



TO: Chief Executive Officers
Chief Instructional Officers
Chief Student Services Officers

FROM: Marty Alvarado, Executive Vice Chancellor, Educational Services & Support

RE: Emergency Guidance for Extended Opportunity Programs & Services (EOPS)

The COVID-19 pandemic and the rapidly escalating social and physical distancing required has substantially disrupted instruction for all institutions. As a result, colleges throughout the state are working comprehensively to meet the needs of students as they transition to online and remote learning environments and this includes leveraging the personnel and funding resources of the Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS). The content of this memo provides guidance for college EOPS programs, including the suspension of regulations as defined in Executive Order 2020-03, ensuring maximum flexibility for programs working to meet the immediate instructional needs of students impacted by the COVID-19 state of emergency.

Guidance on Grants, Workstudy, and Emergency Loans

Executive order 2020-03 suspends the “not to exceed” grant amount of \$900 per student and the total award amount of \$1,800, as defined in title 5, section 56254, as well as the clause that requires grants to be disbursed to each student equally among terms in the college academic year. Colleges are advised to establish funding protocols in alignment with title 5, sections 56252 and 56256, for assessing individual student needs related to the unexpected transition to online education and direct available program resources to mitigate barriers for EOPS students impacted by this transition.

Executive order 2020-03 also suspends the “not to exceed” loan amount of \$300 per student in a single academic year and suspends the requirement that emergency loans be repaid within the academic year in which the loan was made. Districts must require such emergency loans to be repaid within a reasonable timeframe. Colleges are advised to establish guidelines if they intend to award loans that exceed the original cap of \$300. College guidelines should include a focus and prioritization on ensuring the continuity of education for EOPS students and should implement a streamlined process for students requesting emergency support.

EOPS workstudy awards are approved to continue during the COVID-19 state of emergency. Colleges should continue workstudy payments regardless of whether a student is actually working. Where possible, colleges should continue to identify alternative work opportunities for students that contribute to the students’ educational experience and future employment opportunities.

Guidance on Allowable Expenditures

To ensure the timely procurement of technology needed to support the transition to remote instruction and student supports, Executive order 2020-03 suspends the requirement in title 5, section 56295, that the Chancellor's Office approve the purchase of computer hardware and/or software. Colleges should follow their standard local process for purchasing technology and work to expedite the process given the current state of emergency. The 10% "not to exceed" clause is also suspended and colleges expecting to exceed the 10%, or \$50,000, limit should document the rationale for the increased expenditures and submit with their annual report.

Guidance on Eligibility for Programs and Services

At the time of this guidance the duration and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is unknown and anticipated to extend through some portion of the 2020-2021 academic year. To ensure students are supported throughout the entirety of this state of emergency this memo serves to provide clarification on the enrollment status requirements for continuing EOPS students. Title 5, section 56220, requires that students are enrolled full-time when accepted into the EOPS program. The requirement to *remain* enrolled full-time is not specified in the regulation and colleges should ensure that continuing students unable to maintain fulltime enrollment due to COVID-19 are not dropped from the EOPS program. The 10% cap on accepting students enrolled in a minimum of 9 units remains in effect at this time and may be revisited should colleges find that they cannot meet their program enrollment numbers for Fall 2020.

This memo also serves to clarify that per title 5, section 56222, students are required to file an EOPS application, a student educational plan, and an EOPS mutual responsibility contract for programs and services. The regulations do not stipulate in what form these documents are required to be completed and as such, they may be completed and submitted electronically or by mail. Colleges should work with their legal departments to ensure protocols for appropriate authentication of documents submitted, taking into account the potentially limited access to software and hardware resources that students may need to authenticate documents. Colleges should strive to mitigate this burden on students and find solutions that maintain broad access and applicability to the student population.

Guidance on Counseling & Advisement

This memo serves to clarify that per title 5, section 56236, each college receiving EOPS funds are required to provide counseling and advisement to EOPS-eligible students of at least three contact sessions per term for each student. The regulations do not stipulate the length or format of how these contact sessions are to be conducted and, as such, colleges have full discretion to conduct these sessions via technology including, but not limited to, emails, text messages, phone calls, or online counseling platforms. Colleges should strive to minimize the burden and potential financial impact on students and should make efforts to accommodate the student's desired form of contact, including delaying student contact should students be unavailable due to illness or other related COVID-19 circumstances.

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Should you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me via email at malvarado@cccoco.edu.

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