

Item 5

(Information Item)

Update on state and federal legislation and issues affecting Commission programs

SUMMARY:

This item provides an update on pending federal and state policy issues and legislation relevant to the California Student Aid Commission's policy priorities adopted in December 2020 or other items relevant to the Commission's programs.

RECOMMENDATION:

This is an information item; no action is required.

BACKGROUND:

The Commission staff are currently tracking 17 priority measures, eleven of which continue to move through the first half of the 2021-22 two-year legislative session. Six of these measures have been moved to the "Two-Year Bill" category and will be heard in policy and fiscal committees next year. The Legislature was required to pass all bills in the "house of origin" by June 4th to successfully continue moving through the process in this legislative session. These bills have now moved to the second house for further consideration.

Assembly Bill 1456 (Medina & McCarty), legislation that establishes the Cal Grant Equity Framework proposed by the Commission, was approved by the Assembly on a wide, bipartisan vote of 78-0 on June 3. AB 1456 has now been sent to the Senate, where it awaits referral to a policy committee for a hearing.

Commission staff have designated support positions on a total of nine legislative measures, the Commission sponsored bill, Senate Bill 737 (Limón). The attached Summaries of Priority and Tracked Legislation provides updates that directly or indirectly impact Commission operations and programs, as well as bills impacting state financial aid and college affordability policies. The State Legislative Bill Tracking Matrix provides a concise reference on the status of priority and tracked legislation.

In addition to the legislative actions in Sacramento, Commission staff are also closely monitoring federal policy proposals and announcements that will impact California students. On May 14, U.S. Secretary of Education Michael Cardona finalized a federal regulation related to the distribution of relief funds authorized under previous Covid-19

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stimulus legislation. The new regulation permits all students, regardless of their immigration status and eligibility for federal financial aid, to receive relief funds provided by the CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) Act of 2020, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2020, and the American Rescue Plan of 2021. President Biden also included a provision extending eligibility for the Pell Grant to all students with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) status in his proposed 2021-22 federal budget, as well as a \$1,400 increase to the maximum Pell Grant award.

Federal policymakers also are engaged in conversations about establishing a federal-state partnership to make college tuition-free or more affordable to students. Four proposals have been introduced, one released by President Biden and three others by Members of Congress. Commission staff will present an overview of these various proposals as part of the Legislative, Audit, and Budget Committee meeting in June. The attached document on the Proposals for Federal-State Partnerships Towards College Affordability includes a briefing that will be covered in the presentation.

RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S):

Jake Brymner, Director
Government and External Relations

ATTACHMENT(S):

Summary of Priority and Tracked Legislation

State Legislative Bill Matrix – as of June 16, 2021

Briefing Document: Proposals for Federal-State Partnerships Towards College
Affordability

Letter in Support of FY 2022 Proposal to Extend Pell Grants to DACA Recipients

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presentation presented on June 23, 2021