

Financial Aid Awareness Month & Achieving Racial Equity
Vice Chancellor of Government Relations, David O'Brien and Lisa Mandy, CCC Financial Aid President
February 15, 2023

[5:00 pm] Pam

Welcome to #EquityChat sponsored by @CollegeFutures w/your @equityavengers @iamkeithcurry, @DrTammeil & @DrPamLuster. Our guests are @Davidinsacto VC-Gov. Relations @CCCCO & Bd member @castudentaid & @LisaMandy1 @CCCFinancialAid Pres. w/ the topic #FinAidFebruary Hi Lisa & David!

[David O'Brien@Davidinsacto·7m](#)

Replying to [@DrPamLuster @CollegeFutures and 7 others](#)

Hello out there in Twitterland! I'm excited to be here and to join [@LisaMandy1](#) in discussing [#FinAidFebruary](#) and all the ways financial aid changes our students' lives for the better! Thank you to our [#EquityChat @equityavengers](#) co-hosts for having us!

[Lisa Mandy @LisaMandy1·9m](#)

Replying to [@DrPamLuster @equityavengers and 7 others](#)

Hello All!

[5:05 pm] Tammeil

Q1 @Davidinsacto @LisaMandy1 as you engage in equity-focused work, what is your walk-up song or anthem? @DrPamLuster @iamkeithcurry @CollegeFutures #EquityChat #EquityAvengers

[David O'Brien @Davidinsacto·2m](#)

Replying to [@DrTammeil @LisaMandy1 and 3 others](#)

A1 Great question! One of my favorite artists is Bruce Springsteen, who's more famously known as an arena rocker, but writes great protest songs as well - like this one, which makes me think of all the things the USA could be, but isn't (yet): [#EquityChat](#)

[Lisa Mandy @LisaMandy1·1m](#)

Replying to [@DrTammeil @equityavengers and 4 others](#)

One. Bono explained, "One' is not about oneness, it's about difference. 'We are one, but we're not the same. We get to carry each other.' 'Get to' suggests it is our privilege to carry one another. It puts everything in perspective and introduces the idea of grace." [#EquityChat](#)

[5:11 pm] Keith

Q2 @Davidinsacto @Lisa Mandy1 tell us about how the @CCCCO & @castudentaid are collaborating to create #FinAidFebruary? #EquityChat @DrTammeil @DrPamLuster @CollegeFutures

[Lisa Mandy](#)

[@LisaMandy1](#)

Replying to [@Iamkeithcurry](#) [@equityavengers](#) and 6 others

Partnering with our colleagues at “Icangotocollege”, partnering with CSAC/Cal Soap to assist in the Cash For College Workshops, utilizing the financial wellness tools provide by the CCCCCO. Hosting workshops on our campuses promoting FASFA/CADAA application assistance.

[#EquityChat](#)

[David O'Brien](#) [@Davidinsacto](#)·3m

Replying to [@Iamkeithcurry](#) [@LisaMandy1](#) and 5 others

A2 the [@CalCommColleges](#) Chancellor’s Office works closely with [@castudentaid](#) - so much so that [@CAGovernor](#) appointed me to the CSAC board as CCC representative in 2021, to ensure we are collaborating to put as much aid in our students’ hands as possible! (1/2) [#EquityChat](#)

[5:18 pm] Pam

Q3 @Davidinsacto @LisaMandy1 - what is one myth students and educators have about applying for and receiving financial aid- what are some barriers to increasing access to financial aid? @DrTammeil @iamkeithcurry @equityavengers #EquityChat @CollegeFutures

[David O'Brien](#) [@Davidinsacto](#)

Replying to [@DrPamLuster](#) [@LisaMandy1](#) and 4 others

A3 honestly, the biggest myth is that tuition = the biggest barrier for our students. It’s not! At \$46/unit, [@CalCommColleges](#) are a bargain. Living costs, though, are another issue - the *total* cost of attending a CCC can exceed \$20k/year for a full-time student! [#EquityChat](#)

[David O'Brien](#) [@Davidinsacto](#)· 41s

Replying to [@Davidinsacto](#) [@DrPamLuster](#) and 6 others

(cont.) we hope colleges will utilize all available resources - not just financial aid but state/federal relief \$, local funds, etc. - to ensure their students’ basic needs (housing, food, etc.) are being met. We call this the “total cost of success”! [#equitychat](#)

[Lisa Mandy](#)

[@LisaMandy1](#)

Replying to [@Davidinsacto](#) [@equityavengers](#) and 5 others

David, you are absolutely correct!

[Lisa Mandy](#) [@LisaMandy1](#)

Replying to [@DrPamLuster](#) [@equityavengers](#) and 4 others

1/5 The FAFSA and the CADAA are available for anyone to submit. I believe so many students/parents believe they won’t be eligible, so they don’t submit the applications. For our community college students, this couldn’t be further from the truth. [#equitychat](#)

[Lisa Mandy @LisaMandy1·1m](#)

Replying to [@DrPamLuster @equityavengers and 4 others](#)

2/5 We have our California College Promise Grant that waives enrollment fees, those who may not be eligible for that are more than likely eligible for the Promise Programs at our institutions. [#equitychat](#)

[Lisa Mandy @LisaMandy1·9s](#)

Replying to [@DrPamLuster @equityavengers and 4 others](#)

3/5 We all have different criteria, but, at the end of the day, our students have the opportunity for an affordable education. The barriers may be the student and/or parents fear of submitting the applications or asking questions of the financial aid staff. [#equitychat](#)

[Lisa Mandy @LisaMandy1·20s](#)

Replying to [@DrPamLuster @equityavengers and 4 others](#)

4/5 The process itself can be very daunting to some. It is our job to assist the students, meet them where they are at. We have found having zoom drop in hours during the week beneficial in assisting students with their questions and completing their "files" [#equitychat](#)

[Lisa Mandy @LisaMandy1](#)

Replying to [@DrPamLuster @equityavengers and 4 others](#)

5/5 i had a lot to say on that subject [#equitychat](#)

[David O'Brien @Davidinsacto](#)

Replying to [@LisaMandy1 @DrPamLuster and 4 others](#)

As well you should! You and your colleagues are doing the work, day in and day out, to transform students' lives and help them realize their educational dreams

[5:25 pm] Tammeil

Q4 @Davidinsacto @LisaMandy1 – what are the high impact practices you've seen to engage students in applying for & benefitting from Financial Aid? #EquityChat @iamKeithCurry @DrPam Luster @CollegeFutures

[Lisa Mandy @LisaMandy1](#)

Replying to [@DrTammeil @equityavengers and 4 others](#)

1/2 Providing workshops in the learning communities on campus has increased the applications and understanding of how financial aid works. We also partner with our athletics department to ensure our athletes are receiving services they need. [#equitychat](#)

[Lisa Mandy @LisaMandy1·36s](#)

Replying to [@DrTammeil @equityavengers and 4 others](#)

2/2 The athletes, like those in our learning communities, feel more comfortable in their own space. We decided several years ago, to have an open door policy. Students are not required to make appointments to see anyone in our office. [#equitychat](#)

[Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson @DrTammeil-15m](#)

Replying to [@LisaMandy1 @equityavengers and 4 others](#)

No appointments?! Love this--meeting students where they are at when they need it.

[David O'Brien @Davidinsacto](#)

Replying to [@DrTammeil @LisaMandy1 and 4 others](#)

Yes! Let students come in, feel comfortable and welcomed, and get help accessing their aid!

[5:32 pm] Keith

Q5 @Davidinsacto @LisaMandy1 How does #FinAidFebruary connect to the work of #racialequity? What data and assessments are done to see the impact of these efforts? #EquityChat @DrTammeil @CollegeFutures @DrPamLuster

[David O'Brien @Davidinsacto-1m](#)

Replying to [@iamkeithcurry @LisaMandy1 and 3 others](#)

A5 this is where innovation is so important. Financial aid may be “race neutral” but that doesn’t mean we can be neutral to the disparate racial impacts of affordability and basic needs issues. Connecting financial aid to programs like Umoja and Puentes that (1/2) [#EquityChat](#)

[Lisa Mandy @LisaMandy1](#)

Replying to [@Davidinsacto @equityavengers and 4 others](#)

I agree David. We partner with our learning communities such as Umoja, Puentes, FYE, AAPI, etc. It gives us a better understanding of what we need to do to help them succeed.

[Lisa Mandy@LisaMandy1](#)

Replying to [@iamkeithcurry @equityavengers and 4 others](#)

Our institutional research team compiles our financial aid data annually and provide reports that indicate where we have made improvement, and where we have deficiencies. Truly helps us to map out our plan for the next year on how to best serve our students. [#equitychat](#)

[5:39 pm] Pam

Q6 @Davidinsacto @LisaMandy1 Where we are in terms of #FinAid reform, both in CA and nationally- what’s on the horizon? What financial aid reforms do we still need to achieve to increase equity? @DrTammeil @iamkeithcurry @equityavengers @CollegeFutures #EquityChat

[David O'Brien @Davidinsacto-30s](#)

Replying to [@DrPamLuster @LisaMandy1 and 4 others](#)

A6 Cal Grant Reform is in statute - but still needs to be funded in spring 2024! Folks need to call their legislators and let them know the work isn’t done. As President Biden said in his SOTU last week, “finish the job.” But there’s so much more work to do! (1/x) [#EquityChat](#)

[Lisa Mandy @LisaMandy1](#)

Replying to [@Davidinsacto @equityavengers and 4 others](#)

Cal Grant reform a must. I will rally the CCCSFAAA troupes to get the word out!
[#equitychat](#)

[Lisa Mandy @LisaMandy1](#)

Replying to [@DrPamLuster @equityavengers and 4 others](#)

1/2 Honestly, at times it feels like a revolving door. FAFSA simplification has been on the horizon for a few years, should be implemented in the 2024-25 award year. If there is any way possible for Calif to continue assisting with emergency grants for our students beyond what

[Lisa Mandy @LisaMandy1·3m](#)

Replying to [@DrPamLuster @equityavengers and 4 others](#)

2/2 already received, that would go a long way in assisting our students who are homeless and food insecure. I read every emergency fund application that comes to the financial aid office, these issues aren't going away simply because we have deemed the pandemic over [#equitychat](#)

[Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson @DrTammeil](#)

Replying to [@LisaMandy1 @DrPamLuster and 4 others](#)

Being proximate to our students & the real work speaks to me so strongly [@LisaMandy1](#)! I'm so grateful that you are on the ground understanding & addressing student needs & fighting at a policy & org level to improve support for FA administrators & access to aid for students.

[Lisa Mandy @LisaMandy1·3m](#)

Replying to [@DrPamLuster @equityavengers and 4 others](#)

one final thought: I've been doing this for longer than I care to admit, and it truly humbles me when I read the applications, and I wish there was more I could do. [#equitychat](#)

[David O'Brien @Davidinsacto](#)

Replying to [@Davidinsacto @DrPamLuster and 5 others](#)

(cont.) We need to grow the size of the Cal Grant Access Award so it covers more living costs; keep campaigning at the federal level to [#DoubleThePell](#) Grant award; and fight for the innovative [#AmericasCollegePromise](#) proposal championed by Pres. Biden and [@SecCardona](#).
[#EquityChat](#)

[Lisa Mandy @LisaMandy1](#)

Replying to [@Davidinsacto @equityavengers and 5 others](#)

Agree. I'm fairly certain the access amount hasn't changed in at least 20 years! Pell grant hasn't kept up with inflation either. Let's get real and help our students.

[5:46pm] Tammeil

Q7@Davidinsacto @LisaMandy1 To do this work, we must continue learning and partnering with others. Who/what is informing your practice? Who do you recommend we follow, and what are you learning from them? @iamkeithcurry @DrPamLuster @CollegeFutures #EquityChat @equityavengers

[David O'Brien @Davidinsacto](#)

Replying to [@DrTammeil @LisaMandy1 and 4 others](#)

A7 besides the brilliant scholars and leaders that comprise the [@equityavengers](#)?! Tbh, expertise is important, but there's no substitute for listening to the voices & lived experiences of our students. [@SSCCC OFFICIAL](#) and their partners in [@FixFinancialAid](#) have been (1/2)

[David O'Brien @Davidinsacto](#)

Replying to [@Davidinsacto @DrTammeil and 7 others](#)

(cont.) the front-line soldiers and heroes in the fight for more, and more equitable, financial aid. Anytime I have questions or doubts about a policy proposal, I look to see what students are saying about it first and foremost. It's how I (try to) stay grounded! [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson @DrTammeil](#)

Replying to [@Davidinsacto @LisaMandy1 and 6 others](#)

"I look to see what students are saying about it first and foremost"...

[Lisa Mandy @LisaMandy1 ·56s](#)

Replying to [@DrTammeil @equityavengers and 3 others](#)

1/2 We are so fortunate in the CC system to be able to share best practices. The monthly webinars hosted by the CCCO, really showcase the amazing work being done. From a financial aid perspective, we gain knowledge from the other financial aid associations such as NASFAA,

[Lisa Mandy @LisaMandy1](#) Replying to [@DrTammeil @equityavengers and 3 others](#)

2/2 CASFAA, WASFAA. We partner closely with CSAC to ensure we are on top of changes. TICAS always has relevant information to share. And the CCCSFAAA membership, of course!

[#equitychat](#)

[5:53 pm] Keith

Q8 @Davidinsacto – How does your work with CSAC and CCCSFAAA give you hope? @DrPamLuster @iamkeithcurry @CollegeFutures #EquityChat #EquityAvengers

[David O'Brien @Davidinsacto·44s](#)

Replying to [@iamkeithcurry @DrPamLuster](#) and [@CollegeFutures](#)

A8 I've had the privilege of working alongside amazing folks (like [@EloyOakley @daisygonzales](#) who made clear when they hired me that equitable financial aid for CCC students was our top priority), but seeing the impact of the work on students is what inspires me. [#EquityChat](#)



EQUITY
AVENGERS

[6:00 pm] Pam

[Dr Pamela Luster](#) [#EquityAvengers](#) [#RealCollegePrez](#) [@DrPamLuster](#) ·33s

TY so much [@Davidinsacto](#) & [@LisaMandy1](#) for joining us & sharing the work of [@CalCommColleges](#) [@castudentaid](#) for [#FinAidFebruary](#) ! Join us next wk for a new [#EquityChat @CollegeFutures](#) session, guest posted soon! [@equityavengers](#) [@lamkeithcurry](#) [@DrTammeil](#) OUT!