



**CALIFORNIA STUDENT AID COMMISSION
TELECONFERENCE MEETING MINUTES**

Friday, May 15, 2020

9:00 am

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

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Catalina Cifuentes
Jamillah Moore
Judith Maxwell Greig
Juanita Doplemore
Hal Geiogoue
Maria Manjarrez
Debra Maxie
Guillermo Mayer
Charles Nies
Wm. Gregory Sawyer (departed 9:15 a.m.)
Caroline Siegel-Singh
David Valladolid

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Catalina 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.

There was no public comment.

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

Chair Cifuentes welcomed everyone and congratulated Commissioner Maria Manjarrez and Caroline Siegel-Singh on their graduation.

4. Executive Director's oral report (Information)

Executive Director Marlene L. Garcia also congratulated the student Commissioners on their graduation.

Executive Director Garcia announced that an employee survey was administered to Commission staff to get feedback on telework since COVID-19. She highlighted some of the challenges that telework and how the feedback will help management determine how to improve the working environment.

Executive Director Garcia also gave special thanks to staff who provided many support throughout the telework transition period.

5. Approval of minutes of December 5-6, 2019 and January 17, 2020 (Action)

Moved By Greig

Seconded By Maxie

Carried (11 to 0)

The Commission **APPROVED** the minutes of December 5-6, 2019 meeting and January 17, 2020 teleconference meeting.

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

Absent (1): Sawyer

15. Presentation of Resolution to Nancy Anton and Glen Becerra, former Commissioners (Information) – taken out of order

Chair Cifuentes read the resolution for former Commissioner Glen Becerra.

Commissioner Moore read the resolution for former Commissioner Nancy Anton.

Commissioners were provided an opportunity to share their thoughts and gratitude for the former Commissioners.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 15 PRESENTATION OF RESOLUTION TO NANCY ANTON AND GLEN BECERRA, FORMER COMMISSIONERS

There was none.

6. Update on Cal Grant Modernization and Four-Part Strategy Amid COVID-19 Crisis (Information)

Vice Chair Moore invited Executive Director Garcia to present on item 6.

Executive Director Garcia provided a background on the Cal Grant Reform and expressed how important financial aid is for students at this time. She announced that a letter to the Governor requesting for additional funds in the Executive Order. She briefly highlighted the requests in the letter and explained the steps that helped determine the needed requests.

Executive Director Garcia also presented the following Four-Part Phase plan that would help the highest need students in the next couple of years:

1. Immediate term - support colleges and universities by distributing federal emergency financial aid and temporarily relax Cal Grant verification requirements.
2. Short term - target emergency financial aid relief to highest need students who are less likely to receive federal emergency relief.
3. Medium term - advocate for new legislation in the 2021 legislative session that would implement the proposed Cal Grant Modernization framework with existing funds.
4. Long term - fully fund Cal Grant Modernization as presented in released report on March 6, 2020.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 6 UPDATE ON CAL GRANT MODERNIZATION AND FOUR-PART STRATEGY AMID COVID-19 CRISIS

There was none.

7. Update on 2020-21 State budget/May Revise and legislative issues and federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (Information)

Chair Cifuentes invited Julia Blair, Interim Director of Government Relations, and Melissa Bardo, Legislative Analyst, to present on item 7.

Ms. Blair summarized the May Revise for 2020-21 FY, which was released yesterday. She noted that while the state will be experiencing a recession, the Governor's budget maintained the traditional Cal Grant adjustments. She highlighted the some of the proposed modifications to the 2019-20 FY.

Commissioner Geiogoue asked for clarification on the reason behind the reduction on Cal Grant awards for the private institutions. Commissioner Greig responded

that the reduction was a result of failure to meet ADT requirement, however, the deficit would hurt many of the low income students at private institutions.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 7 UPDATE ON 2020-21 STATE BUDGET/MAY REVISE AND LEGISLATIVE ISSUES AND FEDERAL CORONAVIRUS AID, RELIEF, AND ECONOMIC SECURITY (CARES) ACT

Alex Graves, from the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities (AICCU), expressed AICCU's disappointment in the Cal Grant cut for private institutions and how this would significantly impact their students. He posed a question of whether this cut violates the CARES act in section 1800-8, which requires states to maintain funding for the three years prior average.

Commissioner Greig asked that General Counsel, Julia Blair, look into the CARES act and determine if the Commission has the responsibility to do anything.

8. Update on COVID-19 Student Survey and other Research and Data Initiatives (Information)

Chair Cifuentes invited Patrick Perry, Director of Policy, Research and Data, and Jessica Moldoff, Research Data Specialist, to present on item 8.

Mr. Perry announced that the new SEARS spotlight report on Food Insecurity was recently released. He presented the findings highlighted in the spotlight report.

Commissioners discussed strategies to address food insecurities.

Mr. Perry continued his presentation on the findings for COVID-19 student survey.

Commissioners provided their thoughts on the survey and discussed ways to utilize the information for future research and collaborative work with partners.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 8 UPDATE ON COVID 19 STUDENT SURVEY AND OTHER RESEARCH AND DATE INITIATIVES

There was none.

11. Consideration of the Cal-SOAP LA contract amendment (Action) – taken out of order

Steve Caldwell, Interim Deputy Director of Program Administration and Services Division, presented on the item. He noted that the Cal-SOAP LA consortium would like to request to change their fiscal agent, Families in School, to East Los Angeles College Foundation. Mr. Caldwell provided a brief summary for the

change and explained that due to a legislative bill, Families in School can longer serve as the fiscal agent.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 11 CONSIDERATION OF THE CAL-SOAP LA CONTRACT AMENDMENT

There was none.

Moved By Mayer
Seconded By Valladolid
Carried (9 to 0)

The Commission **ADOPTED** the staff recommendations to: 1) amend the contract between Cal-SOAP LA and the Commission to reflect the change in fiscal agent from Families in Schools to East Los Angeles College Foundation (ELAC Foundation); and 2) amend the contract between Cal-SOAP LA and the Commission to change the grant funding from bi-yearly payments to quarterly payments.

In Favor (9): Cifuentes, Greig, Doplemore, Geiogue, Manjarrez, Maxie, Mayer, Siegel-Singh, and Valladolid

Absent (3): Moore, Nies, and Sawyer

9. Leveraging CalFresh to support student basic needs (Information) – taken out of order

Chair Cifuentes invited Alexis Fernandez, Chief of the CalFresh and Nutrition Branch at the California Department of Social Services, to present on item 9.

Ms. Fernandez presented on the background, eligibility, and process for CalFresh.

Commissioner Greig commented on the notification to Cal Grant students regarding TANF/CalFresh eligibility and if there was a way to notify federal work-study students and Cal Grant C students in a CTE program. Ms. Greig also suggested making connections with AICCU segments and asked about advocating for changes to SNAP student requirements based on how different students are now. Ms. Greig also posed the question of why someone with a college degree would be considered unemployable when it should increase someone's employability. Executive Director Garcia agreed that the system and process needs to be more efficient and further discussion is needed with colleagues to address these issues.

Commissioner Nies thanked Ms. Fernandez on behalf of the financial aid team across the UC campuses and basic needs team for the work that has been done

with the work-study verification letters to increase access to CalFresh and remove barriers.

Commissioner Siegel-Singh asked about data to identify which segments are enrolling the most students and where there are gaps in coverage. Ms. Fernandez indicated that their system does not track where students are attending. Ms. Siegel-Singh also asked about what the outreach looks like for students receiving free and reduced lunch who are transitioning from K-12 to higher education. Ms. Fernandez explained that students are not considered eligible until they enroll in college.

Chair Cifuentes asked about the process for students to apply for CalFresh and the 30-day indicator and process for reapplying if student moves to a different county. Ms. Fernandez explained students do not have to re-apply but it is to their benefit to update their information to transfer their benefits. Ms. Fernandez explained the current process does not allow the use of CalFresh to pay for meal plans.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 9 LEVERAGING CALFRESH TO SUPPORT STUDENT BASIC NEEDS

There was none.

10. Update on communications strategy, logo and rebranding (Information) – taken out of order

Chair Cifuentes welcomed Michael Lemus, Communications Manager, Judith Gutierrez, Policy and Project Manager, and Teresita Martinez, Executive Fellow, to present on item 10.

Ms. Gutierrez provided a brief history behind the Commission logo and rebranding journey. She introduced Tina Reynolds, Owner and CEO of Uptown Studios, and Noel Riggs, from Uptown Studios, to present the designed logos.

Commissioners were given an opportunity to provide their thoughts and feedback.

Mr. Lemus presented on changes to the Commission website which includes information on COVID-19 for students and families.

Ms. Martinez presented on the impact of various social media platforms and how staff will utilize each platform to increase followers and outreach.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 10 UPDATE ON COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY, LOGO AND REBRANDING

There was none.

12. Update on 2020-21 FAFSA CADAA application award cycle (Information)

Chair Cifuentes invited Steve Caldwell, Interim Chief Deputy Director of Program Administration and Services Division to present on item 12.

Mr. Caldwell provided an update on the 2020-21 FAFSA and CADAA application award cycle.

Patrick Perry, Director of Policy, Research and Data presented the data on FAFSA and CADAA application, and compared it to prior and upcoming years.

Commissioner Moore asked if more information can be provided to address this issue as a Summer Melt issue.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 12 UPDATE ON 2020-21 FAFSA CADAA APPLICATION AWARD CYCLE

There was none.

13. Update on implementation of new programs (Information)

Chair Cifuentes invited Steve Caldwell, Interim Deputy Director of Program Administration and Services

Mr. Caldwell provided an update on the Golden State Teacher Grant Program, Child Savings Account Program, Dreamer Service Incentive Grant Program, and Cal Grant Students with Dependents.

The Golden State Teacher Grant Program will have some changes in the May Revision and from federal funding for special education. The Child Savings Account is proposed to have a funding reduction from \$25 million to \$10 million. The Dreamer Service Incentive Grant Program will be ready to be implement in the Fall 2020-21 academic year. The Cal Grant Students with Dependents awards have been implemented and student payments have been processed.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 13 UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW PROGRAMS

There was none.

14. Update on the Grant Delivery System Modernization Project (Information)

Chair Cifuentes invited Gurinder Bains, Chief Information Officer, Steve Caldwell, Interim Deputy Director of Program Administration and Services Division, and George Polisner, Information Technology Manager.

Mr. Bains expressed the Commission's gratitude for the Governor's continued support for the Grant Delivery System Modernization project. He noted that the system is progressing well and have provided improved features for users. Mr. Bains also announced that Mr. Polisner has been appointed as the new project manager for GDSM.

Mr. Polisner provided an update on GDSM developments, priority programs, and timeline for meeting project deadlines.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 14 UPDATE ON GRANT DELIVERY SYSTEM MODERNIZATION PROJECT

There was none.

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

Commissioner Moore would like to bring more information on outreach to address Summer Melt.

Commissioner Greig would like more information on the legal status of the CARES Acts requirement, and ways to change the student eligibility on the students with dependent children at private institutions.

Commissioner Maxie would like an update on Cal-SOAP in regards to the impact of the pandemic and how information is shared between the consortia and schools.

Commissioner Doplemore would like to have a follow up discussion after getting results from the COVID-19 student survey.

Commissioner Geiogue posed the idea of reconsidering the number of days for the June Commission meeting. Chair Cifuentes responded that with the short time frame, there is a possibility of moving the June meeting to July. Executive Director Garcia also added that with the questionable budget process, the best time to meet would be in July. Chair Cifuentes announced that it could possibly be in July 23rd and 24th as potential meeting dates.

Moved By Geiogue
Seconded By Maxie
Carried (11 to 0)

The Commission **APPROVED** the recommendation to move the June meeting to July 23-24, 2020.

In Favor (11): Cifuentes, Moore, Greig, Doplemore, Geiogue, Manjarrez, Maxie, Mayer, Nies, Siegel-Singh, and Valladolid

Absent (1): Sawyer

17. Adjournment

Chair Cifuentes adjourned the meeting at 3:25 p.m.

JUDITH MAXWELL GREIG
SECRETARY