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## **SMC Students with Cal Grants Uneasy**

*By Jennifer Wake*

While Governor Schwarzenegger and the California State Legislature work toward a budget deal, Saint Mary's College incoming freshmen who have been approved for Cal Grants to help them pay for college sit waiting, unsure if that funding will be available when they enter college this fall.

"We're quite hopeful that they'll get the budget resolved," said Michael Beseda, Saint Mary's vice president for communication and vice provost for enrollment. "Right now, every institution is in uncharted territory and we're speculating. Without knowing the scale of the problem, it's hard to find a solution."

While the Governor had proposed cutting California's system of financial aid for low-income incoming freshmen, the legislature had left Cal Grants out of its proposed cuts. As of last week, no budget had been agreed upon and state-registered warrants (IOUs) were being issued for small businesses contracted with the state, taxpayers expecting refunds and Cal Grant recipients, among others, with the stipulation that IOUs could not be redeemed until Oct. 1. More than 500 Saint Mary's students receive Cal Grant assistance.

Fortunately, Cal Grant funding is typically paid in late October, noted Beseda, and in the past when California issued IOUs, there was a tiered system in place where education expenses were paid first, which might protect some education funding.

For now, Beseda said, "The sense is that institutions will do everything in their power to help students enroll in the fall."

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