

California Student Aid Commission
Student Impact, Outreach and Communications Committee

Item 6

(Information Item)

Update on outreach and marketing

SUMMARY:

This item provides a summary of the California Student Aid Commission's (CSAC) Outreach and Marketing initiatives for the 2022-2023 academic year, as well an update on Outreach and Marketing initiatives that will be implemented during the 2023-2024 academic year.

RECOMMENDATION:

This is an information item; no action required.

BACKGROUND:

As part of the *All In for FAFSA/CA Dream* Act campaign to support implementation of the new, universal approach to high school seniors applying for aid, the CSAC Outreach and Marketing unit implemented several new initiatives that contributed to California growing the percentage of seniors in public schools applying for aid to 69%. In addition, the Cash for College Program executed the largest number of workshops in its history in this past application cycle, with 1,482 workshops registered as of July 2023. The increased number of workshops correlated with an increased number of completed first-time high school senior financial aid applications, which improved California's national ranking for first-time FAFSA filers.

Throughout the 2022-23 financial aid application cycle, the Outreach and Marketing team expanded marketing efforts in the form of print and digital material, including post cards, social media, billboards, special messages from key endorsers, and toolkits. The campaign included partners from the K-12 sector, higher education segments, community-based organizations, elected officials, Cash for College Regional Coordinating Organizations (RCOs), California Student Opportunity and Access Program (Cal-SOAP) consortia.

As the Commission prepares for the 2023-2024 academic year, Outreach and Marketing staff are currently working to:

- Prepare the public for the implementation of the simplified FAFSA otherwise known as *Better FAFSA*, which will launch in December 2023.

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- Enter year two of the *All In for FAFSA/CA Dream Act* campaign where it will be working with partners across the state to ensure high school seniors apply via the FAFSA or CA Dream Act Application unless they formally opt out.
- Partner with local schools, districts, higher education segments, elected officials, RCOs, Cal-SOAPs, and various community-based organizations to host Cash for College workshops across the state, including workshops for specialized groups such as foster youth, formerly incarcerated students, and different cultural/ethnic groups.
- Update Cash for College workshop/Train the Trainer curriculum to reflect the value proposition of college.
- Expand upon the Black Student Outreach Initiative to reflect the work of newly formed Black Advisory Council.
- Hire new staff to address equity gaps including: two Strategic Outreach Coordinators, a Creative Content Coordinator, and a Digital Content Coordinator.
- Deepen partnerships with parent organizations such as the Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE) and the California Association for Bilingual Education (CABE).
- Engage philanthropic entities around supporting research into which messages will most effectively engage target student populations and their parents.
- Invest in paid social media advertisement and contracting with content creators/influencers on marketing campaigns that will expand the Commission's reach.
- Create new print material partners to help spread awareness about financial aid resources.
- Utilize analytics to support data-informed decision-making around the impact of various messages and modes of communication.
- Invest in a language translation contract, which will allow the Commission to reach student and families in a variety of different languages.
- Leverage a texting platform to send out targeted texting campaigns to students.

RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S):

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ATTACHMENT(S):

Outreach and Marketing Presentation Presented on September 6, 2023