

# High School Shout Out!

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



RANCHO CORDOVA, CA

MARCH 2011



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

The March 2 Cal Grant application deadline is now behind us!

For many of you, this date marked the end of an incredibly busy time dedicated to motivating your students to fill out the FAFSA and submit their GPA's to the Commission.

Although final data is still being compiled as of this writing, we know the level of submissions has greatly exceeded previous years.

Certainly, the volume of applicants speaks to the critical financial need of our students during these challenging economic times for California. From the Commission's perspective, this extraordinary response also demonstrates that students and parents remain committed to discovering all available financial aid avenues in order to continue to provide our future generation the opportunity for postsecondary education or career training.

It is a difficult time for many, but the message that help is available clearly resonated to students throughout our state and is a direct result of your efforts and assistance. Thank you.

As you are aware, budget hearings and discussions related to proposed resolutions to the current deficit are continuing. Commission staff is attending all meetings relevant to Cal Grants and higher education. We will provide updates on this process and the status of our programs through Special Alerts and future editions of Shout Out.

Have a great month!

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



### The Work Continues! March Tasks for Financial Aid Applicants

- ✓ Verify that all the data on the SAR (Student Aid Report) is accurate. Submit updates at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov).
- ✓ Revise student and parent SAR data with final 1040 tax numbers, if necessary.
- ✓ Check with the campus financial aid office to make sure that all relevant application paperwork is complete. Students may be requested to submit tax forms for verification purposes.
- ✓ Students should narrow down their school choices, visit campus sites and talk to current students while on campus. Dorm dining halls and campus café's are great places to ask about the school.
- ✓ Students should be on the lookout for acceptance letters.
- ✓ Visit [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org) to find information on Advanced Placement (AP) exams. 2011 AP Exams will be administered over two weeks in May, from May 2 through 6 and May 9 through 13, 2011.
- ✓ College bound students should start looking for summer jobs and, if possible, try to get work or volunteer in a field related to their study interest to determine the right career choice.

### *WebGrants for Students (WGS)*

- ✓ After filing the FAFSA, students should establish a WebGrants for Students (WGS) account.
- ✓ Using WGS, students can see their Cal Grant application status, confirm and update their postal and e-mail addresses, provide the required high school graduation confirmation once they graduate and change their college of attendance.
- ✓ WGS can be accessed 24/7 and is an easy and efficient way for students to stay on top of their application and, if awarded, their Cal Grant award.
- ✓ To establish a WGS account, students should go to [www.webgrants4students.org](http://www.webgrants4students.org) and follow the instructions!



## **A Student Missed the March 2 Cal Grant Deadline? Important next steps...**

Students who failed to submit a FAFSA by the March 2 Cal Grant filing deadline should continue to be encouraged to submit the FAFSA as soon as possible. Many government and private financial aid programs do not have a set deadline.

Also, please be aware that the Legislature allocates 11,250 Cal Grant awards specifically for students who will attend a California Community College and who file their FAFSA and school certified GPA by September 2. The legislature is aware that some disadvantaged students may miss the March 2 deadline yet enroll in community college. Read the information below regarding filing a late March 2 Cal Grant GPA appeal.

### ***Filing an Entitlement Cal Grant Late GPA Appeal***

The California Code of Regulations states that it is the responsibility of the Cal Grant applicant to have a grade point average or test score reported. There are no exceptions to filing the FAFSA by the March 2 Cal Grant filing deadline. However, the Commission may, on a case-by-case basis, accept the submission of GPAs from an applicant or reporting institution after the March 2 deadline if, in the opinion of the Executive Director, circumstances beyond the control of the applicant delayed or prevented the timely submission of the grade point average by the applicant or reporting institution by the deadline.

Documentation of these circumstances must be shown by a certification from the reporting institution or from the applicant of the circumstances beyond the control of the applicant that delayed or prevented the timely submission of the GPA. This documentation can be authoritative proof, such as a US Postal Service Certificate of Mailing, that the GPA was originally mailed by the applicant or reporting institution before the deadline or be in the form of a written description from the applicant describing, under penalty of perjury, the circumstances beyond the control of the applicant that delayed or prevented the timely submission of the grade point average.

For High School Entitlement applicants, the documents above, along with the school certified GPA, must be received by the Commission no later than May 16 seventy-five days after the March 2 deadline. Questions regarding late GPA appeals should be directed to the Commission School Support Branch at (888) 294.0153 or [schoolsupport@csac.ca.gov](mailto:schoolsupport@csac.ca.gov).

## **Arthur Marmaduke High School Counselor Award**

The Arthur Marmaduke High School Counselor award honors excellence in student counseling.

Named after Arthur Marmaduke, the first California Student Aid Commission Executive Director, recipients are determined based on nominations from high school principals or their designee. For further information, please visit the Commission's website at <http://www.csac.ca.gov/doc.asp?id=1425>.

***Nominations are due March 30, 2011!***

## **Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship**

The Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship Program (Scholarship) is a federally funded, merit based scholarship. The Commission grants these awards solely on the basis of academic merit to recognize students who show promise of continued academic excellence. Nominations are made by high schools. Each high school selects up to two (2) nominees from among students who:

1. Have demonstrated outstanding academic achievement in high school and show promise of continued achievement in college;
2. Will graduate from high school at the end of the current academic year and agree to enroll in and attend an institution of higher education on a full-time basis for the 2011-12 academic year; and
3. Will submit the completed application to the designated coordinator at the applicant's California high school by the deadline.

The 2011-12 Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship Application Packet and Coordinator's Guide is available on the Commission's website homepage. Select "Financial Aid Programs" and click on "Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship Program." The Scholarship is \$1,500 annually, available for up to four years, and subject to federal budget appropriations. Student inquiries can be directed to the fact sheet, which is also available on the Commission's website.

***The filing deadline for Byrd scholarships is  
April 1, 2011!***



## CASH FOR COLLEGE

More than 600 Cash for College workshops were held throughout the state between January 1 and March 2. A record year!

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the counselors, teachers and volunteers who organized and facilitated these important workshops!

### California Cash For College Day

Wednesday, March 9th, 10 AM - 9 PM PST

Visit Us Online at *CollegeWeekLive* !

Cash for College Day is an exciting, new *CollegeWeek Live* event streaming live across California.

One counselor, teacher or school staff member who registers and has a classroom of high school seniors attend the event will win a \$500 scholarship to give to a student attending Cash for College Day.

At Cash for College Day, your students will get:

- *Next Steps on Tracking Cal Grants*
- *Opening a WebGrants4Students Account*
- *Tips on Fixing the FAFSA*
- *Making Final School Choices*
- *Decoding Financial Aid Letters Help*

Your students will be prepared to step onto a campus even more knowledgeable about their financial aid.

Later in the day, students can join *CollegeWeekLive* on their own for an online chat follow up between 3 pm and 9 pm.

Another \$500 scholarship will be available to seniors who come online and use the chat features for help with financial aid.

[Sign Up For Free Today!](#)

### We Want to Help You Help Your Students!

Our monthly High School Shout Out newsletter highlights the critical steps and processes to help you guide your students through the college financial aid application process.

We would appreciate your comments and suggestions. What topics would you like to see in the Shout Out? What items would you like to learn more about?

Contact Bryan Dickason at [bryand@csac.ca.gov](mailto:bryand@csac.ca.gov) with your ideas!

### CONTACTING THE COMMISSION:

If you have questions, please contact:

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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

#### Mailing address:

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