



**CALIFORNIA STUDENT AID COMMISSION**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

Thursday, December 5, 2019

9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Commission's Boardroom, 11040 White Rock Road, Rancho Cordova, CA

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** Catalina Cifuentes, Chair  
Jamillah Moore, Vice Chair  
Judith Maxwell Greig, Secretary  
Glen Becerra  
Juanita Doplemore  
Hal Geiogue  
Debra Maxie  
Guillermo Mayer  
Wm. Gregory Sawyer  
Caroline Siegel-Singh  
David Valladolid

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:** Maria Manjarrez  
Charles Nies

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

Chair Cifuentes called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Roll call was taken and a quorum was recognized.

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

Jake Brymner, State and Federal Policy Director with the Campaign for College Opportunity, expressed gratitude in partnerships with various organizations to ensure that financial aid is provided to all students in California, including

undocumented students. He was grateful to see how quickly the Commission staff implemented changes to the Competitive Program for Dreamer students and looks forward to more partnership opportunities with the Commission to increase service incentive programs and to help offset the cost of college attendance.

**3. Approval of Minutes of June 13-14, 2019 and September 12-13, 2019 (Action)**

The Commission **APPROVED** the minutes of June 13-14, 2019 meeting as presented.

**MOVED** Sawyer  
**SECONDED** Becerra  
**CARRIED (11 to 0)**

**In Favor:** (11): Cifuentes, Moore, Greig, Becerra, Doplemore, Geiogoue, Maxie, Mayer, Sawyer, Siegel-Singh, and Valladolid  
**Absent:** (2): Manjarrez, and Nies

The Commission **APPROVED** the minutes of the September 12-13, 2019 meeting as presented.

**MOVED** Becerra  
**SECONDED** Moore  
**CARRIED (11 to 0)**

**In Favor:** (11): Cifuentes, Moore, Greig, Becerra, Doplemore, Geiogoue, Maxie, Mayer, Sawyer, Siegel-Singh, and Valladolid  
**Absent:** (2): Manjarrez, and Nies

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

Chair Cifuentes thanked Commission staff for their work and excitement throughout the year participating in all the activities, events, and initiatives. She highlighted some key achievements of the College Affordability Summit, which took place in November 2019 and is looking forward to organizing more summits in the future to increase FAFSA/CADAA completion.

**5. (Item 1) Executive Director's Report (Information)**

Executive Director commended Chair Cifuentes for putting the College Affordability Summit together. She expressed the significance of bringing in multiple key stakeholders together to discuss and address the concerns of financial aid and basic needs. She emphasized the student voice panel, which provided a real insight of the struggles of current and future college students.

Executive Director also highlighted the success of the Cash for College workshop provided during the College Affordability Summit. She also announced that the Commission will host another year of the College Affordability Summit.

Executive Director Garcia shared the importance of the SEARS initial insights and how it is being received by stakeholders.

Executive Director Garcia thanked the Commissioners for taking time to host and attend various outreach events. She provided an update on current and future outreach events for the year.

Executive Director Garcia also provided an update on the Cal Grant Reform Workgroup and the Washington D.C. advocacy trip.

Commissioner Greig asked if the Cal-SOAP direction is to head towards financial aid outreach on financial literacy instead of college readiness, which is stated on the report. Executive Director confirmed that financial literacy is the one of the main goals of the vision, with the context of college readiness.

Executive Director Garcia introduced the Executive Office's Executive Fellow, Teresita Martinez. Ms. Martinez was invited to speak and talk about what her expectations are with her time at the Commission.

Executive Director Garcia also announced the launch of the Employee Recognition program which honors three exemplary staff. She welcomed the three employees: Patricia Hammond, Staff Services Manager of the Customer Assistance and Program Unit, Lisa Wright, Staff Services Manager of the System Analysis and Operation Unit, and Kelly O'Brecht, Budget Analyst in the Fiscal Administration and Service Division.

**6. (Item 2) Election of Commission Officers (Action)**

Virginia Jo Dunlap, Chief Deputy Director/Chief Legal Officer, announced that the current three incumbents are the candidates nominated for each of their respective officer positions and after comments by the candidates, the Commission could vote for all the positions in one motion.

The Commission unanimously **APPROVED** the election of officers Catalina Cifuentes, Chair, Jamillah Moore, Vice Chair, and Judith Maxwell Greig, Secretary.

**MOVED** Becerra  
**SECONDED** Valladolid  
**CARRIED (11 to 0)**

**In Favor:** (11): Cifuentes, Moore, Greig, Becerra, Doplemore, Geiogoue, Maxie, Mayer, Sawyer, Siegel-Singh, and Valladolid

**Absent:** (2): Manjarrez, and Nies

**7. (Item 3) Consideration of the 2020 Commission meeting calendar (Action)**

Virginia Jo Dunlap, Chief Deputy Director/Chief Legal Officer, explained that the proposed dates for 2020 meetings were presented at the September meeting. She also noted that the items that need to be addressed before making a motion are clarification for November and December meetings, and the meeting location for June.

Chair Cifuentes noted that based on the discussion at the September meeting, the December dates would be the best date for the last meeting of 2020. She opened the meeting for discussion and encouraged Commissioners who may have a conflict with those dates.

Commissioner Siegel-Singh commented that the December meeting will be an issue with the two student Commissioners as it could be the last week of class or finals.

Commissioner Geiogoue motioned to approve the Commission meeting dates with December 3-4 as the final meeting date of 2020.

Commissioner Sawyer also added that certain universities have pre-finals week, which would require the students to not participate in any activity.

Commissioner Becerra announced that a representative at the University of San Diego has offered to host the Commission meeting for June 2020.

Chair Cifuentes asked that student Commissioners reach out to other Commissioners if they need help with attending the Commission meetings on proposed dates of December.

The Commission **APPROVED** the January 17 (teleconference), March 26-27, May 15 (teleconference), June 25-26, September 24-25, and ~~November 12-13~~ **December 3-4** dates for the 2020 Commission meetings.

**MOVED** Geiogoue

**SECONDED** Valladolid

**CARRIED (9 to 2 abstentions)**

**In Favor:** (9): Cifuentes, Moore, Greig, Becerra, Doplemore, Geiogue, Maxie, Mayer, and Valladolid

**Abstain:** (2): Sawyer, and Siegel-Singh

**Absent:** (2): Manjarrez, and Nies

**8. (Item 4) Update on Financial Aid and Cal Grant Reform (Information/Action)**

David O'Brien, Director of Government Affairs, provided a brief summary of the discussion on the Cal Grant reform at September's Commission meeting. He proceeded to provide updates on the current activities with the Cal Grant workgroup, which includes looking at different options to streamline Cal Grant and models that serve the need of different student population.

Commissioner Becerra asked if transportation needs are factored into the discussion in the workgroup. Mr. O'Brien confirmed that transportation is a core component in cost of attendance, and the current strategy discussed is to help students take advantage of the current transportation resources available to them.

Commissioner Greig asked for more insight on the two Cal Grant Reform options mentioned in the Executive Director's report. Mr. O'Brien noted that the framework considered the type of students, and presented the two options as follows:

1. Maintain the current entitlement program and create an option for returning students
2. Consolidate all entitlement programs into one grant

The discussion on the Cal Grant reform options continued.

Commissioner Geiogue asked that the status of the Cal Grant workgroup be added as an item for the January teleconference meeting, and that the time for the teleconference not be limited to one-hour. Executive Director Garcia agreed to provide an update on the workgroup at the January teleconference meeting and will include necessary background information for Commissioners.

Commissioner Moore recommended that institutional representatives from each segment be invited to explain how the two Cal Grant Reform options will impact the process for each segment. Commissioner Moore clarified that it could be the January or March meeting, as long as each segment is provided enough time to review and discuss the impact of the options before presenting it to the Commission.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 4 UPDATE ON FINANCIAL AID AND CAL GRANT REFORM**

There was no public comment.

### **9. (Item 5) Update on the Student Expenses and Resources Survey (SEARS) (Information)**

Patrick Perry, Director of Policy, Research, and Data Team, provided an update on the data and research team. Mr. Perry invited Dr. Jessica Moldoff, Research Specialist, to present on the initial findings in the Student Expenses and Resources Survey (SEARS).

Dr. Moldoff presented on housing and food insecurity findings.

Mr. Perry highlighted the Housing Spotlight handout and announced that more briefings will be provided in the coming weeks on food insecurity.

Commissioner Sawyer asked if there was a question in the survey which asked the students if they reached out to different resources and programs on campus. Dr. Moldoff responded that the survey did not have a follow-up question which asked whether the student reached out to other campus resources. Commissioner Sawyer added that this question can help different campuses find out what other campuses are offering so that they can possibly offer something similar.

Commissioner Geiogue suggested providing actual numbers of students on spotlights instead of percentage so it can make the report more impactful. Commissioner Doplemore also suggested providing a comment box for students to type in the different resources.

Commissioner Mayer asked if the percentage of housing can be compared to the total cost of college attendance for students. He explained that the rate of homelessness dramatically increased once housing constitutes more than 30 percent of total income. Mr. Perry responded that students were asked for an estimated total cost of attendance in the survey and the team can look into that information for a percentage. Commissioner Mayer asked if this information can be shared with other state agencies as a means to build partnerships. Mr. Perry responded that team will look into how to communicate the information.

Commissioner Becerra also asked if there can be a spotlight on transportation issues. Mr. Perry responded that the team can look at some of the transportation

issues in the survey and will consider the different requests from the Commissioners.

Chair Cifuentes asked that the information be broken down by specific regions and presented to those regions during the briefings. Mr. Perry explained that the current data is broken down on a macro and micro level and can also be broken by regions as well.

**10. (Item 6) Update on the Grant Delivery System Modernization Project (Information)**

Gurinder Bains, Chief Information Officer, provided an update on the Grant Delivery System Modernization project (GDSM) and explained that the launch date was delayed due to the implementation of the new program for supplemental aid for students with dependent children.

Catalina Mistler, Deputy Director of Program Administration and Services Division, also indicated that in addition to the student with dependent children program, the awards to Dreamers in the Competitive program was a priority to implement which led to significant changes to the legacy Grant Delivery System (GDS) and GDSM. She noted that the additional opportunity to have testing done by staff has allowed the team to improve the final product.

Commissioner Geigogue asked for clarification of dates for the GDSM and students with dependent children. Mr. Bains confirmed that December 10th will be the launch date of students with dependent children on the GDS, and December 16th will be the launch date for GDSM.

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 6 UPDATE ON THE GRANT DELIVERY SYSTEM MODERNIZATION PROJECT**

There was no public comment.

**11. (Item 7) Update on CSAC's branding and logo (Information)**

Chair Cifuentes welcomed Bryan Sapp, Media Relations Manager, Tina Reynolds, Owner and CEO of Uptown Studios, and Mackenzie McKinney, Product Manager of Uptown Studios to present.

Mr. Sapp introduced Tina Reynolds and Mackenzie McKinney to present on the communications and brand audit.

Ms. Reynolds briefly summarized the method behind the research. Ms. McKinney presented on the findings of the audit.

Ms. Reynolds directed the Commissioners to the handout provided and explained how each logos were designed.

The Commissioners were provided an opportunity to offer feedback on each logo.

Commissioner Sawyer suggested a tagline underneath the logo to make it stand out.

Commissioner Becerra suggested that the focus group on the logos include educational and legislative partners.

Commissioner Geiogoue suggested that the current logo be included in the focus group to see if there can be changes to the existing logo instead of creating a completely new one.

Commissioner Siegel-Singh asked if there can be one unified logo with the only change of text for each different program. She added that this will maintain consistency and still associate each program with the California Student Aid Commission, if the different programs are listed in smaller font below the California Student Aid Commission.

After the Commissioners provided their feedback to all the proposed logos, Ms. Reynolds thanked them and advised them that she will take the information back to the team.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 7 UPDATE ON CSAC'S BRANDING AND LOGO**

There was none.

#### **12. (Item 8) Update on Research Unit Workplan and Strategic Initiatives (Information)**

Patrick Perry, Director of Policy, Research and Data, provided an update on the research unit work plan and strategic initiatives.

Commissioner Greig asked how the Commission's current data is stored. Mr. Perry explained that most information is pulled from the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and the California Dream Act Application (CADAA), which is stored in the legacy Grant Delivery System.

Commissioner Greig asked about how the data provided can still protect students' confidential information. Mr. Perry explained that personal information, such as social security numbers, are removed from the data extraction that are provided to requestors.



Commissioner Geiogue asked if all data are under the Data, Analysis and Research Team. Mr. Perry responded that Gurinder Bains, Chief Information Officer, currently has ownership of the data, which is stored and retained on the backend. He explained the collaboration processes between divisions to carry out data requests.

Commissioners continued the discussion on strategies to improve data.

Chair Cifuentes suggested that Commissioners send Mr. Perry a list of wishes for data to report out at future meetings.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 8 UPDATE ON RESEARCH UNIT WORKPLAN AND STRATEGIC INITIATIVES**

There was no public comment.

#### **13. Recess for Committee meetings**

Chair Cifuentes announced that the Commission meeting would recess for lunch and after, the following committee meetings would report:

- *Legislative, Audit and Budget Committee meeting*
- *Student Impact Committee meeting*
- *Strategic Policy and Planning Committee meeting*
- *Personnel, Evaluation and Nominations Committee meeting*

Chair Cifuentes recessed the Commission meeting at 12:25 p.m.

#### **14. Reconvene Commission meeting and Recess Commission meeting to Friday, December 6, 2019**

Chair Cifuentes reconvened the Commission meeting at 4:53 p.m. and announced that the meeting will be recessed to Friday, December 6, 2019.

Chair Cifuentes recessed the Commission meeting at 4:54 p.m.

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JUDITH MAXWELL GREIG  
SECRETARY



**CALIFORNIA STUDENT AID COMMISSION**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

Friday, December 6, 2019

9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Commission's Boardroom, 11040 White Rock Road, Rancho Cordova, CA

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** Catalina Cifuentes, Chair  
Jamillah Moore, Vice Chair  
Judith Maxwell Greig, Secretary  
Glen Becerra  
Juanita Doplemore  
Hal Geiogue  
Debra Maxie  
Guillermo Mayer  
Wm. Gregory Sawyer  
Caroline Siegel-Singh  
David Valladolid

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:** Maria Manjarrez  
Charles Nies

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

Chair Cifuentes called the meeting to order at 9:12 a.m.

Roll call was taken and a quorum was recognized.

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

There was no public comment.

**13. (Item 18) Presentation by statewide student organizations (Information) – taken out of order**

Chair Cifuentes invited the presidents from the University of California (UC) Student Association and California State University (CSU) Student Association to present to the Commission.

David O'Brien introduced Varsha Sarveshwar, president of UC Student Association, and Michael Wiafe, president of CSU Student Association, and invited them to present on their organizations.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 18 PRESENTATION BY STATEWIDE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS**

There was no public comment.

#### **14. (Item 19) Student loan debt (Information) – taken out of order**

David O'Brien, Director of Government Affairs, introduced the following presenters to speak on student loan debt: Laura Szabo-Kubitz, Associate California Program Director of The Institute of College Access and Success (TICAS), Hans Johnson, Director of Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) Higher Education Center, and Arnie Sowell, Vice President of California Policy of NextGen America.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 19 STUDENT LOAN DEBT**

There was no public comment.

#### **12. (Item 17) Update on the Child Savings Programs RFA (Information) – taken out of order**

Steve Caldwell, Assistant Deputy Director of Customer Relations Branch, provided a background on the Child Savings Account Programs Request for Application (RFA). Ramona Carlos, Manager of Specialized programs, provided an update on the development of the Child Savings Programs RFA. She noted that staff have drafted an RFA and are waiting to establish a council before presenting the RFA to the Commission.

Catalina Mistler, Deputy Director of Program Administration and Services Division, confirmed that staff plans to provide a draft version of the RFA to the Commission at the March 2020 meeting.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 17 UPDATE ON THE CHILD SAVINGS PROGRAMS RFA**

There was no public comment.

### **3. Committee Report Items**

Chair Cifuentes announced that the Commission will move to reports from each committee.

Legislative, Audit and Budget Committee Report - Glen Becerra, Committee Vice Chair

### **4. (Item 9) Update on state and federal legislation and issues affecting Commission programs (Information/Action)**

Committee Vice Chair Becerra invited David O'Brien, Director of Government Affairs, to provide a summary of the state and federal legislation issues affecting Commission programs.

### **5. (Item 10) Operations budget update (Information)**

Committee Vice Chair Becerra invited Rhonda Pascual, Interim Chief of Fiscal Administrative Services Division, and Vivian Su, Interim Fiscal Manager, to provide a summary on the operations budget. He provided a quick overview of the 2018 budget expenditure and operational support budget.

Executive Director noted that a workforce audit will take place before staff can prepare a budget change proposal (BCP) for the Commission to review.

Student Impact Committee Report - David Valladolid, Committee Vice Chair

### **6. (Item 11) Update on Competitive Cal Grant Program (Information)**

Committee Vice Chair Valladolid provided a summary of the Competitive Cal Grant Program.

Commissioner Greig asked if the Committee and staff understood why the percentage of paid rate dropped after succeeding 100 percent in other years. Chair Cifuentes clarified that institutions are preparing for the students with dependents program, which has led to a delay in the payment and recycling process.

Catalina Mistler, Deputy Director of Program Administration and Services Division, also added that the Commission has been asked by institutions to delay the payment process in order for the institutions to meet their census. Ms. Mistler stated that staff plans to be more aggressive in awarding more students in order to meet the 100 percent paid rate.

Strategic Policy and Planning Committee Report - Debra Maxie, Committee Chair

**7. (Item 12) Update on engagement of stakeholders and partnerships (Information)**

Committee Chair Maxie provided a summary of the update on engagement of stakeholders and partnerships.

**8. (Item 13) Report on the auxiliary corporation (Information)**

Committee Chair Maxie provided a brief summary of the report on the auxiliary corporation. She invited Virginia Jo Dunlap, Chief Deputy Director/Chief Legal Officer, to elaborate on the item.

Ms. Dunlap briefly explained some of the requirements for the Commission to receive philanthropic donations. She also provided examples of how other state entities use philanthropic donations. She added that the Committee has asked staff to develop models for the Commission to review.

**10. (Item 15) Closed Session – taken out of order**

Committee Chair Sawyer announced that the full Commission would meet in closed session.

Ms. Virginia Jo Dunlap, Chief Deputy Director/Chief Legal Officer, 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 full Commission went into Closed Session at 12:02 p.m.

RECONVENE OPEN SESSION and RESUME COMMITTEE REPORT ITEMS - Personnel, Evaluation and Nomination Committee Report - Wm. Gregory Sawyer, Committee Chair

**9. (Item 14) Closed Session**

Committee Chair Sawyer reconvened Open Session at 12:11 p.m. and announced that there was nothing to report from the Committee.

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

Commissioner Geiogue noted the concerns expressed about the December meeting conflicting with finals week for students. He added that based on his review of the UCSD and USC academic calendars for this year, there does not appear to be a conflict, however, in the future, the Commission should check on school calendars to limit academic concerns for student Commissioners.

Executive Director added a few items for future meetings as follows:

1. Invite segmental leadership partners to provide their perspective on Cal Grant Reform proposals
2. Bring back refined logos to the March meeting, including upgrade of current logo
3. Present strategies on competitive Cal Grant unpaid rate
4. Update on Inland Empire Cal-SOAP RFA
5. Present concept paper proposal on auxiliary corporation
6. Invite Department of Social Services to present on CalFRESH and strategies to ensure students have easy access to these benefits

Commissioner Greig asked for an update on research plan. Commissioner Doplemore asked that an update on the Child Savings RFA be on the agenda for March meeting.

Commissioner Becerra asked if the student loan debt can continue to be an item for future meetings. Commissioner Siegel-Singh suggested to look at ways students are financing their education at the low-income, middle-income, and high-income levels. She added that this could help the Commission determine whether the current income brackets are serving the correct group of students. Executive Director Garcia responded that the two items could be a future research agenda item.

Commissioner Geiogue asked to invite the other two student groups to present at the next meeting. Commissioner Becerra also asked for a list of student association events that Commissioners can attend.

Chair Cifuentes suggested to collaborate with State Board members to see what they offer students in regards to college affordability.

**11. (Item 16) Presentation of Resolution to Nancy Anton, former Commissioner (Information)**

The Commission did not visit this item and tabled it for a future meeting.

**16. Adjournment**

The Commission meeting was adjourned at 12:27 p.m.

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JUDITH MAXWELL GREIG  
SECRETARY