CPEC

California Postsecondary Education Commission

Completing the Affordability Picture: The Need for More Data on Financial Aid

Presented By
Jessika Jones

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Financial Aid Data for Commission Research

- Disaggregated, student record financial aid data
- In-house access by research staff
- Link with enrollment and completion data

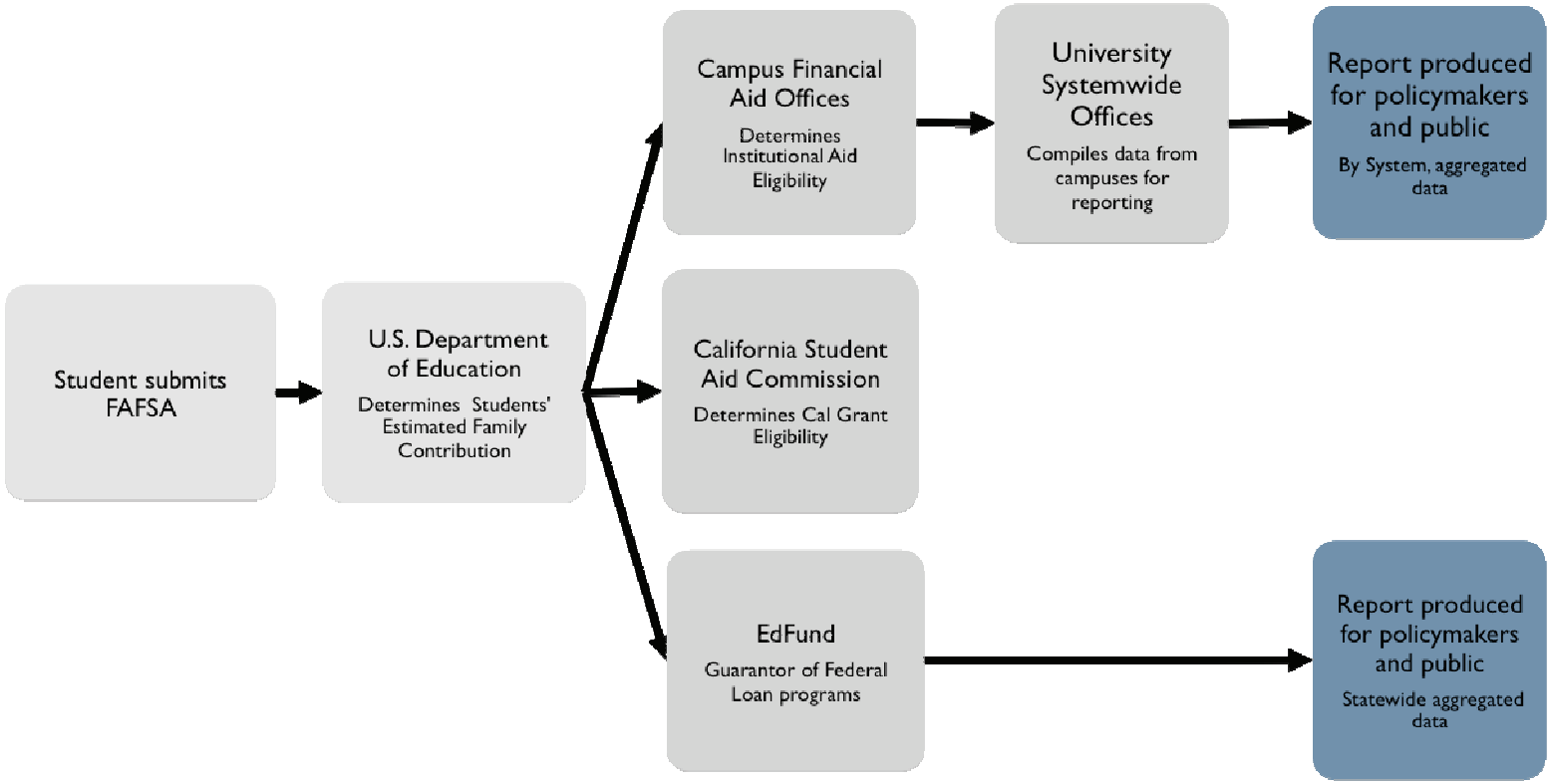
Affordability Studies

- Recent Commission studies looked at:
  - Cost of attendance as percent of family income
  - Student ability to self-sufficiently pay for college

Challenges in Evaluating College Affordability

- Offsetting college costs with financial aid estimates is difficult because of:
  - Numerous reporting sources
  - Variation in how data is presented
  - Undocumented sources of borrowing

Flow of Financial Aid Data



Student Survey Data

- Student Expenses and Resources Survey (SEARS)
- National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS)

Streamlining the Data

- CPEC, as the State higher education research and coordinating board, should . . .
  - Be a housing agency for student record FA data
  - Work with CSAC to maximize survey data utility
  - Use data to provide analysis and recommendations for FA policy

Commission Eligible to Access FAFSA Data?

- Possible Options (if authorized)
  - Obtain directly from U.S. Department of Education
  - Collaborate with UC, CSU, CCC system offices to obtain data
  - Obtain data from CSAC

Possible Studies Using Financial Aid Data

- Link enrollment and completion data to financial aid records
- Financial trends or patterns among students who stop out or drop out
- Debt estimates by Estimated Family Contribution (EFC)

Next Steps

- Working with FERPA officials to determine Commission eligibility to house data
- Discussions with CSAC regarding SEARS data use