

California Student Aid Commission
Student Impact, Outreach and Communications Committee

Item 5

(Information Item)

Update on outreach and social media

SUMMARY:

This item provides an update on the California Student Aid Commission's (Commission) post March 2nd outreach and social media activities, including Statewide Cash for College events to reach students and families in completing the Free Application for Federal Student (FAFSA) and the California Dream Act Application (CADAA) for the 2021-22 academic year.

RECOMMENDATION:

This is an information item. No action is required.

BACKGROUND:

In the Fall of 2020, Commission staff launched the new virtual Statewide Cash for College (C4C) Webinars and the Train the Trainer program to expand partnerships and increase the Cash for College events throughout the state. The Statewide C4C webinars and Train the Trainer Program provides new and existing community partners with the training and resources to organize and host their own C4C Workshops to assist students in completing the FAFSA or CADAA. Since March 2nd, staff have conducted two Statewide C4C webinars and plan on hosting three events before the end of August 2021, which include webinars in Spanish.

Since the Cal Grant March 2nd deadline, the Commission's Program Marketing and Outreach team has been working with the Community College Chancellor's Office (CCCO) to continue hosting Statewide C4C Webinars and Train the Trainer workshops to reach students who have not yet filed their financial aid applications. This post March 2nd campaign is focused on reaching students who may qualify for the September 2nd Competitive Cal Grant award for community college students.

C4C Partners

Staff have established C4C partnerships with Immigrants Rising, various Mexican Consulates across the state, and the Latino Legislative Caucus to host Spanish language webinars. A new collaboration with First Gen Empower, a nonprofit student organization, will serve as a sponsor of our C4C webinars. First Gen Empower will also create multilingual Public Service Announcements focused on increasing FAFSA, CADAA, and Chafee Grant for Foster Youth applications. The goal is to reach students statewide and ultimately increase the number of C4C registrations.

California Student Aid Commission

Student Impact, Outreach and Communications Committee

Parent Institute for Quality Education

To reach more students and their families, the Program Marketing and Outreach Unit has created a partnership with the Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE), whose mission is to provide families with the knowledge and skills to partner with schools and communities to ensure their children achieve their full potential. Commission staff have been invited to present to PIQE's Local District - Central Community, which covers the Downtown and MacArthur Park areas of Los Angeles. Commission staff will present at a College Going Day on the various types of financial aid and how to apply. Additionally, Commission staff are looking to continue our work with PIQE across the state to reach more students and their families and provide training resources to parents.

Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Students and Foster Youth

As the Commission expands its outreach to specialized student populations, the Train the Trainer will be an invaluable resource for new partners to learn about the financial aid application process. The Commission is partnering with the Youth Law Center, which advocates to transform foster care and juvenile justice systems across the nation. Additionally, we are partnering with the Rising Scholars Network, which is a network of California Community Colleges committed to serving incarcerated and formerly incarcerated students by providing degree-granting programs in correctional facilities and on-campus support for students who have experienced the criminal justice system. Commission staff have started working with these two organizations to co-host a joint specialized Cash for College webinar for this student population. Additionally, staff are planning to provide training to their program staff via the Train the Trainer program.

California Student Opportunity and Access Program (Cal-SOAP)

Cal-SOAP provides expert student financial aid outreach and support across the state of California. As the Commission's Program Outreach and Marketing team think ahead and prepare for the upcoming financial aid cycle, they will continue to work with the Cal-SOAP consortia to streamline the financial aid process, making it easier for students and their families to not only understand the various financial aid applications available to them, but also to complete them. Additionally, the team will be partnering with Cal-SOAPs to continue hosting and expanding the Cash for College workshops and webinars. A Cal-SOAP marketing campaign is being developed to effectively tell the story of what Cal-SOAP is, why Cal-SOAP cares, and how it reaches students and their families.

Train the Trainer Program

Staff have promoted the Train the Trainer workshops to expand its reach to community-based organizations that work with students who face significant barriers to accessing college. Prior to the Cal Grant March 2nd deadline, Commission staff, in partnership with the California Community Chancellor's Office, expanded their outreach efforts to reach Black community-based organizations. Based on the success of these outreach efforts, staff have expanded its reach to Latinx, Asian American Pacific Islander, and Native American community-based organizations through workshops dedicated to these specific student populations.

California Student Aid Commission

Student Impact, Outreach and Communications Committee

Upcoming 2022-23 Financial Aid Application Year

As staff continue to promote the Statewide C4C webinars for the 2021-22 academic year, the Marketing and Outreach unit has started preparing for next year's financial aid application cycle which begins on October 1, 2021, for the 2022-23 academic year. Some of the planned activities include:

- Develop a centralized hub for social media materials, which hosts the current Social Media toolkits, making it easy for people to share out the Commission's digital content.
- Form a Cash for College Marketing Team that consists of Commission staff and external partners who work with undocumented, foster care, and formerly incarcerated students. This team will assess, update, and expand the current marketing and resource materials to meet the expected increase in demand.
- Develop a targeted marketing and outreach campaign focused on increasing Chafee Grant for Foster Youth applications.
- Host a retreat for the C4C Regional Coordinating Organizations in late July where they would establish C4C program plans, and review marketing materials developed by the Program Marketing and Outreach team.
- Connect with representatives across different segments to discuss outreach and marketing for California Dream Act Application students.
- Monitor FAFSA/CADAA application submission rates for all high school districts and reach out to high schools with low rates to offer assistance and services to increase their application rates.
- Work with a marketing and/or public relation firm to provide graphic design and other marketing services to increase public awareness for the FAFSA/CADAA application campaign and promote awareness to specific cultural and linguistically diverse communities and underserved students and families.

The Program Outreach and Marketing team will continue to partner with community organizations, colleges, and other government agencies to promote the Cal Grant and other financial aid programs administered by the Commission.

RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S):

Michael Lemus, Program Outreach and Marketing Manager
Executive Office

Edwin Chikukwa, Cash for College Coordinator
Executive Office

ATTACHMENT(S):

Outreach and Marketing presentation presented on June 23, 2021