



The Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges

PRESENTED TO THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

DATE: March 3-4, 2014

SUBJECT: Analysis of the Potential Impact of New Board of Governors Fee Waiver Regulations		Item Number: 3.3	
		Attachment: No	
CATEGORY:	Student Services and Special Programs	TYPE OF BOARD CONSIDERATION:	
Recommended By:	 Linda Michalowski, Vice Chancellor	Consent/Routine	
		First Reading	
Approved for Consideration:	 Brice W. Harris, Chancellor	Action	
		Information	X

ISSUE: This item presents estimates of the effect of recent changes to the Board of Governors (BOG) Fee Waiver Program on various student populations.

BACKGROUND: On January 13, 2014, the BOG approved changes to its fee waiver program regulations. The new regulations implement sections of the Student Success Act of 2012, (Senate Bill 1456) signed by Governor Brown on September 27, 2012. The regulations, which are intended to incent students to persist toward their education goal and to focus college efforts on supporting their success, require that a student meet minimum academic and progress standards for continued receipt of the BOG Fee Waiver. The regulations also establish notification and appeal requirements. Upon approving the regulations, the BOG asked staff to further analyze projected impacts on student populations, consider criteria for extending exemptions to groups beyond Foster Youth and then present findings for discussion at the next BOG meeting.

RECOMMENDATION: This agenda item is presented for the Board’s information to answer questions asked by the Board at its January meeting. Chancellor’s Office staff will continue to monitor impacts of the recently enacted changes to the BOG Fee Waiver program and will provide updates to the Board on a periodic basis.

ANALYSIS: Staff produced a model to estimate how many credit students would be subject to loss of the BOG Fee Waiver under the new regulations. The methodology for this analysis consisted of several steps and required a look back over four terms to model the effect the regulations would have.

First, the Chancellor's Office staff established a cohort containing all credit students from fall 2011 who received the BOG Fee Waiver and who met the minimum cumulative unit level of 12 units (students are not subject to academic or progress probation until they have earned 12 or more units). The original cohort size was 603,685 students. The second step involved determining which students from the cohort persisted to and received a BOG Fee Waiver for spring 2012, and of that group which students failed to meet the minimum academic and progress standards at the end of that term. The third step was to track those students still remaining in the cohort who persisted to and received a BOG Fee Waiver for fall 2012. Staff then identified which students did not meet the minimum standards at the end of fall 2012 and, finally, which of this group of students persisted to spring 2013. This final group would have been subject to potential loss of the BOG fee Waiver for spring 2013 had the new regulations been in effect at that time.

To address questions posed by the Board, the Chancellor's Office disaggregated these estimates by ethnicity, gender, age, disability status, and participation in either CalWORKs or EOPS. Reliable calculations for Foster Youth and Veterans were not possible because the system only recently began requiring identification of these students in the data reported to the Chancellor's Office.

Estimates likely overstate impact

It is important to note that there are significant challenges to accurately projecting the impacts of this policy change. That is because simulations based on historic student performance do not take into account the positive impacts that will result from the policy change, namely: 1) the targeting of services and interventions to assist students at risk of losing the BOG Fee Waiver; and 2) the incentive the policy will provide to students to improve academic performance. In addition, the estimates do not take into account the beneficial effects of other elements of the Board's Student Success Initiative. These include implementation of Enrollment Priorities, which will have focused attention on the importance of meeting academic and progress standards, and the services and interventions offered as a result of the Student Success and Support Program. Because of the effects of these services and interventions that will have been in effect for two years before the BOG Fee Waiver requirements are effective, we expect that the number of students who would ultimately be affected by the BOG Fee Waiver changes will be even lower than reflected in our analysis. It is also important to note that the simulations do not take into account the appeals process for all students and the specific appeal considerations afforded to CalWORKs, DSPS, EOPS and Veteran students. Appeals granted would further reduce the number of students who would be denied BOG Fee waivers under the new policy. For the reasons noted above, the estimates contained in this agenda item likely overstate the impacts.

Key Findings

Highlights of the data are provided below:

- Of the original cohort, 31,342 students who received a BOG Fee Waiver and failed academic and/or progress standards for two consecutive terms persisted to the following term. It is this group of students that could have lost eligibility for the fee waiver if the proposed regulations had been in place for spring 2013. This number represents:
 - 3.9 percent of the total number of students receiving a fee waiver for spring 2013.
 - 2.2 percent of the total number of all credit students enrolled for spring 2013.
- For fee waiver recipients:
 - Hispanics (4.7 percent) and African Americans (4.4 percent) show a higher risk of losing the fee waiver under the regulations than do whites (2.3 percent).
 - Men (4.1 percent) show a slightly higher risk than women (3.8 percent).
 - CalWORKs students are more likely (4.7 percent) than non-CalWORKs students (3.9 percent) to be affected.
 - Students with disabilities are more likely (6 percent) than students without disabilities (3.8 percent) to be affected.
 - EOPS students are more likely (4.8 percent) than non-EOPS students (3.9 percent) to be affected.

Summary

Chancellor's Office staff concludes that the projected number of students potentially impacted by the recently adopted BOG Fee Waiver requirements is relatively small and while some differential impacts are likely, they also appear to be relatively modest. Further, these estimated impacts should be taken in the context of the policy proposal which is intended to both focus colleges' resources and interventions on students at risk of failing and also provide these students with an added incentive to meet academic standards. These beneficial impacts are likely to reduce the numbers of students who actually lose a BOG Fee Waiver under the policy. Further, when taken in the overall context of other initiatives being pursued to improve student success rates, this policy is likely to help these at-risk students persist and complete at higher rates than they have in the past. Given these findings, as well as the college-level appeals processes included in the recently adopted regulations, Chancellor's Office staff does not recommend extending further general exemptions from the BOG Fee Waiver requirements.