Item 7

(Information Item)

IES Grant/Research Partnership: Student Supports - The Role of Social Safety Net Programs in Community College Student Success

SUMMARY:
The attached slide deck provides an overview of the Student Supports project, which is being led by the California Policy Lab (CPL) in partnership with the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC), California Department of Social Services (CDSS), and the California Community College Chancellor's Office (CCCCO). This project was recently awarded the prestigious IES Education Research Grant.

The Student Supports project will study the extent to which college students access existing safety net benefits to meet their basic needs, how those benefits affect their educational outcomes, and how information about existing usage patterns can inform future efforts to increase take-up and improve student success. CPL has developed the first database of linked, student-level data on social safety net program participation, higher education enrollment, and financial aid receipt in California. We will use this to a) estimate safety net program eligibility and take-up among community college students in California, b) examine whether participation in social safety net programs promotes post-secondary educational success, and c) explore how this database can support evaluations on the impact of interventions to increase students' take up of these benefits.

RECOMMENDATION:
This is an information item only; no action is required.

BACKGROUND:
Many college students struggle to meet their basic needs, potentially interfering with their ability to focus on school. Public higher education institutions are well-situated to facilitate student access to safety net benefits, but data limitations have hampered previous efforts to quantify eligibility and take-up. This project begins with, and is based on, the development of the Student Supports database: comprising up to 15 years and tens of millions of linked individual-level administrative records on financial aid applications, community college student enrollment, and participation in public safety net programs.

California Student Aid Commission
Data, Research, and Strategic Planning Committee

To create the database, the California Policy Lab at the University of California, Berkeley, is partnering with three agencies: CSAC, CDSS, and CCCCO, each of which is contributing linkable individual-level data. A fourth partner is Code for America, which, contracted by CDSS, has developed an online app supporting SNAP applications in California and will, via CDSS, provide linkable data on these applications, both successful and not.

RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S):

Patrick Perry, Deputy Director
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Jennifer Hogg, Research Manager
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ATTACHMENT(S):

IES Grant Research Partnership Presentation Presented on September 7, 2022