



## Frequently Asked Questions

### **WHY IS THE CURRENT FINANCIAL AID/CAL GRANT STRUCTURE FAILING CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS?**

Because of built-in inequities of the Cal Grant program, just 5 percent of community college students received a Cal Grant in 2017-18. That compares to nearly 40 percent of undergraduate students at the University of California and approximately 36 percent of students at the California State University system.

### **WHAT RATIO OF CAL GRANT FUNDS DO CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS RECEIVE?**

California Community Colleges enroll about two-thirds of the state's undergraduate students, yet they receive just 7 percent of Cal Grant funds.

### **WHY DOES THE HEALTH OF OUR ECONOMY DEPEND ON THE CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES SYSTEM?**

The California Community Colleges system is the largest provider of workforce training in the nation and—with 115 colleges serving 2.1 million students—is the largest higher education system in the country.

### **HOW DIVERSE IS THE CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES SYSTEM?**

The California Community Colleges system has the most diverse student body of any higher education system, and it is at the forefront in paving the way for residents from all walks of life to realize upward social mobility.

### **WHAT DOES IT COST TO ATTEND A CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE?**

For more than 75 years, California Community Colleges charged no tuition or fees. That changed in 1984 when a statutory fee and fee waiver program were established. Today, the total cost of attending a California Community College for a student living independently is nearly \$20,000, when room and board, transportation, tuition, textbooks, and miscellaneous costs are taken into account.

### **STUDENTS ALREADY RECEIVE FINANCIAL AID. WHY DO THEY NEED MORE?**

The maximum financial aid package for a California Community College student enrolling in 15 or more units per semester leaves that student nearly \$6,700 short of meeting his or her total cost of attendance.



## **AREN'T CALIFORNIA'S COMMUNITY COLLEGES SUPPOSED TO BE MORE AFFORDABLE THAN OTHER COLLEGES, LIKE THOSE IN THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM?**

In most regions of California, community colleges have a higher net price for low-income students than a nearby California State University or University of California campus. For example, because of the way current requirements are structured, only about 5 percent of California's community college students receive a Cal Grant compared to the nearly 40 percent of UC and 36 percent of CSU undergraduate students.

## **COMPARED TO OTHER SCHOOLS, HOW MANY LOW-INCOME STUDENTS DO THE CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES ENROLL?**

California Community Colleges enroll more low-income Pell Grant recipients than do the CSU, UC, and California's nonprofit colleges and universities combined.

## **DON'T MOST COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS ALREADY QUALIFY FOR FINANCIAL AID?**

While many students do qualify for financial aid for tuition, it is only one part of affording college. The new program would take all costs associated with attending college, like living expenses, transportation, and textbooks, into account.

## **DON'T LOW-INCOME STUDENTS HAVE PLENTY OF OPTIONS WHEN IT COMES TO ATTENDING COLLEGE?**

Low-income students with unmet financial need have limited choices: work more hours, take fewer courses, drop out of school, or take on what can become crushing debt. All of which make it less likely that they will complete the education they need to succeed in today's workforce.

## **DO EDUCATIONAL EXPERTS SUPPORT THESE REVISIONS TO THE CAL GRANT PROGRAM?**

During the 2017-18 legislative session, the Legislative Analyst's Office, the Washington, D.C.-based Century Foundation, and the nonprofit Institute for College Access and Success all recommended infusing additional resources into the Cal Grant program directed specifically toward community college students.



## **WHY IS THE CAL GRANT PROGRAM UNFAIR TO COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS?**

The Cal Grant program's focus on traditional-aged students is patently unfair to community college students because a significant percentage of those attending community colleges are returning students. In fact, more than 4 in 10 California Community College students are 25 years old or older, and more than 1 in 5 are 35 years old or older.

## **WHAT IS THE BASIC ARGUMENT FOR REFORMING THE CAL GRANT PROGRAM?**

Cal Grant reforms should be based on a student's financial needs, regardless of their age or how long ago they graduated high school, and they should link a student's financial aid to the total cost of attendance—not just the tuition and fees.

## **UNDER THE CURRENT REQUIREMENTS, ONLY CERTAIN KINDS OF DEGREE AND CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS QUALIFY FOR CAL GRANT FUNDING. WILL THAT CHANGE?**

The Cal Grant program should be extended to all certificate and degree programs offered at community colleges, regardless of whether the programs are oriented toward those transferring to four-year colleges or universities.

## **WILL CAL GRANT REFORMS HELP ELIMINATE EQUITY GAPS?**

Adjustments to the Cal Grant program are imperative if we are to meet the goals set forth in the California Community Colleges' Vision for Success, which calls for eliminating equity gaps and significantly increasing the number of students earning a degree or credential and transferring to a UC or CSU campus.

## **WHAT KIND OF INVESTMENT IS THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA MAKING TO SUPPORT THESE REFORMS?**

The California Governor's Office has proposed adding \$121.6 million for public college Cal Grant recipients who have dependent children and \$9.6 million to fund 4,250 new competitive Cal Grant awards, bringing the new total to 30,000 awards in 2019-20.