

# Memorandum

To: Leroy Wade, Assistant Commissioner

From: Khaneetah A. Cunningham, Manager Student Financial Aid

Date: 1/29/09

Re: Policy Discussion on State Financial Aid Programs

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Thank you for the opportunity to share information that may be useful in the upcoming policy discussion at the February 2009 CBHE meeting. I have provided a response to each bullet point as requested in Dr. Stein's memo.

- **Identification of data elements and summaries the MDHE could provide that would add value to the public policy discussion.**

The following data elements would be useful in evaluating the effectiveness and success of various state aid programs.

Enrollment data of Missouri students at Missouri public and private institutions  
Institutional aid dollars provided by source (state, federal, institutional, and private)  
Financial profile of Missouri students and families that are benefiting from state aid programs by institution and educational sectors  
Retention, graduation and transfer rates  
Employment statistics by institution and sectors  
Long term tracking studies of specific cohorts of students receiving state aid

Evaluating outcome data for each state aid program would assist in ensuring that programs are meeting their intended purpose. Data could also be useful in ensuring that dollars are being appropriately and effectively leveraged to meet the needs of students and families in Missouri and the educational goals of the state.

- **Any institutional research and analysis about your students who receive state financial aid.**

Information and data regarding primary state programs at St. Louis Community College is included. Information relates to students and families receiving state aid at St. Louis Community College from 2006-07 to date.

- **Position papers about what should be Missouri's public policy on state student financial aid.**

Affordability and access to higher education remain primary concerns for the general public. Given current economic conditions and uncertainties, conditions of the student loan market and regulatory requirements for specific federal aid programs and the impact on students, state financial assistance is crucial for families to have both access and choice in pursuing higher education goals.

The complexity and structure of existing state student financial aid programs and the amount of need-based aid available for low income students remains a concern. Given this, state financial aid programs should remain priority and continue to focus on enhancing access and success for students and families with the greatest financial need as determined by the FAFSA. In addition, there should be continued efforts to ensure that higher education remains accessible and affordable to working, middle income families and self supporting students with demonstrated financial need. We support the continued funding and existing eligibility guidelines of state need-based aid programs.

To assist students and families in pursuing and successfully achieving their higher education goals and to assist in meeting educational goals of the state, students should continue to have a choice in using state aid at any of Missouri's accredited post secondary institutions.

There may be cause for review of policy to determine the various sectors that should qualify to receive state aid dollars. There may also be cause for thorough evaluation of the A+ program and seeking recommendation for expansion of the program for junior and senior level coursework at four year institutions.

Focus should remain on improving the efficiency of financial aid with regard to state program funding, determination of awards, and simplifying and streamlining financial aid eligibility requirements for the state aid programs. Consistent renewal eligibility criteria for specific programs would be less confusing to students and parents and would provide an expectation for the student to maintain eligibility for state awards. In addition, if the renewal eligibility criteria were consistent for programs, verification of eligibility would be simplified for institutions.

Missouri's current policy on state financial assistance seems to be working as intended. With state financial aid programs being priority and continued focus on enhancing access and choice, students and their parents can easily access financial aid opportunities and higher education in Missouri.

#### Access Missouri Financial Assistance Program

Access Missouri has increased the number of students receiving state financial assistance and provided opportunity to middle income families to achieve higher education goals. The only other source of funding for many of these families would have been student loans. State-wide, there have been significant gains in qualifying more community college students for state awards. This current academic year, St. Louis Community College has awarded more students Access Missouri than any other institution in the public two-year sector. Many of our Missouri students and families have benefited from this program institutionally as well as state-wide. Other notable positive contributions of the program include portability for students and improved administrative capability for institutions. Future discussions could include review and evaluation of maximum student award amounts, for the purpose of achieving equity of funds available across sectors. There could also be discussion of the current 2.5 GPA requirement for renewal students and whether or not this is an equitable assessment of academic achievement in comparison to other state programs. Based on evaluation of various data, the program has demonstrated success in a relatively short period of time and seems to be working as intended. It is our hope that the Coordinating Board for Higher Education, the Missouri Department of Higher Education and the Missouri General Assembly continue to support the Access Missouri program.

## St. Louis Community College State Programs

### Access Missouri Total

	Count	Total
2007-08	889	501,819.00
Fall		
2008	936	435,333.00

### EFC Range

	EFC<=4041	EFC between 4,041-12,000	EFC Great than 12,000
2007-08	702	187	
Fall			
2008	740	179	17

### Dependency Status

	Dependent	Independent
2007-08	554	335
Fall		
2008	591	345

### Adjusted Gross Income Range

	Dependent AGI 0-75,000	Dependent AGI Over 75,000	Independent AGI 0-75,000	Independent AGI Over 75,000
2007-08	525	29	335	
Fall 08	550	41	343	2

### Access Missouri Grade Level

	First Year Students	Second Year Students
2007-08	560	329
Fall		
2008	616	320

### A Plus

	Count	Total
2006-07	958	1,783,549.80
2007-08	925	1,801,870.60
Fall		
2008	887	1,093,774.10

**Bright Flight**

	Count	Total
2007-08	44	68,000.00
Fall		
2008	27	27,000.00

**Marguerite Ross Barnett**

	Count	Total
2007-08	0	0.00
Fall		
2008	0	0.00

**Gallagher & Missouri College Guarantee**

	Fund	Count	Total
2006-07	Gallagher	20	15,738.00
2006-07	Missouri College Guarantee	24	37,685.00