



**Student Services
Program Review 2009-2012**

Section 1 is due by October 6, 2009

PROGRAM AREA: Financial Aid

Program Philosophy: The mission of the Financial Aid Office is to provide financial resources to all eligible students who would otherwise be unable to fulfill their educational goals because of financial barriers. The purpose of financial aid is to fill the discrepancy that may exist between the cost of education and the financial resources available to students from family, employment, savings, scholarships, and other personal sources, while assuring that compliance is maintained with all applicable government regulations and policies, and that students take on no more than a reasonable amount of debt commensurate with their academic and employment goals. Our philosophy is to continually strive to streamline and simplify all processes and procedures to assure quickest service and delivery to students, and to increase the number of applicants each year through a variety of methods.

Progress on Goals, Objectives (2005-2009):

Please list each goal from goal's matrix and describe progress on each.

1. To administer all financial aid programs in compliance with applicable regulations, and assure the college's non-financial aid policies and practices comply with federal and state financial aid-related regulations. There are areas of noncompliance which we are trying to address but staffing shortages in the area of accounting make this very difficult.
2. Continue to review and update the Financial Aid Webpage for information and accuracy. Changes and additions to the webpage are done on an ongoing basis. We are unable to do major changes at this time due to staff time limitations.
3. Continue to provide financial aid workshops to local high schools and provide information at local college fairs. We continue to provide workshops at our local highschools, but have had to turn down several requests at other schools due to staffing limitations.
4. To identify and secure sufficient and appropriate office space and equipment to accommodate the growing population of financial aid students and staff, maintain confidentiality of student contact, and to ensure smooth delivery of services; to secure adequate storage facilities for program supplies, literature, and confidential student records. We have moved to a more appropriate office space with one additional office. There is now a district plan in place for a new scanning system to replace the current archaic system, but implementation timeline has not been finalized.

5. Make better and more extensive use of technology with regard to electronic processing, communication with students, and legal compliance.

No improvements over the past year. We remain at a deficit in usage of banner as there is no staff person to do testing or provide support to learn enhancements within the current system and make optimum utilization of the software. A small amount of progress has been made with Banner Self-Serve, but we are utilizing the available functionality only minimally. There must be a concerted effort by District IT services to roll out the software along with training so that the functionality can be utilized. We have made headway into driving students to our web portal in order to access their financial aid information and to review requirements and download necessary forms. We now send letters informing students to log into their accounts on the portal to determine the necessary requirements, and to download all forms from our website; this has been successful. Previously we sent multiple mailings of personalized letters detailing each individual's forms needed; this was extremely time consuming, paper intensive, costly, and ultimately yielded little more response. We also send generic award letters letting students know their awards are posted, rather than individualized letters.

6. To increase staffing to meet student needs and ensure ability to remain compliant.

No progress. While financial aid student numbers have increased continuously and significantly over the past three years, no additional staff has been added since 2003-2004 when our numbers were nearly one third of what they currently are. This has created a substantial increase in processing time and a delay in many students receiving aid at the beginning of the term. This also puts the college at risk of making errors and not meeting compliance because of the pressure to process so many more files as quickly as possible. We are unable to keep up with all of the required compliance regulations related to accounting, have had to reduce outreach and inreach efforts, and have insufficient overall support. Additionally, due to the economy our loan volume has doubled in two years with no additional staff to handle loan processing or counseling. Additionally the Department of education has now forced us to use direct lending, requiring additional workload. Year round pell is another program that is very labor intensive and was forced on us beginning summer 2010; this adds an additional burden to our workload.

Over the past year a student financial aid fraud ring has been discovered and has created a significant additional workload as we work with the Office of Inspector General and as we put into place procedures which help identify potential students intending to defraud before payment is made. This has created yet additional workload as these procedures are very labor intensive.

Program Information

Staffing:

(Number of permanent staff and position titles)

- 1 FTE Financial Aid Officer
- 3 FTE Financial Aid Specialist II

Location:

Building 1300

Services:

Provide fee waivers, grants, loans and scholarships to students

Program Components:

- BogW Fee Waivers
- Title IV Federal Grants (Pell, SEOG, Academic Competitiveness Grant, Federal Workstudy)
- State Cal Grants
- Title IV Federal Direct Student Loan Program (Subsidized and Unsubsidized)
- Scholarships
- Short term Book Loan program
- Accounting and reconciliation between all accounts with district, federal government and California Student Aid Commission
- Outreach/inreach

	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010
Number of Students Recvg aid:	1846	2413	3290
Total value of aid received	3,071,108	4,689,962	7,865,082
Operating budget	\$412,875	\$415,319	\$357,944

1. What is the program’s connection/dialogue to other programs?
 Financial Aid must maintain a strong connection to most student service programs not only to maintain good communications to best serve our students, but also for compliance purposes. We are required to report as resources all sources of assistance provided to students from other campus programs including but not limited to EOPS and CalWorks so that the resources provided by other programs reduce unmet need, allowing us to prevent over awards. We are strongly connected to Counseling because there are several critical areas of financial aid requiring counselor's assistance for individual students, including evaluation of prior college transcripts for transferable credit and evaluation of remaining coursework needed for students with 'excessive units'. College policy and procedures must be reviewed annually to incorporate consistency and compliance while ensuring there are enough staffing resources to meet the demands of our own policy. We must work closely with admissions and records in many aspects. We have to request approval by the Department of Education for individual certificate programs in order to provide financial aid to students enrolled in those programs, which requires coordination with the deans and Academic Services.

2. Please describe the status of Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) for your program.
Attach Elumen Matric of SLO’s in Appendix.
 1. Students will use online services to successfully navigate through the financial aid process.
 Status: Improvements in online services are continually being investigated and put into place.
 At the conclusion of 2009-2010 the financial aid office stopped mailing individual ‘Missing Documentation’ and ‘Award Letters’ to students. Instead, general letters were sent only once, directing students to the Zone Portal or Class Web for their individual account information with notification that additional or future notifications would be sent only by email. Students were instructed to download their own paper forms for submission instead of forms being mailed to them. Since student numbers continue to grow substantially year over year in all of our programs we can assume these improvements have been successful, but still there is room for improvement.

2. Students will demonstrate the ability to successfully apply for financial aid online Paper FAFSAs are no longer being provided. The number of online fafsas filed has grown immensely year over year in the past 3 years, along with students successfully receiving fee waivers and financial aid as a result of their successful application process.

	NUMBER OF FAFSA APPLICATIONS AWARD YEAR TO DATE			% change 1 year	% change 3 years
	Dependent Students	Independent Students	Award Year To Date Total		
2009-2010	1,871	2,194	4,065	41.30%	105%
2008-2009	1,367	1,510	2,877	30.10%	
2007-2008	1,091	1,121	2,212	11.50%	
2006-2007	980	1,003	1,983		

3. Provide a summary of current and future programmatic challenges

Challenge #1: *Increased number of financial aid applicants/recipients with limited staffing*

Currently the Financial Aid Office has three (3) specialists to serve 13,532 students (2009-2010 total **unduplicated** headcount) of the college. For Fiscal Year 2009-2010, the actual workload of these 3 staff equated to an average of 1 staff to 1187 actual financial aid recipients. The Office has managed to serve students by significantly reducing office hours to allow the staff time to process files in order to pay the students. The challenge remains in offering a balance of available staff time to meet with students and appropriate down time to review files.

Due to limited staffing – the program does not have a designated specialist to provide the accounting functions for the program. For example, as financial aid recipient withdrawals (unofficial and official) have grown immensely the last few years to approximately 200 per semester, each withdrawal requires about ½ hour of accounting time to perform all necessary accounting procedures. Our fraud investigation involves a significant amount of investigative time and accounting time. In addition, due to the numerous changes in financial aid compliance and regulatory requirements; a technical/computer specialist is a critical position that would support the program with banner testing, troubleshooting, workflow efficiencies, and database research and maintenance.

Currently, these functions are fulfilled primarily by the financial aid officer, with staff assisting on various projects as time allows.

Challenge #2: *Trend* in federal and state student aid to decentralize service and delivery and transfer the workload to the Financial Aid Offices.

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- **Direct Lending** (July 2010) forced us to take on large workload burden as we took on functions previously provided by our lenders and guarantee agencies
 - **Two Pell's in One Year** (2009-2010) added huge manual workload to colleges to provide additional Pell funds to students in effort to accelerate their academic progress
 - **'Simplified FAFSA'** – simplified application form results in more work for colleges at the back end
 - **Decentralized Cal Grant** - would transfer the bulk of the workload from CSAC to colleges, is proposed for the near future

There is no additional funding for administration of these programs, the burden lies directly on the college to provide the increased support.

Challenge #3: Poor academic progress numbers of financial aid students increasing with no support to guide them

Challenge #4: Maintaining compliance with federal and state regulations under the current workload

It is increasingly difficult to maintain compliance under the current pressures of increased workload, regulatory changes, and the expectation of awarding students in a timely manner.

Section 2 is due by February 26, 2010

Point of Service Surveys:

Number of surveys gathered: 103

Date range of survey(s): Fall semester 2009

Attach copy of survey in Appendix.

Program Strengths Identified (utilizing survey data):

1. Knowledgeable staff
2. Information available online
3. Overall quality of service
4. Staff responsive and timely
5. Good customer service provided
6. Office environment is user friendly and welcoming

Areas of Improvement Identified (utilizing survey data):

1. Improvements in provision of general information on the website needed
2. Improvements in ease of access to online forms needed

Section 3 – Goal Matrix completed by March 31, 2010

1. To increase staffing to meet student needs and ensure ability to remain compliant.
2. Continue to review and update the Financial Aid Webpage for information and accuracy.
3. Make better and more extensive use of technology with regard to electronic processing, communication with students.
4. Seek out and participate in continued training and workshops to provide staff with a clear understanding of current and changing regulations, policies, procedures, and technology required to remain current for each of the financial aid programs, and to seek training opportunities for improving customer service skills and techniques, as needed.

Instructions: Using your self study and PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT forms, please complete the spreadsheet below. Each DEVELOPMENT form corresponds to one row so that each OBJECTIVE is on one I

Institutional Strategic Goals (for exact wording please visit the next spreadsheet in this workbook)

1. Teaching and Learning
2. Institutional Advancement
3. Accountability
4. Economic Development
5. Resource Development and Allocation
6. Academic and Professional Excellence
7. Diversity and Pluralism
8. Communication and Infrastructure
9. Community Life
10. Sustainability

Please contact The Office of Institutional Research and Planning (X1027), your Dean or VP with questions or assistance completing this data base.

DO NOT MAKE CHANGES TO THE DATA BASE FORMAT.

Macros must be enabled.

Program Review Type	Discipline/Unit (ex. CHEM, Research, Library, A&R, AUTO)	Divisional Program Review Only	What do you want to accomplish? (Objective)	How do you plan to accomplish this?	What is/are your measurement criteria? (How will you measure and document effectiveness?)	Which College Strategic Goal(s) does this objective address? (all that apply 1-10)	Does this objective address an Accreditation Recommendation or Planning Agenda?	When do you plan to start?	What resources will this take? (all that apply)	What Institutional Process/Committee/Office will you need? (all that apply)	Specify if Other process	Prioritized
Student Services	Financial Aid	Student Services	Serve huge increased numbers with no additional staff	Drive students to utilize online tools available, continually improve website, limit office hours,	comparative data analysis will show growth of number of unduplicated students first payment of term	1 Teaching and Learning, 3 Accountability	Not sure	Fall 2010	Non-Financial, Ongoing	My own Discipline		High Priority
Student Services	Financial Aid	Student Services	Maintain compliance and serve increased numbers of students	increase staffing to support the program compliance requirements	Increase in FTE staffing; compliance with Chancellors Office Maintenance of effort restored; compliance restored/maintained with fin aid accounting,, ability to resume outreach/inreach efforts	3 Accountability	Not sure	Spring 2011	Financial, Ongoing	PBC Classified Request Process		High Priority

Student Services	Financial Aid	Student Services	improve use of technology internally	utilize IT staff support to provide training to better utilize technology	Staff will be able to better utilize banner functionality and windows functionality	6 Academic and Professional Excellence	Not sure	Fall 2011	Non-Financial, Ongoing	My own Discipline	request assistance from IT Dept	Low Priority
Student Services	Financial Aid	Student Services	ensure staff always maintain current knowledge of changing regulations, policies, procedures and technology	participate in training opportunities and conferences online and in person	Staff will be current in knowledge of all programs and will advise students, review and process files, award and authorize payment for students in an appropriate manner assuring compliance with federal and state regulations	6 Academic and Professional Excellence	Not sure	Spring 2011	Financial, Ongoing	Staff Development		High Priority