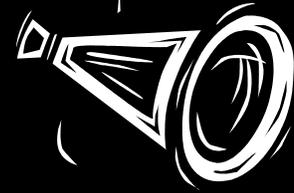


High School Shout Out!



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

RANCHO CORDOVA, CA

MAY 2011



A MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DIANA FUENTES-MICHEL

The current California budget deficit has necessitated many difficult decisions on the part of the Administration and Legislature. In late March, the Governor and Legislature agreed to \$12 billion in General Fund cuts to state funded programs. As a result, legislation was recently enacted that will make changes to Cal Grant eligibility.

On March 24, 2011, Governor Jerry Brown signed Senate Bill 70 (the education trailer bill) into law. Senate Bill 70 achieves reductions in state spending by changing Cal Grant eligibility requirements for both students and institutions. These changes will affect new and renewal Cal Grant recipients beginning with the 2011-12 academic year. A Special Alert with additional detail on the legislation along with "Frequently Asked Questions" are now available on our website at the following link: [SB 70](#).

Commission staff is currently modifying our grant delivery system to implement Cal Grant eligibility changes required by SB 70. Please continue to monitor our website for guidance and direction.

On another note, we recently have had several changes to the Commission. Commissioners Pat Fong Kushida, Bonaparte Liu and Antonio Solórzano have concluded their service. Although we will miss their guidance as official members of this body, we know they will continue to advocate for educational access and opportunity in their professional and personal roles, and thank them for their contributions.

We also would like to extend a welcome to two new Commissioners, Nancy Anton and Brian Conley. Their extensive experience in postsecondary education will offer the Commission valuable perspective and guidance as we continue to move forward during these challenging times for students.

Diana Fuentes-Michel
1975-1979 Cal Grant B Recipient

CAL GRANT AWARDS UPDATE

As of April 29, 2011, the Commission has offered over 106,000 High School Entitlement Cal Grant awards to eligible students. This award total exceeds the 2010-11 year by over 10 percent.



LOOKING
TO THE FUTURE!



2012-2013 FUND YOUR FUTURE PLANNING

Today's students need information on access to higher education that will effectively and quickly capture their attention. As counselors and educators who interact with them daily, you realize that today's students increasingly receive their information via the internet where access is 24/7. The Commission's award winning [Fund Your Future](#) publications (workbook and brochure) are currently undergoing review. As our link to the "real world", we'd like your input! For example:

- Are these publications a positive information resource for counselors, educators and administrators?
- Are the publications considered "user friendly"?
- Does the comprehensive workbook meet your needs?
- How is the brochure utilized?

The Commission, in partnership with ECMC, welcomes your ideas to help us create tools to reach students and parents and assist you in your outreach efforts. Forward your ideas or comments to clenz@csac.ca.gov. Thank you!

LATE GPA APPEAL REMINDER

Students who filed an on-time March 2 deadline FAFSA but could not submit the Cal Grant GPA due to reasons beyond their control can file a late Cal Grant GPA appeal. The late [Cal Grant GPA](#) appeal form is available on the Commission website.

**All late Cal Grant GPA appeals must be received at
The California Student Aid Commission by May 16, 2011**



TIME FOR A
ROAD TRIP...?

TIME FOR COLLEGE VISITS!

Visits to college campuses are the best way for students to take a look at schools they might attend and envision what their college experience will be like. Campus visits offer a firsthand interactive approach for parents or mentors to provide future students valuable insight into their limitless opportunities. This is a chance to talk seriously about a student's college plans.

Summer is a good time to visit colleges because the student does not have to miss any school. However, visiting a college campus when the school is in session enhances the experience through formal tours, and the invaluable opportunity to talk to current students about their observations and impressions.

For additional information on California colleges, you may want to review <http://www.californiacolleges.edu/>. This comprehensive website provides important college information for administrators, students and parents.



HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION CONFIRMATION

High School Graduation confirmation is required for newly selected Entitlement Cal Grant participants. WebGrants for Students does not allow graduation confirmation until the expected graduation month received with the student's high school GPA. To illustrate, a student whose estimated graduation date is May can confirm their graduation starting in May. Those whose estimated graduation date is June can confirm their graduation starting in June.

WebGrants for Schools has an on-line report that high schools can use to confirm graduation status for their newly awarded students. Although high school participation is not required, we feel the WebGrants confirmation is simple to use.

In state law, newly awarded Entitlement Cal Grant participants must complete all of their high school graduation requirements before receiving any payments. Those students who do not complete all graduation requirements by December 31 must have their award offer withdrawn. Graduation requirements not only include passing the CAHSEE test for public school students but also completion of senior projects, internships, etc. that schools or school districts may require to issue a full diploma.

Those students without a diploma in time for 2011-12 award year Cal Grants can apply again by March 2, 2012 to receive Entitlement Cal Grant award consideration.

IMPORTANT UPDATE: Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship Program

The Commission regrets to inform you that the U.S. Department of Education (USED) has indicated the Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship Program has been eliminated for the 2011-12 school year due to budget cuts in federal funding. As a result, no new awards for the 2011-12 academic year will be made for this program. We are waiting for information from USED to determine if renewal recipients will be funded. Updates will be provided as soon as they are available.



WHEN TO CALCULATE CAL GRANT GPAS

Although the 2012-2013 school year seems far away, the Commission attempts to provide information in advance of deadlines to allow adequate planning by counselors.

Each year, the Commission opens up WebGrants GPA submission capabilities in September for the following application. State law prescribes how a Cal Grant high school GPA is to be calculated and the time period for the coursework used to calculate the GPA. For students submitting a GPA as a high school senior, no coursework completed after the summer term following the junior year is to be included. This means that high schools can start calculating GPAs for their seniors starting as soon as summer grades for the summer term following the junior year are posted.

Although starting this early to calculate the Cal Grant GPA will not reduce a high school's workload, spreading out the calculations may be helpful. Also, early submission of the GPAs allows more time to discover and submit corrections. The Student Aid Commission starts matching GPAs with FAFSAs as early as January if both are in our possession. This means that by early February a student will know that both their FAFSA and Cal Grant GPA are received and ready for processing. Each year, the Commission experiences a processing crunch due to the large number of GPAs received near the March 2 deadline and it can be difficult for the Commission to provide confirmation of the receipt of their GPA during this busy period.

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