



CALIFORNIA STUDENT AID COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, February 20, 2020

1:00 pm

Offsite Location, State Capitol Assembly Hearing Room 437

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Catalina Cifuentes, Chair
Jamillah Moore, Vice Chair
Judith Maxwell Greig, Secretary
Hal Geiogue
Debra Maxie
Guillermo Mayer
Charles Nies
David Valladolid

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Glen Becerra
Juanita Doplemore
Maria Manjarrez
Wm. Gregory Sawyer
Caroline Siegel-Singh

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Catalina Cifuentes called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. at the State Capitol Assembly Hearing Room 437.

Roll Call was taken and a quorum was recognized.

2. Public comment on items not on the agenda

There was no public comment.

3. Chair's oral report on Commission related issues (Information)

Chair Cifuentes thanked everyone for attending the special Commission meeting and emphasized the significance of this meeting for students of California.

4. Executive Director's oral report (Information)

Executive Director Garcia thanked everyone and elaborated on the need for the special February Commission meeting.

Ms. Garcia also announced the University of California's (UC) upcoming vote on their cohort tuition proposal on March 19. Ms. Garcia explained that based on the decision made at the March 19 meeting, staff will be prepared to discuss implementation strategies at the March Commission meeting.

Ms. Garcia also announced the upcoming March 2nd Cal Grant deadline and stated that staff will provide an update on the FAFSA and CADAA application at the March meeting.

5. Update on the Cal Grant Reform (Information/Action)

Chair Cifuentes welcomed Patrick Perry and David O'Brien to present on the Cal Grant Modernization proposal.

Executive Director Garcia began the item by referencing several findings from the SEARS survey and emphasized the need of the Cal Grant reform. She also provided a brief history on the legislative process to change the financial aid system to meet the needs of today's students. Ms. Garcia recognized the Cal Grant Reform workgroup members, Commissioners, and staff who played a role in the development of the proposal.

David O'Brien, Director of Government Relations, directed the Commissioners to the attachments and provided an overview of the need for Cal Grant Reform.

Commissioner Geiogue asked for clarification on the term tuition-guarantee used in the presentation and if it was similar to entitlement, as entitlement is the terminology used for guaranteed financial aid.

Patrick Perry, Director of Data, Analysis and Research Team, presented the Cal Grant model that the workgroup has agreed to propose to the Commission. Mr. Perry presented on the first Cal Grant 2 program model, which would award students attending a 2-year institution.

Commissioners engaged in a discussion on the Cal Grant 2 program model.

Mr. Perry proceeded to the second Cal Grant 4 program model presentation, which would award students attending a 4-year institution.

Commissioners engaged in a discussion on the Cal Grant 4 program model.

Commissioner Nies asked if the Summer Cal Grant will be a separate program, or if it was already included in both proposed models. Mr. O'Brien responded that the Summer Cal Grant was not included in this particular proposal, but it can be included if Commissioners recommend it.

Commissioner Greig asked if there will be a change to the maximum number of years of Cal Grant use. Executive Director Garcia responded that the workgroup did not discuss that particular topic.

Chair Cifuentes invited the first group of panelists to present their reactions and remarks to the Commission.

California Community College (CCC) Chancellor, Eloy Ortiz Oakley, expressed the CCC's full support of the Cal Grant Reform workgroup's proposals. Chancellor Oakley also indicated that the CCC would like to continue partnership with the Commission to address several other issues such as middle-class income students and non-tuition aid. Chancellor Oakley would hope to have the phase in process occur at a rapid rate to assist students with zero Expected Family Contribution (EFC) as quickly as possible.

Yvette Gullia, from the University of California Office of the President (UCOP), expressed the UC's support of the Cal Grant 4 program model proposal. She noted that the proposal aligns with two of the priorities highlighted in the Fall letter from University of California (UC) President, Janet Napolitano, and California State University (CSU) Chancellor, Timothy White. She added that the UC would like to continue discussion on the Summer Cal Grant program and the utilization of institutional aid towards total cost of attendance for students.

Luoluo Hong, from the California State University Office of the Chancellor, expressed the CSU's support Cal Grant model proposals. She added that the CSU recognizes that the models align with the goal of providing equitable access to financial aid for all students, especially for first-time Cal Grant recipients. She briefly highlighted three concerns which included 1) removal of state financial aid for non-institutional costs at 4-year institutions, 2) consistency in the amount of aid based on institution, and 3) emphasis on Expected Family Contribution (EFC) of zero without flexibility. Ms. Hong also recommended to 1) perform more predictive analysis on the models that involve following up on impact after three months, and 2) develop an implementation plan that allows policy change throughout implementation process.

Alex Graves, from the Associate Independent California Colleges and Universities (AICCU), expressed AICCU's support in the simplicity of the models, age and time out of school restriction, eligibility for new students to start restart receiving aid in first year of implementation. He added that AICCU shared concerns with other segments related to the non-tuition aid package of up to \$6,000 and the new EFC model. Mr. Graves also stated that AICCU would like to continue the conversation of including a Summer Cal Grant program and considering AICCU students for the students with dependents program.

Chair Cifuentes invited the second group of panelists to present their reactions and remarks to the Commission.

Carolina Reyes, from the AICCU student group, expressed her appreciation of the age limit lift in the new proposal and how it will change the lives of adult students. Ms. Reyes also noted that, even though she is a student parent, she is not eligible for supplemental funding for students with dependent children because she does not attend a public university.

Varsha Sarveshwar, from the UC Student Association (UCSA), highlighted four key goals that came out of the Fix Financial Aid Coalition: 1) accounting for total cost of attendance; 2) expanding access; 3) investing in basic needs and basic needs resources; and 4) creating a Summer Cal Grant. She also asked that the proposal include additional cost of living support for UC students.

Grace Pang, from the Cal State Student Association (CSSA), reiterated the four key goals of the Fix Financial Aid Coalition. She expressed that the CSSA agreed this proposal moves would expand access, eliminate socioeconomic barriers, simplify financial aid process, and take substantial steps towards addressing the total cost of attendance. She also noted that the CSSA would like to know more about 1) the implementation process, 2) institutional guidelines on how to package institutional aid, 3) whether students will be involved in decision making if the proposal moves to institutional level, 4) oversight and accountability on institutional roles, 5) why there are no new funds directed to non-tuition aid, and 6) why Summer Cal Grant was not incorporated in the proposal.

Amine El Moznine, from Student Senate for the California Community Colleges (SSCCC), reiterated the significance of the four key goals of the Fix Financial Aid Coalition. He also emphasized the need to increase the Cal Grant access award, which would serve more community college students who do not receive institutional aid like other UC and CSU students. He closed his presentation by expressing the SSCCC's full support of the Cal Grant Modernization proposal.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 5 UPDATE ON THE CAL GRANT REFORM

Public comments were taken in the following order.

Laura Szabo-Kubitz, from The Institute for College Access and Success (TICAS), thanked the Commission for the collaborative work on the Cal Grant reform proposal. She provided a few recommendations that TICAS hopes to discuss with the Commission that would help more of low-income students.

Magali Kincaid, from Public Advocates, expressed Public Advocates' support of the Cal Grant reform proposal and respectfully urges the Commission to consider an equity phase in process.

Anna Alvarado, from EDGE Coalition, commended the Commission for the quick turnaround on the proposal and would like to continue working with the Commission during the phase in process.

Jake Brymner, from Campaign for College Opportunity, expressed gratitude in Commission for addressing the gaps in financial aid. He urged the Commission to put the needs of the lowest income students first and to identify a sustainable source of revenue to address those needs. He also asked that the legislature, in partnership with the Commission, consider other policies to leverage some of new investments such as summer grant programs.

Brian Rivas, from Education Trust-West, expressed Ed Trust-West's support for the Cal Grant reform proposals.

Gail Yen, from California Competes, expressed shared concerns that TICAS mentioned and elaborated on concerns around adult students who pursue higher education at a later stage. She urged that the Commission also prioritize support for this group during the phase in process.

Moved By: Moore

Seconded By: Valladolid

Carried (8 to 0)

To direct staff to finalize a formal report recommending policy changes to modernize and streamline the Cal Grant program, with final approval from the Executive Director; and submitted by the Chair and Vice Chair, on behalf of the Commission, to the Governor and Legislature.

In Favor (8): Cifuentes, Moore, Greig, Geiogue, Maxie, Mayer, Nies, and Valladolid

Absent (5): Becerra, Doplemore, Manjarrez, Sawyer, and Siegel-Singh

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

Chair Cifuentes highlighted some of the requests and recommendation presented by panelists and public comments, which Commissioners and staff have noted.

Commissioner Nies added to research additional support for students at private institution who have dependent children.

7. Adjourn

The special Commission meeting was adjourned at 4:04 p.m.

JUDITH MAXWELL GREIG
SECRETARY