will be accepted starting January 1 at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov). All students hoping to attend college during the 2011-2012 school year are encouraged to file the FAFSA.

To apply for California's Cal Grant program, a student must file the FAFSA and have a school certified Grade Point Average (GPA) submitted, both by the March 2, 2011 deadline. Colleges will have their own scholarship and financial aid filing deadlines, sometimes earlier than March 2. Students should check on-line with every college under consideration for their scholarship and financial aid deadline.

Although a student's final financial aid eligibility will be based on final 2010 year tax figures, students are encouraged to file their FAFSA as early as possible. Students and parents should complete the FAFSA by the earliest school deadline, using estimates of their 2010 federal taxes. Then, when the final tax figures are available, they must file a correction at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov). Not having final tax figures is not an accepted reason for missing a school or state filing deadline.

Questions on completing the FAFSA can be directed to the Federal Student Aid Information Center at (800) 433.3243. School questions on Cal Grant GPA submission can be directed to (888) 294.0153.

## MOST ASKED FAFSA QUESTIONS

**For what programs is the FAFSA application used?**

- *Federal Pell Grant*
- *Federal SEOG Grant*
- *Federal Work-study Program*
- *Federal Perkins Loan*
- *Federal Stafford Loans*
- *Federal Plus (Parent) loans*
- *State Cal Grant (GPA form required)*

**In addition to the FAFSA, do I need another form to receive Cal Grant Award Consideration?** *Yes, a Cal Grant GPA Verification Form.*

**Do my parents have to file their taxes before I complete the FAFSA?** *No*

**What happens if the student lives with only one parent?** *Use the income of the parent with whom the student lives.*

**Note: The on-line FAFSA instructions cover these situations extensively.**

## AFTER FILING THE FAFSA

Once a student submits the FAFSA, he or she should expect an email from the federal FAFSA processor within 72 hours. If the student does not hear from the FAFSA processor, he or she should call the Federal Student Aid Information Center at (800) 433-3243.

The California Student Aid Commission will also send the student an email once both a FAFSA and Cal Grant GPA are filed. To make sure that email from the Commission is accepted, the student should mark the following addresses as "Safe:" [calgrantoffice@csac.ca.gov](mailto:calgrantoffice@csac.ca.gov) Or [studentsupport@csac.ca.gov](mailto:studentsupport@csac.ca.gov).

Corrections to the FAFSA, including adding additional colleges to receive the FAFSA information, can be made online at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov). If a student provides estimates of 2010 income and taxes paid, these should be updated on the FAFSA as soon as the final 2010 tax returns are completed. Since this happens as late as April 15, students must make sure to file the FAFSA, with estimates, by any appropriate college or program deadline.

## SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

2010 was a year when many parents suffered declines in income and other misfortunes that might not be adequately described by the FAFSA questions. Periods of unemployment, and natural disasters such as fires and floods, might have seriously affected a parent's ability to assist in paying for their child's education.

State and Federal law give authority to colleges to examine any "Special Circumstances" that may exist in the family financial situation. If a college feels it is warranted, school Financial Aid Officers are allowed to make changes to the FAFSA data if special circumstances exist. Special circumstances must be reported to the college the student attends to be given consideration. Only the college the student is attending can make adjustments to the FAFSA data.

The United States Department of Education and the California Student Aid Commission do not have the authority to change FAFSA data.

We suggest that students contact the college or colleges under consideration and ask them what documentation they require to accept a special circumstances appeal. Follow the school's instructions.

Regardless of where in the appeal process a student is, he or she must file the FAFSA by any program deadline. If approved, the Commission will accept any adjustments approved by colleges due to special circumstances as long as the original FAFSA was filed by March 2.

## Robert C. Byrd Applications Now Available

The Commission is pleased to announce that the 2011-12 federal Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship Program (Scholarship) applications are now available to download from our website at : [www.csac.ca.gov](http://www.csac.ca.gov)

On the Commission's homepage, select "Financial Aid Programs," click on "Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship Program."

We encourage scholarship coordinators and counselors to nominate the top two qualifying student candidates at each school for the scholarship.

The federal award is \$1,500 annually, available for up to four years, and is subject to federal budget appropriations

If students should inquire about the 2011-12 scholarship, please direct them to the fact sheet which is also available on the Commission's Website. The fact sheet provides a summary of eligibility and general scholarship information.

**All Byrd applications must be postmarked  
no later than April 1, 2011**

### A Reminder...



### *Time to Consider Potential Arthur Marmaduke Award Nominees!*

Each year, the Commission accepts applications for the Arthur Marmaduke High School Counselor award. Now is the time for high school principals to consider who you might nominate from your school. The scholarship award is based on many factors, including innovative techniques a counselor employs to inform students and families about higher education opportunities and financial aid options.

Marmaduke award nomination forms will be available on the CSAC website by February 1, 2011.



**The 2011-12 Cal Grant deadline  
for submission is  
Wednesday, March 2, 2011**

## Submitting Test Scores in Lieu of a GPA

In some instances, a student cannot submit an accepted GPA for Cal Grant application purposes. Examples of those situations would be if the student attended a non-accredited high school, or the student attended a school that graded on a scale that cannot be converted to a 4.00 GPA scale as required for the Cal Grant program.

In lieu of a GPA, students can apply for Cal Grants using SAT, ACT or GED test scores. If submitting SAT results, the Commission can only accept the results from the SAT Reasoning test. We will not accept results from the SAT Subject Tests.

To submit the test score, students should download the 2011-12 Cal Grant GPA Verification Form available online at <http://www.csac.ca.gov/doc.asp?id=1177>. The GPA form should be completed with the exception of the school certification portion. A photocopy of the test results should be attached to the GPA form and both must be mailed by March 2 to the address on the form.

## 2011-12 Chafee Foster Youth Grant Application

The 2011-12 Chafee Foster Youth Grant application is now available at <https://www.chafee.csac.ca.gov>.

Students are Chafee eligible if they are current or former foster youth who have not reached their 22nd birthday as of July 1 of the award year. The court must have established the student's dependency between the ages of 16 and 19. Upon application, students may create a WebGrants for Students account and monitor Chafee status at [webgrants4students.org](http://webgrants4students.org). Both schools and students can view Chafee updates by using the "Important Cal Grant /Chafee Updates" link.

In addition, the Chafee Coordinator's Guide is now available for schools at [www.csac.ca.gov](http://www.csac.ca.gov). Click on "Schools", "Colleges", and then "Training." This useful tool provides information on program requirements and guidelines for any person serving high school foster youth.

### CONTACTING THE COMMISSION

If you have any questions, please contact the following:

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[www.csac.ca.gov](http://www.csac.ca.gov)  
[www.webgrants4students.org](http://www.webgrants4students.org)  
[www.calgrants.org](http://www.calgrants.org)

Or, call toll-free at (888) 294.0153

