



**CALIFORNIA STUDENT AID COMMISSION  
TELECONFERENCE MEETING MINUTES**

Thursday, September 24, 2020  
9:00 am  
Virtual Meeting

**COMMISSIONERS  
PRESENT:**

Catalina Cifuentes, Chair  
Jamillah Moore, Vice Chair  
Judith Maxwell Greig, Secretary  
Isaac Alferos (arrived 9:20 a.m.)  
Jessica Bartholow  
Juanita Doplemore (arrived 9:20 a.m.)  
Hal Geiogque  
Debra Maxie  
Guillermo Mayer  
Steve Ngo  
Charles Nies  
Wm. Gregory Sawyer  
Caroline Siegel-Singh  
David Valladolid

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**1. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Chair Catalina Cifuentes called the meeting to order at 9:13 am  
Roll call was taken and a quorum was recognized.

**2. Public comment on items not on the agenda.**

There was no public comment.

**3. Approval of minutes of July 23, 2020 (Action)**

Commissioner Maxie **moved to approve** the minutes. **Seconded by** Commissioner Greig.

Roll call vote:

**In Favor** (9): Cifuentes, Moore, Greig, Geiogoue, Maxie, Mayer, Nies, Sawyer, and Siegel-Singh

**Abstention** (2): Bartholow, and Ngo

**Absent** (3): Alferos, Doplemore, and Valladolid

**Carried (9 to 0)**

The Commission **APPROVED** the minutes of the July 23, 2020 teleconference meeting

**4. Chair's oral report on Commission related issues (Information)**

Chair Cifuentes welcomed everyone and thanked Commissioners and staff for their commitment to their work during this pandemic.

Chair Cifuentes congratulated Catalina Mistler on her permanent role as the Chief Deputy Director at the Commission. Chair Cifuentes provided Ms. Mistler an opportunity to speak.

Chair Cifuentes announced three new Commissioners recently appointed to the Commission: Jessica Bartholow, Steve Ngo, and Isaac Alferos. Each new Commissioners were provided an opportunity for introduction.

Chair Cifuentes highlighted some of the obstacles that counselors and students are experiencing during this time. She also announced there will be a discussion on committee meetings which would help the Commission focus on addressing some of these issues better.

**5. Executive Director's Report (Information)**

Executive Director Marlene Garcia welcomed the new Commissioners and expressed the Commission's gratitude for Commissioners who are have the same interests and passion.

Executive Director also shared the Commission and staff's excitement to have Catalina Mistler as the permanent Chief Deputy Director.

Executive Director provided brief updates on the following work groups:

- Cal Grant Modernization
- Student Loan Debt Service Work Group
- CalFresh Work Group
- Undocumented Student Work Group

Executive Director added that she has been assigned to participate in the Governor's COVID-19 Recovering Task Force.

Executive Director also announced the Commission's new EEO Officer, Marcella Rojas.

Executive Director announced Train the Trainer workshop that will help recruit community leaders to help with reaching the goal of serving 75,000 students. She emphasized the significance of reaching more students during this pandemic, especially those in regions that were not reached before.

Executive Director shared important projects that the Commission have been working on with the College Futures Foundation. She noted that College Futures Foundation invited the Commission to submit a proposal for additional funding support and highlighted some key needs in the proposals.

Executive Director also shared the Commission participated in assistance with the US Census.

Commissioner Geiogue asked about an update on the Child Savings Account item. Executive Director explained that due to technical issues with the new eSCRIBE program, the item was omitted from the agenda during the finalizing process. She added that the Commission will have to meet for a special meeting next month to discuss the item.

Commissioner Bartholow shared concerns about undocumented students, who are suffering deprivation from the pandemic, and would like the Commission to keep an eye on that. She also added that the incarcerated and formerly incarcerated parents, students, and families are also left out, and it would be important for the Commission to reach out to this population. Executive Director and Chair Cifuentes also emphasized the need for shared data with rehabilitation groups in order to reach this population.

#### **6. Presentation of Resolution to Maria Manjarrez, former Commissioner (Information)**

Chair Cifuentes read the resolution for former Commissioner Maria Manjarrez.

Commissioners were provided an opportunity to share their thoughts and gratitude for the former Commissioner.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 6 PRESENTATION OF RESOLUTION TO MARIA MANJARREZ, FORMER COMMISSIONER**

There was no public comment.

#### **7. Presentation from statewide student organizations (Information)**

Chair Cifuentes invited Jake Brymner, Director of Government and External Relations, and Melissa Bardo, Legislative Analyst, to present the item.

Mr. Brymner introduced Aidan Arasingham, President of UC Student Association (UCSA), Zahraa Khuraibet, President of Cal State Student Association (CSSA), Stephen Kodur, President of Student Senate of Community Colleges (SSCCC), and Jesus Alexander Gomez, representative from the Independent California College Advocate Program (ICCAP).

Each student was provided an opportunity to present an update on their organization's priority for the coming year.

Commissioners thanked the students for their presentation and provided their thoughts and suggestions on how the Commission can work with each association to help their students.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 7 PRESENTATION FROM STATEWIDE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS**

There was no public comment.

### **8. Ratification of contracts over \$100,000 (Action)**

Chair Cifuentes invited Lilly Myers, Deputy Director of the Fiscal and Administrative Services Division, to present the item.

Ms. Myers summarized the proposed new contract with California Department of Education (\$15,000,000) for the Golden State Teacher Grant Program.

Commissioner Geiogue **moved to approve** the staff recommendations.  
**Seconded by** Commissioner Valladolid.

Roll call vote:

**In Favor** (13): Cifuentes, Moore, Greig, Bartholow, Doplemore, Geiogue, Maxie, Mayer, Ngo, Nies, Sawyer, Siegel-Singh, and Valladolid

**Absent** (1): Alferos

### **Carried (13 to 0)**

The Commission **APPROVED** staff recommendation to ratify the contracts described in the proposed contracts.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 8 RATIFICATION OF CONTRACTS OVER \$100,000**

There was no public comment.

### **9. Consideration of Budget Change Proposals (BCPs) for Fiscal Year 2021-22 (Action)**

Chair Cifuentes invited Lilly Myers, Deputy Director of Fiscal and Administrative Services Division, Gurinder Bains, Chief Information Officer, Steve Caldwell, Interim Deputy Director of Program Administration and Services Division, and Jake Brymner, Director of Government and External Relations, to present the item.

Ms. Myers presented an overview of the budget change proposals (BCPs). Ms. Myers invited Mr. Brymner to present on the auxiliary proposal. Mr. Brymner presented a brief overview of the auxiliary proposal and explained the purpose and process of an auxiliary entity.

Ms. Myers invited Mr. Caldwell to present on the planning and researching proposal for the Customer Relations Management (CRM) Solution. Mr. Caldwell presented priority needs for the Commission's Customer Support system.

Commissioner Greig asked about the difference between GDSM and CRM capability and systems. Mr. Bains explained that the data and information between GDSM and CRM can be exchanged. He added that GDSM does not have all the capability that CRM provides, especially in specific case management.

Ms. Myers invited Mr. Bains to present on the GDSM project maintenance BCP. Mr. Bains explained the BCP request and where the funds will be allocated.

Executive Director added that the three BCPs went through a thorough vetting process to prioritize the highest operational needs.

Commissioner Ngo **moved to approve** the budget change proposals. **Seconded by** Commissioner Doplemore.

Roll call vote:

**In Favor** (13): Cifuentes, Moore, Greig, Bartholow, Doplemore, Geiogoue, Maxie, Mayer, Ngo, Nies, Sawyer, Siegel-Singh, and Valladolid

**Absent** (1): Alferos

**Carried (13 to 0)**

The Commission **APPROVED** the staff recommended budget change proposals.

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 9 CONSIDERATION OF BUDGET CHANGE PROPOSALS (BCPS) FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021-22**

There was no public comment.

**10. Update on 2020-21 state budget and legislation affecting Commission programs (Information)**

Chair Cifuentes invited Jake Brymner, Director of Government and External Relations, and Melissa, Legislative Analyst, to present.

Mr. Brymner provided an update on the 2020-21 State budget update which impacts the Commission as follows: He noted that there will be no additional federal funding for \$88 million deficit in Golden State Teacher Grant Program.

Mr. Brymner also highlighted state operations expenditure authority and appropriation.

Commissioner Geiogoue asked about plans regarding relocation based on telework opportunity. Mr. Brymner responded that there are no plans to relocate due to budget cuts. Ms. Myers added that with the current telework environment, the Commission is trying to utilize the current office space to not incur additional cost. Executive Director Garcia added that a survey was provided to staff asking about return-to-work options. She noted that many staff showed interest in continuing telework which would play a huge role in office space consideration.

Ms. Bardo summarized the federal and state legislative bills affecting the Commission.

Executive Director emphasized an interest in financial aid at the federal level. She noted that the annual Washington D.C. trip will not occur this year, but staff will weigh heavily on these issues.

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 10 UPDATE ON 2020-21 STATE BUDGET AND LEGISLATION AFFECTING COMMISSION PROGRAMS**

There was no public comment.

**11. Update on the Grant Delivery System Modernization Project (information)**

Chair Cifuentes invited Gurinder Bains, Chief Information Officer, and George Polisner, Information Technology Manager, to present on the item.

Mr. Bains gave a brief update on the timeline of the GDSM project. Mr. Polisner provided an update on core objectives, schedule, screen transformation status, enhancements/new features, and legacy versus GDSM screens.

Commissioner Greig asked about transition for staff from legacy to new GDSM system, and how are stakeholders, like FAAB, involved in enhancements. Mr. Polisner responded that the Organization Change Manager and customer relations team have been working together to understand the transition. Mr. Polisner also added that there will be training provided to stakeholders to better understand the new system.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 11 UPDATE ON THE GRANT DELIVERY SYSTEM MODERNIZATION PROJECT**

There was no public comment.

#### **13. Outreach and Cash for College in the 2021-22 financial aid application cycle (Information)**

Chair Cifuentes invited Catalina Mistler, Chief Deputy Director, to present on the item.

Ms. Mistler provided an update on outreach strategies and cash for college workshops for the 2021-22 financial aid application cycle.

Ms. Mistler announced that the Commission will host the 2nd Annual College Affordability Summit on November 17, 2020, which will be hosted virtually.

Commissioner Doplemore asked if there is a way to identify the different connections and partnerships that the community partners in Train the Trainer workshops have. She emphasized the need to strategically spread outreach across different communities in order to minimize duplicated work.

Commissioner Siegel-Singh asked about the requirements for Train the Trainer and whether there will be more African American Outreach. Ms. Mistler responded that there are many interested individuals and staff are reaching out to volunteers who are willing to help. She also explained that trainees will be placed in different levels of training based on how much information they already know about financial aid and organizing Cash for College workshops.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 13 OUTREACH AND CASH FOR COLLEGE IN 2021-22 FINANCIAL AID APPLICATION CYCLE**

There was no public comment.

#### **12. Update on Research Initiatives (information)**

Chair Catalina Cifuentes invited Patrick Perry, Deputy Director of the Data, Analysis and Research Team, and Jessica Moldoff, Research Data Specialist, to present the item.

Mr. Perry provided an update on ongoing surveys and research studies which includes:

- Analysis in current trends in the Free Application for Federal Student Aid and California Dream Act Application completions
- Data match with the California Department of Education (CDE) to acquire race/ethnicity data

- Study of summer melt and “paid rate” phenomena in the California Community College and California State University systems
- Study of modeling CalFresh eligibility using CSAC data
- Plan for the data collection and evaluation framework for the California Student Opportunity and Access Program
- Convening of a mandated Student Loan Debt Advisory Committee

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON UPDATE ON RESEARCH INITIATIVES**

There was no public comment.

**14. Announcement of the opening of nominations for 2021 Commission Officers (Information)**

Chair Cifuentes invited Julia Blair, General Counsel, to present the item.

Ms. Blair announced the opening of the nominations for the 2021 Commissioner Officers and explained the nomination process. She noted that the deadline to nominate is November 23, 2020.

**15. Presentation of proposed 2021 Commission meeting calendar (Information)**

Chair Cifuentes invited Catalina Mistler, Chief Deputy Director, to present the item.

Ms. Mistler presented the proposed 2021 Commission meeting calendar. She also noted that there are ongoing discussion for the Committee meetings and the dates may change.

Chair Cifuentes suggested that Committees can meet on a separate day or continue all the meetings in one day.

Commissioner Sawyer added that it may be cost effective to keep the Committee meetings virtual to minimize travel costs when the Commission can meet in person again.

Commissioner Ngo suggested that Committees meet earlier than the scheduled full Commission meeting date so that any recommendations can be adjusted before bringing to the full Commission. Ms. Mistler added that some of the meeting dates may be too close for staff to prepare and notice the meetings in a timely manner.

Commissioner Geiogue asked to consider the pros and cons of having Committee meetings on Thursdays and full Commission meetings on Fridays. He also suggested that, at the December meeting, staff make a recommendation on days that work better and would provide sufficient time for posting of meeting notice.

Commissioner Mayer and Greig emphasized the significance of providing enough time for staff to prepare the materials and agreed that having a Thursday/Friday meeting would work better.

Executive Director agreed that Committee meetings should be conducted virtually.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 15 PRESENTATION OF PROPOSED 2021 COMMISSION MEETING CALENDAR**

There was no public comment.

### **16. Update on Commission's mission and vision statements (Action)**

Chair Cifuentes invited Executive Director Garcia to present on the item.

Executive Director Garcia provided a brief history of the Commission's vision and mission statement. She presented the current vision and mission and the proposed vision and mission statements.

Commissioners were provided an opportunity to share their input.

The Commission agreed to table the item and discuss it at the December Commission meeting.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 16 UPDATE ON COMMISSION'S MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS**

There was no public comment.

### **17. Personnel, Evaluation and Nominations (PEN) Committee Report (Information/Action)**

PEN Committee Chair Wm. Gregory Sawyer announced that there was nothing to report from the Committee.

### **18. Consideration of amendments to committee charters (Action)**

Chair Cifuentes provided a background on the committee charters and explained the need to take action when changing the name of any committee.

Chair Cifuentes added that the Commission do not have to take action on this item if Commissioners would like to table it to the December meeting for more time to analyze.

Commissioner Greig suggested to move the item to the December meeting, specifically so that each Committees can review their own charters. Commissioner Geiogue agreed with Commissioner Greig's suggestion and also added to have each Committee provide their recommended changes and present it to the full Commission for a vote.

Executive Director asked if Committees can still meet in December while charters are still under review. Julia Blair, General Counsel, explained that Committees may meet under their current charter and direct staff to make the charter changes.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 18 CONSIDERATION OF AMENDMENTS TO COMMITTEE CHARTERS**

There was no public comment.

### **19. Closed Session (Information/Action)**

PEN Committee Chair Wm. Sawyer invited Julia Blair, General Counsel, to read closed session.



Ms. Blair announced that the full Commission would meet in Closed Session to discuss and may take action on personnel matters pursuant to California Government Code, Section 11126(a).

The Commission went into Closed Session at 4:03 p.m.

### **RECONVENE OPEN SESSION**

Chair Cifuentes reconvened Open Session at 4:45 p.m. PEN Committee Vice Chair Geiogue announced that there was nothing to report from the Commission Closed Session.

### **20. New business to be considered at future meetings (Information/Action)**

Chair Cifuentes noted the following new business to consider at future meetings:

- Determine ways of reaching and helping incarcerated students and families
- Bring back the matrix of legislative bills
- Include Commissioners in Train the Trainer workshop
- Commissioner Nies and Commissioner Ngo to work with Executive Director Garcia on vision and mission statement
- Review and discuss Committee charters
- Send College Affordability Summit flyer to Commissioners and help increase attendance of higher education partners

Commissioner Geiogue asked for an update on status of Competitive Cal Grant program.

Commissioner Siegel-Singh asked for an information item on student call center status and a presentation on communications that the Commission sends to students.

Commissioner Doplemore asked for a list of schools that each Cal-SOAP supports to eliminate overlap. Executive Director encouraged Commissioners to send recommendations of community partners who should be a part of the Train the Trainer program.

Commissioner Bartholow asked for children of veterans and veterans to be added as another outreach population. She also wants to see how school closure has impacted work study and its availability. Commissioner Doplemore also suggested to add veterans as community partners.

Commissioner Maxie asked to add an item on Cal-SOAP update to learn about what has been done over the summer.

Commissioner Alferos would like more update on basic needs as result of COVID and what types of services should be included.

Commissioner Siegel-Singh asked for an update on how financial aid packaging is affecting students due to the change in cost of attendance impacted by COVID. Chair Cifuentes responded that members of the FAAB meeting explained that this change mainly impacted higher income students, however, students with EFC of zero are also

seeing changes. Executive Director noted that segmental partners should be invited to address how they package their financial aid with the change in cost of attendance.

**21. Adjournment**

Chair Cifuentes adjourned the meeting at 5:09 p.m.

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CATALINA CIFUENTES  
CHAIR