



FINANCIAL AID CONSULTING: EVALUATING FINANCIAL AID OPERATIONS

Los Rios Community College District

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ABOUT BLUE ICON ADVISORS LLC

Blue Icon Advisors is NASFAA's new financial aid consulting service for colleges, universities, and career schools. For over 50 years, NASFAA has served as a trusted resource for financial aid administrators. That legacy of support and commitment to excellence continues with Blue Icon Advisors. Blue Icon's team of experienced consultants are ready to help schools with a range of services, including compliance and operational evaluations and improvement plans, writing and reviewing policies and procedures, developing and delivering customized staff training, providing interim leadership, coaching and support, and consulting on financial aid and enrollment management issues.

ABOUT NASFAA

The National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA) is the primary professional association representing the student financial aid interests of institutions of postsecondary education in the United States. NASFAA's vision is shaping the future by promoting student access and success in higher education. NASFAA provides professional development and services for financial aid administrators; advocates for public policies that increase student access and success; serves as a forum on student financial aid issues; and is committed to diversity throughout all activities.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report represents a summary of the consulting engagement: findings, recommendations, results of the assessment surveys conducted, and resources.

Section	Description
Methodology	Summarizes the problem, and tasks performed, of each phase of the consulting engagement.
Executive Summary	Provides a brief overview of the consultant's findings.
Weekly Summaries	Describes the activities that occurred during coaching/consultation engagements.
Findings	Details the observations, discovery, and conclusions of the consulting engagement, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengths of the institution that highlight good practices • Instances when the institution is not in compliance with established rules during the consultation period. • Recommendations for improving procedures, implementing best practices, and enhancing service to students.
Conclusion	Offers the consultant's overall opinion of the engagement and identifies major issues to address immediately.
Blue Icon Advisors Team Members	Provides a listing of the consultants who worked on the engagement.
Resources	Lists the NASFAA and Blue Icon Advisors management and training tools referenced throughout the report and how to access them.
Employee Assessment Summary	Compiles the written comments from financial aid employees on selected issues, such as financial aid operations, student service, and financial aid delivery to students.
Financial Aid Office Student Satisfaction Survey	Compiles the written comments from students regarding the financial aid department's interactions with students, as well as strengths and areas of improvement.

METHODOLOGY

Through remote consultation, the consultants assessed the Los Rios Community College District (Los Rios) financial aid operations with a focus on providing recommendations Los Rios can implement to:

- Increase efficiency using the current student information system (PeopleSoft) where possible;
- Improve automation and the use of technology going forward;
- Optimize federation student aid administration operations and address policies that may negatively affect disproportionately impacted students;
- Evaluate processes for effectively awarding and managing funds; and
- Determine the effective utilization of existing and new staff roles.

The consultants also assessed selected policies and procedures for effectiveness and potential operational efficiency findings. Though this is not a compliance review, throughout the engagement and in this report the consultants pointed out any identified compliance exceptions to the client. The review included a limited examination of evidence supporting claims and disclosures made by the institution. Blue Icon Advisors believes the engagement provides a reasonable basis for the opinion rendered in this report. However, because of inherent limitations in any review, errors, irregularities, or areas of noncompliance may nevertheless exist and may not be detected.

During this project, the consultants:

- Gathered data;
- Reviewed policies and procedures (P&Ps);
- Surveyed students and staff;
- Interviewed institutional and district stakeholders, included but not limited to, classified staff and supervisors, deans, and faculty; and
- Identified best practices for the district operations that reflects an equity-minded and student-centered approach.

The consultants shared initial observations with the executive team and incorporated the results and feedback into this final written report that details what was learned and summarizes the recommendations for an organizational model that streamlines financial aid processing to support all four colleges within the district.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the period of October 2021 through February 2022, JoEllen Price, Pam Fowler, and Aria Simmons, independent consultants with Blue Icon Advisors, worked with the Los Rios Community College district by invitation to provide an analysis and recommendations for the organizational and business process infrastructure required to optimize Title IV Federal Student Aid administration operations and address policies that may negatively affect disproportionately impacted students.

Los Rios Community College district is comprised of four two-year degree granting institutions located in northern California: American River College (ARC), Cosumnes River College (CRC), Folsom Lake College (FLC) and Sacramento City College (SCC). The Los Rios colleges offer federal and state aid programs to assist students with funding to achieve their educational goals.

During the review of Los Rios' financial aid operations, the consultants had the opportunity to:

- Examine the colleges' and district's organizational and business process infrastructure.
- Discuss financial aid operational challenges and opportunities with numerous college personnel.
- Assess the areas of:
 - Compliance;
 - Equity;
 - System utilization;
 - Available metrics;
 - Student satisfaction;
 - Reporting structures;
 - Operational frameworks; and
 - Improving equity and access for disproportionately impacted students.

Interview sessions were held with employees from campus financial aid offices (CFAO), the district financial aid office (DFAO), student services, and other stakeholders. The hard work and dedication of the campus financial aid office personnel was apparent throughout the review. Several themes emerged during the review, summarized as follows and detailed throughout the remainder of the report:

- CFAO staff is dedicated, hard-working, and committed to student service and ensuring compliance with Title IV regulations.
- There is a critical need for greater awareness of, and inter-departmental participation in, the fact that financial aid administration and compliance is ultimately an institutional responsibility, rather than an CFAO responsibility.
- While progress has certainly been made in correcting several previously identified compliance issues, the consultants documented additional compliance concerns that require attention.
- PeopleSoft batch processes are utilized by the DFAO. However, there are opportunities to leverage available technology resources more effectively, thus maximizing the benefits of automation.
- As with any financial aid operation, there are opportunities for process improvements and recommendations in the report details areas of opportunity.
- Overall, students rate the service provided by the CFAO favorably.

Note: Throughout the report, campus financial aid offices or staff refers to those reporting to the separate college operations (ARC, CRC, FLC, and SCC). The District Office refers to a small group of centralized financial aid employees including the Interim AVP of Student Resources, Director of Financial Aid System, and two financial aid Specialists.

STRENGTHS

The consultants identified the following items as strengths at the Los Rios District and the four colleges. Blue Icon Advisors defines strengths as practices at an institution that exceed minimum regulations or requirements. Usually, strengths enhance student service and/or the overall Title IV program operations at an institution.

1. Staff Longevity and Knowledge

The majority of campus financial aid staff members have been with the colleges for over 10 years and possess strong knowledge of financial aid. The campus financial aid staff will assist one another when needed and are willing to share their knowledge with one another when asked. Campus staff are generally dedicated to their profession, have a strong desire to make the process as seamless as possible for students, and are dedicated to excellent customer service.

2. Consistent Policy and Procedure Manuals

All four campus financial aid offices have developed separate policy and procedure manuals that use a consistent format and meet Title IV written policy and procedure requirements. The four financial aid supervisors review the manual periodically, discuss as a team, and make necessary changes ensuring consistency.

3. Auto Drop Report Process

Financial aid administrators complete a proactive review of the drop for non-payment report. They contact financial aid applicants who are in progress but not yet complete, giving students an opportunity to finish the process prior to losing their schedule due to non-payment. This proactive process demonstrates a commitment to ensure that financial aid applicants' files are complete, and students retain their schedule.

4. Financial Aid Course Applicability (FACA) Process

The District Office utilizes HighPoint technology for all colleges to ensure that financial aid enrollment status only includes classes that apply to the student's chosen degree or certificate program. The institution has dedicated significant resources to ensuring the colleges are fully compliant with the requirement that financial aid eligibility only includes those courses that apply to the student's program.

5. Federal Pell Grant Reconciliation

The institution runs a PeopleSoft vs Common Origination and Disbursement (COD) side-by-side reconciliation report weekly to ensure that Federal Pell Grant funds are reconciled in a timely manner. Employees shared that the reconciliation process is streamlined and efficient.

6. Culture of Care for Students

The staff members at the four college campuses demonstrate a culture of care for the students. Employee interviews and results of the student survey clearly indicate that the financial aid staff care about the students and will work hard to ensure students receive exceptional service from the financial aid office.

7. Access to Resources and Support

The institution is engaged in high-cost consulting services and technology options, such as Campus Logic and EdgeRock, to support financial aid operations. Evaluation of those resources is needed as the institution considers ending the consulting relationships to ensure there is a viable plan to maximize resources and sustain processes. Should the institution decide to end the relationships, the consulting team recommends a phased approach.

COMPLIANCE EXCEPTIONS

Compliance was not the focus of the financial aid operational review by the consulting team. However, through interviews, review of documentation and website review, the consultants identified the following items as compliance exceptions at Los Rios colleges. Blue Icon Advisors defines compliance exceptions as violations of federal laws, regulations, or regulatory guidance. It is important that these compliance exceptions are addressed in a timely manner. The compliance exceptions were identified during the review of web pages, documentation provided, policies and procedures manuals, and staff interviews.

The compliance exceptions fall into the following categories:

- Consumer Information
- Return of Title IV Funds (R2T4)
- Federal Direct Loans
- Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)
- Federal Work-study (FWS)
- Standards of Participation in Title IV Programs – Institutional Eligibility
- Cash Management

Those items below marked with an asterisk (*) are high risk items for audits and program reviews and should receive priority resolution.

Consumer Information

1. Missing Consumer Information: Designation of Employees

The institution must identify an employee or group of employees designated to help students obtain consumer information. The consultants could not locate information on the website that identifies an employee or group of employees available to assist students with consumer information topics.

Suggested Corrective Action

The institution must identify what person or group of employees would be available and reachable to help prospective and current students obtain consumer information and/or answer questions about consumer information. Once the employee(s) are officially designated, the institution can add the employee(s)' contact information to the institution's consumer information page.

Citation

34 CFR 668.44

Availability of employees for information dissemination purposes.

(1) Availability. Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section each institution shall designate

an employee or group of employees who shall be available on a full-time basis to assist enrolled or prospective students in obtaining the information specified in 668.42, 668.43, 668.45 and 668.46.

(2) If the institution designates one person, that person shall be available, upon reasonable notice, to any enrolled or prospective student throughout the normal administrative working hours of that institution.

(3) If more than one person is designated, their combined work schedules must be arranged so that at least one of them is available, upon reasonable notice, throughout the normal administrative working hours of that institution.

(a) Waiver.

(1) the Secretary may waive the requirement that the employee or group of employees designated under paragraph (a) of this section be available on a full-time basis if the institution's total enrollment, or the portion of the enrollment participating in the title IV, HEA programs, is too small to necessitate an employee or group of employees being available on a full-time basis.

(2) In determining whether an institution's total enrollment or the number of title IV, HEA program recipients is too small, the Secretary considers whether there will be an insufficient demand for information dissemination services among its enrolled or prospective students to necessitate the full-time availability of an employee or group of employees.

(3) To receive a waiver, the institution shall apply to the Secretary at the time and in the manner prescribed by the Secretary. (c) The granting of a waiver under paragraph (b) of this section does not exempt an institution from designating a specific employee or group of employees to carry out on a part-time basis the information dissemination requirements.

2. Missing Consumer Information: Completion or Graduation Rates Disaggregated

Completion/Graduation Rates are not provided for recipients of Federal Pell Grants, Federal Direct Loans, or students who did not receive either Federal Pell Grant or Direct Loans. Disclosures must occur by July 1 of the following year in which 150% of the normal completion time has elapsed.

Suggested Corrective Action

The institution must develop and implement policies and procedures for disclosing the required information about students considered to have completed or graduated if the program completion is within 150% of the normal completion time.

Citations

34 CFR 668.45

(a)(1) An institution annually must prepare the completion or graduation rate of its certificate- or degree-seeking, first-time, full-time undergraduate students, as provided in paragraph (b) of this section.

(2) An institution that determines that its mission includes providing substantial preparation for students to enroll in another eligible institution must prepare the transfer-out rate of its

certificate- or degree-seeking, first-time, full-time undergraduate students, as provided in paragraph (c) of this section.

(3)(i) An institution that offers a predominant number of its programs based on semesters, trimesters, or quarters must base its completion or graduation rate, retention rate, and, if applicable, transfer-out rate calculations, on the cohort of certificate- or degree-seeking, first-time, full-time undergraduate students who enter the institution during the fall term of each year.

(ii) An institution not covered by the provisions of paragraph (a)(3)(i) of this section must base its completion or graduation rate, retention rate, and, if applicable, transfer-out rate calculations, on the cohort of certificate- or degree-seeking, first-time, full-time undergraduate students who enter the institution between September 1 of one year and August 31 of the following year.

(4)(i) An institution covered by the provisions of paragraph (a)(3)(i) of this section must count as an entering student a first-time undergraduate student who is enrolled as of October 15, the end of the institution's drop-add period, or another official reporting date as defined in § 668.41(a).

(ii) An institution covered by paragraph (a)(3)(ii) of this section must count as an entering student a first-time undergraduate student who is enrolled for at least -

(A) 15 days, in a program of up to, and including, one year in length; or

(B) 30 days, in a program of greater than one year in length.

(5) An institution must make available its completion or graduation rate and, if applicable, transfer-out rate, no later than the July 1 immediately following the 12-month period ending August 31 during which 150 percent of the normal time for completion or graduation has elapsed for all of the students in the group on which the institution bases its completion or graduation rate and, if applicable, transfer-out rate calculations.

(6)(i) Completion or graduation rate information must be disaggregated by gender, by each major racial and ethnic subgroup (as defined in IPEDS), by recipients of a Federal Pell Grant, by recipients of a Federal Family Education Loan or a Federal Direct Loan (other than an Unsubsidized Stafford Loan made under the Federal Family Education Loan Program or a Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loan) who did not receive a Federal Pell Grant, and by recipients of neither a Federal Pell Grant nor a Federal Family Education Loan or a Federal Direct Loan (other than an Unsubsidized Stafford Loan made under the Federal Family Education Loan Program or a Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan) if the number of students in such group or with such status is sufficient to yield statistically reliable information and reporting will not reveal personally identifiable information about an individual student. If such number is not sufficient for such purpose, i.e., is too small to be meaningful, then the institution shall note that the institution enrolled too few of such students to so disclose or report with confidence and confidentiality.

(ii) With respect to the requirement in paragraph (a)(6)(i) of this section to disaggregate the completion or graduation rate information by the receipt or nonreceipt of Federal student aid, students shall be considered to have received the aid in question only if they received such aid for the period specified in paragraph (a)(3) of this section.

(iii) The requirement in paragraph (a)(6)(i) of this section shall not apply to two-year, degree-granting institutions of higher education until academic year 2011-2012.

3. No Evidence of Biennial Review of Drug-Free Workplace Information*

There is no evidence of the required biennial review of Drug-Free Workplace information.

Suggested Corrective Action

The institution must establish and implement biennial policies and procedures for reviewing its drug-free workplace information and for gathering the required data about drug- and alcohol-related violations and fatalities. The school should note the date of the review on the publicly available information to show compliance, even if the school makes no revisions.

Citation

34 CFR 86.100(b)

The IHE's [institution of higher education's] drug prevention program must, at a minimum, include the following:

- (b) A biennial review by the IHE of its program to-
 - (1) Determine its effectiveness and implement changes to the program if they are needed; and
 - (2) Ensure that the disciplinary sanctions described in paragraph (a)(5) of this section

2021-22 FSA Handbook, p. F-14

A school must review its program once every two years to determine its effectiveness and to ensure that its sanctions are being enforced. As a part of this biennial review, the school must determine

- the number of drug and alcohol-related violations and fatalities that occur on a school's campus or as part of any of the school's activities and that are reported to campus officials; and
- the number and type of sanctions that are imposed by the school as a result of drug and alcohol-related violations and fatalities on the school's campus or as part of any of the school's activities.

The school must make available upon request the results of the review as well as the data and methods supporting its conclusions.

4. Incomplete Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Disclosures

FERPA information in the college catalogs is incomplete. Not all aspects of the regulations are detailed in the catalog but do exist on the consumer information webpages.

Suggested Corrective Action

Los Rios colleges should provide a link to the consumer information webpage or repeat the entire information in the school catalogs.

Citation

34 CFR 99.7

(a)

(1) Each educational agency or institution shall annually notify parents of students currently in attendance, or eligible students currently in attendance, of their rights under the Act and this part.

(2) The notice must inform parents or eligible students that they have the right to -

(i) Inspect and review the student's education records;

(ii) Seek amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes to be inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights;

(iii) Consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that the Act and § 99.31 authorize disclosure without consent; and

(iv) File with the Department a complaint under §§ 99.63 and 99.64 concerning alleged failures by the educational agency or institution to comply with the requirements of the Act and this part.

(3) The notice must include all of the following:

(i) The procedure for exercising the right to inspect and review education records.

(ii) The procedure for requesting amendment of records under § 99.20.

(iii) If the educational agency or institution has a policy of disclosing education records under § 99.31(a)(1), a specification of criteria for determining who constitutes a school official and what constitutes a legitimate educational interest.

(b) An educational agency or institution may provide this notice by any means that are reasonably likely to inform the parents or eligible students of their rights.

(1) An educational agency or institution shall effectively notify parents or eligible students who are disabled.

(2) An agency or institution of elementary or secondary education shall effectively notify parents who have a primary or home language other than English.

Return of Title IV (R2T4)

5. Date of Withdrawal Determination*

The institution must evaluate its procedures for determining a student's withdrawal determination date. Campus staff run reports to identify students that are considered withdrawn and use the report run date as the determination date to calculate the 45-day timeframe, regardless of when the student actually withdrew or stopped attending. The withdrawal determination date is specified in the federal regulations as either the date the student officially notified the institutional of the withdrawal or the last date of any academically related activity.

Suggested Corrective Action

Institution must review all R2T4 processes and procedures to ensure that the appropriate withdrawal determination date is used to calculate the 30-day and 45-day requirements. The R2T4 procedures should be documented in writing and applied consistently for all campuses.

Citation

34 CFR 668.22(I)

(3) The "date of the institution's determination that the student withdrew" for an institution that is not required to take attendance is—

(i) For a student who provides notification to the institution of his or her withdrawal, the student's withdrawal date as determined under paragraph (c) of this section or the date of notification of withdrawal, whichever is later;

(ii) For a student who did not provide notification of his or her withdrawal to the institution, the date that the institution becomes aware that the student ceased attendance;

(iii) For a student who does not return from an approved leave of absence, the earlier of the date of the end of the leave of absence or the date the student notifies the institution that he or she will not be returning to the institution; or

(iv) For a student whose rescission is negated under paragraph (c)(2)(i)(B) of this section, the date the institution becomes aware that the student did not, or will not, complete the payment period or period of enrollment.

(v) For a student who takes a leave of absence that is not approved in accordance with paragraph (d) of this section, the date that the student begins the leave of absence.

Federal Direct Loans

6. Half-time Enrollment Status for Federal Direct Student Loan – Reducing Loan Mid-year*

The colleges originate and disburse Federal Direct Loans if the student is, or will be, enrolled at least half-time. As long as the student is, or will be, enrolled half-time for an upcoming semester at the time of disbursement, the student is eligible for the loan disbursement. Three of the four colleges are canceling a student's loan disbursement for the upcoming semester, even though the student is enrolled at least half-time for the upcoming semester, based on their academic performance in the prior semester.

These three colleges are canceling a student's spring loan disbursement if the student does not successfully complete (e.g. passing grade or earned F) six credits in the fall semester. In order to reduce a student's requested loan amount, the school must make the determination on a case-by-case basis, document the determination in the student's file, and notify the student of the reason for the action. This action appears to be taken across the board for all students who are not successfully passing six credits at the end of the fall semester. Students then must re-request a spring loan which will be re-awarded as a spring only loan, split up into two disbursements in the spring.

Disruption to a student's aid in the middle of the academic year may have an adverse effect on a student's academic progress and success, in particular for students with the greatest financial need.

Suggested Corrective Action

Future loan disbursements cannot be canceled for a student who is enrolled at least half-time for the upcoming semester. The institution must cease the practice of canceling a loan in the middle of the academic year when a student does not successfully pass six or more credits in the previous term. This does not meet the intent of the Federal Direct Loan regulations and adversely affects student eligibility.

Citations

34 CFR 685.200(a)(1)(i)-(iii)

(a) Student Direct Subsidized or Direct Unsubsidized borrower.

(1) A student is eligible to receive a Direct Subsidized Loan, a Direct Unsubsidized Loan, or a combination of these loans, if the student meets the following requirements:

(i) The student is enrolled, or accepted for enrollment, on at least a half-time basis in a school that participates in the Direct Loan Program.

(ii) The student meets the requirements for an eligible student under 34 CFR Part 668.

(iii) In the case of an undergraduate student who seeks a Direct Subsidized Loan or a Direct Unsubsidized Loan at a school that participates in the Federal Pell Grant Program, the student has received a determination of Federal Pell Grant eligibility for the period of enrollment for which the loan is sought.

34 CFR 668.32(a)

A student is eligible to receive Title IV, HEA program assistance if the student either meets all of the requirements in paragraphs (a) through (m) of this section or meets the requirement in paragraph (n) of this section as follows:

(a)(1)

(i) Is a regular student enrolled, or accepted for enrollment, in an eligible program at an eligible institution;

(ii) For purposes of the FFEL and Direct Loan programs, is enrolled for no longer than one twelve-month period in a course of study necessary for enrollment in an eligible program; or

(iii) For purposes of the Federal Perkins Loan, FWS, FFEL, and Direct Loan programs, is enrolled or accepted for enrollment as at least a half-time student at an eligible institution in a program necessary for a professional credential or certification from a State that is required for employment as a teacher in an elementary or secondary school in that State; and

(2) For purposes of the ACG, National SMART Grant, FFEL, and Direct Loan programs, is at least a half-time student.

34 CFR 685.301(a)

(8) A school may refuse to originate a Direct Subsidized, Direct Unsubsidized, or Direct PLUS Loan

or may reduce the borrower's determination of need for the loan if the reason for that action is documented and provided to the borrower in writing, and if—

- (i) The determination is made on a case-by-case basis;
- (ii) The documentation supporting the determination is retained in the student's file; and
- (iii) The school does not engage in any pattern or practice that results in a denial of a borrower's access to Direct Loans because of the borrower's race, gender, color, religion, national origin, age, disability status, or income.

(9) A school may not assess a fee for the completion or certification of any Direct Loan Program forms or information or for the origination of a Direct Loan.

(10)(i) The minimum period of enrollment for which a school may originate a Direct Loan is—

(A) At a school that measures academic progress in credit hours and uses a semester, trimester, or quarter system, or that has terms that are substantially equal in length with no term less than nine weeks in length, a single academic term (e.g., a semester or quarter); or

(B) Except as provided in paragraph (a)(10)(ii) or (iii) of this section, at a school that measures academic progress in clock hours, or measures academic progress in credit hours but does not use a semester, trimester, or quarter system and does not have terms that are substantially equal in length with no term less than nine weeks in length, the lesser of—

(1) The length of the student's program (or the remaining portion of that program if the student has less than the full program remaining) at the school; or

(2) The academic year as defined by the school in accordance with 34 CFR 668.3.

(ii) For a student who transfers into a school with credit or clock hours from another school and the prior school originated a loan for a period of enrollment that overlaps the period of enrollment at the new school, the new school may originate a loan for the remaining portion of the program or academic year. In this case the school may originate a loan for an amount that does not exceed the remaining balance of the student's annual loan limit.

(iii) For a student who completes a program at a school, where the student's last loan to complete that program had been for less than an academic year, and the student then begins a new program at the same school, the school may originate a loan for the remainder of the academic year. In this case the school may originate a loan for an amount that does not exceed the remaining balance of the student's annual loan limit at the loan level associated with the new program.

(iv) The maximum period for which a school may originate a Direct Loan is—

(A) Generally, an academic year, as defined by the school in accordance with 34 CFR 668.3, except that the school may use a longer period of time corresponding to the period to which the school applies the annual loan limits under Sec. 685.203; or

(B) For a defaulted borrower who has regained eligibility, the academic year in which the borrower regained eligibility.

7. Paper Master Promissory Note (MPN) Not Made Available Upon Request

The colleges require all student Federal Direct Loan borrowers and Parent PLUS borrowers to complete the MPN electronically through <http://studentloans.gov>, even though guidance from the U.S. Department of Education requires the school to provide a paper MPN if the borrower requests one.

Suggested Corrective Action

The institution must develop a process to make a paper MPN available at a borrower's request. There are two methods of MPN processing: regular mail and overnight/express mail.

- Send express and overnight mail to:
U.S. Department of Education 2429 Military Road Suite 200 Niagara Falls, NY 14302
- Send regular mail submissions to:
U.S. Department of Education P.O. Box 9002 Niagara Falls, NY 14304

Citations

FSA Direct Loan 101 – Master Promissory Notes, p. 2

<https://fsapartners.ed.gov/sites/default/files/attachments/2019-07/DLMPNBasics.pdf>

The Master Promissory Note (MPN) is the legal document used to make one or more Direct Loans for one or more academic years (up to 10 years). By signing an MPN, the borrower is agreeing to repay all loans made under the MPN.

MPNs are not school-specific and may be used across schools. For example, if a student transfers from school A to school B, the previously completed MPN may be used to borrow loans while attending school B. Note: Some restrictions apply for single-year schools; see the Single-year Use section below.

Types

There are two types of MPNs:

- Direct Subsidized/Unsubsidized Loan MPN – A student borrower must complete and sign a Direct Subsidized/Unsubsidized Loan MPN before a school can make the first disbursement of a Direct Subsidized or Direct Unsubsidized Loan.
- Direct PLUS Loan MPN – A graduate/professional student borrower or parent borrower must complete and sign a Direct PLUS Loan MPN before a school can make the first disbursement of a Direct PLUS Loan.
 - Parent borrowers must complete and sign a separate MPN for each student for whom they are borrowing.

Borrowers may complete and sign the MPN electronically via the StudentAid.gov website or on paper. **Note:** Borrowers have the right to complete and sign a paper MPN. If requested by a borrower, a paper MPN must be provided.

2021-2022 COD Technical Reference – Volume VI –p. 7-223

The Direct Loan Completed MPN Report lists all MPNs associated with your school received by the Department, either electronically through StudentAid.gov or via the paper MPN process that have been completed within the past week (i.e. within the last 7 days of the report run date). This report will allow your school to identify students who have completed MPNs.

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

8. Approving SAP Appeals Without Supporting Documentation*

The colleges' Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) appeal procedures indicate that documentation is optional when students appeal their loss of aid. In practice, the colleges no longer require supporting documentation to substantiate an appeal. SAP appeals are considered professional judgment (PJ) decisions based on long-standing Title IV principles and ED policy guidance that SAP appeals fall under the same purview as PJ.

The institution's policy and procedure manual, 7.2.1.4 Satisfactory Academic Progress, is listed under section 7.2 Professional Judgment. Section 7.2 includes the statement that "there must be adequate documentation to prove the unique circumstance(s) as related to eligibility. The Verification Guide can be used as a general guide for acceptable documentation standards."

Suggested Corrective Action

The colleges must ensure that all SAP Appeal decisions are based on extenuating circumstances with supporting documentation and that financial aid administrators are adequately documenting the reason for an approval with sufficient justification. Without adequate reason and supporting documentation, an auditor or program reviewer will find it difficult to justify the decision and may require the institution to pay back funds if the approval decision is not adequately documented and explained (see article below regarding Florida State College-Jacksonville). The decision to make supporting documentation optional must be reconsidered.

https://www.huffpost.com/entry/500-more-students-at-fscj_n_1756930

"On Monday, officials at FSCJ announced that another 500 students may be forced to repay their Pell Grants. The Pell Grants were granted not through the initial application process, but rather, were given to students submitting appeals without proper documentation. This number is in addition to the initial 780 students affected." ... Bill Scheu, a Jacksonville attorney who is reviewing the college's policies, criticized FSCJ saying that the staff was not properly trained to distribute Pell Grants, and that the financial aid director had a "laissez-faire process."

Citation

NASFAA AskRegs – KA-33753 – Must Third-Party Documentation Be Included With a Student’s Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal <https://askregs.nasfaa.org/article/33753/must-third-party-documentation-be-included-with-a-student-s-satisfactory-academic-progress-appeal>

Required documentation for a Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) appeal includes information from the student regarding why he or she did not meet SAP standards and what has changed in the student's situation to allow the student to meet SAP standards at the next evaluation. Per 34 CFR 668.34(a)(9)(iii), "If the institution permits a student to appeal a determination by the institution that he or she is not making satisfactory academic progress, the policy describes—(iii) Information the student must submit regarding why the student failed to make satisfactory academic progress, and what has changed in the student’s situation that will allow the student to demonstrate satisfactory academic progress at the next evaluation," i.e., the school is allowed to define its policy to indicate any additional documentation, including third-party documentation, a student must submit in addition to the required documentation.

During the open comment period prior to issuing final regulations, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) declined to provide more specific guidance regarding documentation requirements for SAP appeals, leaving it clear that schools can form their own policies in this regard. However, it would be considered a best practice to request third-party documentation. This would also be consistent with documentation requirements for other types of professional judgment (PJ) decisions, such as special circumstance requests to adjust FAFSA data elements or to increase the allowance for cost of attendance (COA) components.

For a related article, please see [Is a Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Considered Professional Judgment?](#)

9. Denying Aid Due to Receipt of a Bachelor’s Degree*

Currently the colleges include all credits taken at a previous institution, regardless of program applicability at the Los Rios college, and denies student aid eligibility as a result. Students with a previous bachelor’s degree are automatically considered ineligible for aid and must appeal to receive aid such as a Direct Loan. According to the school’s policy and procedure manual “A student may appeal any denial or termination action described in these policies, except for students who exceed 150 total attempted units or have a Bachelor’s degree or higher or have met their 70-unit transfer requirement under the ‘Transfer to a 4-yr institution’ program of study.”

Suggested Corrective Action

The practice of denying all students’ financial aid because they have a prior bachelor’s degree must cease. Students with prior bachelor’s degrees do not qualify for Federal Pell Grants but may receive other Title IV Federal Student Aid. The school has the option to review, on a case-by-case basis, a student’s eligibility for Federal Direct Loans.

Citation

34 CFR 685.301(a)(8)

A school may refuse to originate a Direct Subsidized, Direct Unsubsidized, or Direct PLUS Loan or may reduce the borrower's determination of need for the loan if the reason for that action is documented and provided to the borrower in writing, and if—

- (i) The determination is made on a case-by-case basis;
- (ii) The documentation supporting the determination is retained in the student's file; and
- (iii) The school does not engage in any pattern or practice that results in a denial of a borrower's access to Direct Loans because of the borrower's race, gender, color, religion, national origin, age, disability status, or income.

34 CFR 690.6

(a) Except as provided in paragraphs (c) and (d) of this section, a student is eligible to receive a Federal Pell Grant for the period of time required to complete his or her first undergraduate baccalaureate course of study.

(b) An institution shall determine when the student has completed the academic curriculum requirements for that first undergraduate baccalaureate course of study. Any noncredit or remedial course taken by a student, including a course in English language instruction, is not included in the institution's determination of that student's period of Federal Pell Grant eligibility.

(c) An otherwise eligible student who has a baccalaureate degree and is enrolled in a postbaccalaureate program is eligible to receive a Federal Pell Grant for the period of time necessary to complete the program if—

- (1) The postbaccalaureate program consists of courses that are required by a State for the student to receive a professional certification or licensing credential that is required for employment as a teacher in an elementary or secondary school in that State;
- (2) The postbaccalaureate program does not lead to a graduate degree;
- (3) The institution offering the postbaccalaureate program does not also offer a baccalaureate degree in education;
- (4) The student is enrolled as at least a half-time student; and
- (5) The student is pursuing an initial teacher certification or licensing credential within a State.

(d) An institution must treat a student who receives a Federal Pell Grant under paragraph (c) of this section as an undergraduate student enrolled in an undergraduate program for title IV purposes.

(e) If a student receives a Federal Pell Grant for the first time on or after July 1, 2008, the student may receive no more than nine Scheduled Awards.

10. Inconsistent Application of SAP Policy*

The majority of student SAP calculations at the end of each semester are calculated by the PeopleSoft system's automated process. However, financial aid staff members informed the consulting team that, in some circumstances, based on the student's Los Rios consortium status, they must manually calculate a student's SAP status. The financial aid staff run a query to identify students who have a Los Rios college consortium agreement in place. Employees then must figure out what consortium classes were paid for by financial aid to determine if they need to be included in the SAP calculation.

The consulting team is concerned about incorrect SAP calculations when a student takes courses at another Los Rios college. If the student passes a course, it may be included in the SAP calculation. If the student does not pass, it may not be included. However, all courses taken at any of the four Los Rios colleges are considered toward the completion of a degree program. If a student passes all of the courses at one college, they are included in degree completion and may be included in the SAP calculation. However, if a student fails all classes at one college, the student can move to another college and “start fresh” with SAP (i.e. failed courses are not included).

Suggested Corrective Action

The colleges’ SAP policies and procedures must be closely reviewed and evaluated to ensure that students are not treated one way for graduation requirements but differently for determining classes included in the SAP calculation. The colleges must determine if classes taken at one college are treated as transfer credits in terms of degree completion and measuring progress toward that degree.

Citations

34 CFR 668.34(a)(2)

(b) Satisfactory academic progress policy. An institution must establish a reasonable satisfactory academic progress policy for determining whether an otherwise eligible student is making satisfactory academic progress in his or her educational program and may receive assistance under the title IV, HEA programs. The Secretary considers the institution's policy to be reasonable if—

- (1) The policy is at least as strict as the policy the institution applies to a student who is not receiving assistance under the title IV, HEA programs;
- (2) The policy provides for consistent application of standards to all students within categories of students, e.g., full-time, part-time, undergraduate, and graduate students, and educational programs established by the institution;
- (3) The policy provides that a student's academic progress is evaluated—
 - (i) At the end of each payment period if the educational program is either one academic year in length or shorter than an academic year; or
 - (ii) For all other educational programs, at the end of each payment period or at least annually to correspond with the end of a payment period;
- (4)(i) The policy specifies the grade point average (GPA) that a student must achieve at each evaluation, or if a GPA is not an appropriate qualitative measure, a comparable assessment measured against a norm; and
- (ii) If a student is enrolled in an educational program of more than two academic years, the policy specifies that at the end of the second academic year, the student must have a GPA of at least a "C" or its equivalent, or have academic standing consistent with the institution's requirements for graduation;

11. Unclear Transfer Student Policy

The use of other college credit in the policy and procedure manual, section 7.1.4, needs to specify if transfer credits from any college, including other Los Rios colleges, are included in the SAP calculation at the end of each measurement period (semester/term). The policy and procedure manual states, "The academic records of students who have attended other postsecondary institutions and whose records have been evaluated by evaluators will be posted in PeopleSoft and calculated towards maximum timeframe." The language does not indicate whether the evaluation includes transfer credits that apply to the student's program and if they are included in the quantitative or qualitative measurements. In other words, if a student has taken courses in at another college that are not applicable to the student's active program plan, are those courses included in the SAP maximum timeframe and/or pace measurement?

Records Office officials indicated that transcripts are not evaluated officially until the student is ready to graduate and credits are not applied to a student's record earlier unless the student is a financial aid applicant.

Suggested Corrective Action

The colleges should review SAP policies and procedures with regard to transfer student progress and determine how transfer credits impact pace (i.e. quantitative measure) and maximum timeframe. At a minimum, transferred hours that count toward a student's program must be considered attempted and completed in reviewing student pace.

Citation

CFR 34 668.34(a)(6)

(6) The policy describes how a student's GPA and pace of completion are affected by course incompletes, withdrawals, or repetitions, or transfers of credit from other institutions. Credit hours from another institution that are accepted toward the student's educational program must count as both attempted and completed hours;

12. Unclear Treatment of Repeat Coursework

College aid administrators are not sure how repeat courses are treated. The repeat course rules and information are limited to the district operation and campus administrators do not have written information on how repeat courses are handled. Aid administrators thought that only three repeats were allowed but could not specify what constitutes three repeats.

Suggested Corrective Action

The district office must have written policies and procedures regarding retaking coursework and provide the information to the college aid administrators. Financial aid administrators must have the ability to view and note repeat coursework before determining aid eligibility.

Citation

2021-22 FSA Handbook, Volume 1, Chapter 1, p. 1-31

Eligibility and enrollment status for retaking coursework

The regulatory definition for full-time students (for undergraduates) allows a student, in a term-based program only, to retake any previously passed course (a maximum of once per course). For this purpose, passed means any grade higher than an “F,” regardless of any school or program policy requiring a higher qualitative grade or measure to have been considered to have passed the course. This retaken course may be included in the student’s enrollment status, and would count toward the student’s eligibility for Title IV aid.

SAP regulations allow a student to receive Title IV funds for retaking a course he or she failed, and if a student withdraws before completing the course that he or she is being paid Title IV funds for retaking, that is not counted as his or her one allowed retake for that course. However, if a student passed a class once, then is repaid for retaking it, and fails the second time, that failure counts as their paid retake, and the student may not be paid for retaking the class a third time.

If your school has a policy that requires students to retake all of the coursework for a term in which a student fails a course, only the first retake of any previously passed course is eligible for Title IV aid (see the preamble to the October 15, 2015 Program Integrity regulation; page 67127). If a student withdraws from all Title IV eligible courses in the payment period or period of enrollment and continues to attend only the course(s) that they are completing or repeating for which they may not receive Title IV aid during that period, the student is a withdrawal for Title IV purposes.

This is because a student is considered to be attending a Title IV eligible program only if he or she is attending one or more courses in that program for which the student is receiving Title IV funds. For more details on eligibility for retaking coursework, see 34 CFR 668.2(b).

Federal Work-Study (FWS)

13. Selection of Students for FWS Employment

The institution does not make FWS reasonably available to all eligible students using a uniformed and written process. There does not appear to be equal opportunity for students to obtain work-study positions. Many of the students placed into positions are hand-picked by departmental employees. The institution does not have a process of reaching out to students to inform them about FWS job opportunities. Students are left to discover the opportunities on each college’s separate websites. Additionally, the colleges do not 1) award FWS up front, 2) perform mass packaging to consider eligible and interested applicants, and 3) communicate FWS opportunities to students.

Suggested Corrective Action

Institution must have a unified and equitable process for making students aware of FWS opportunities and placing students into FWS positions ensuring that it is free from bias and preferential treatment. As a best practice, the colleges may want to consider including FWS funds in their mass packaging plans and develop a communication plan to inform eligible students about FWS opportunities.

Citation

34 CFR 675.9

(c) An institution shall make employment under FWS reasonably available, to the extent of available funds, to all eligible students.

(d) An institution shall establish selection procedures and those procedures must be—

- (1) Uniformly applied;
- (2) In writing; and
- (3) Maintained in the institution's files.

(e) *Part-time and independent students.* If an institution's allocation of FWS funds is directly or indirectly based in part on the financial need demonstrated by students attending the institution as less-than-full-time or independent students, a reasonable portion of the allocation must be offered to those students.

14. Ensure Students are Not Permitted to Work During Scheduled Class Time

There are no mechanisms in place to ensure that students are not working during the time they are expected to be in class. Employees in the financial aid office verify and authorize students to be paid work-study funds after completion of the electronic timesheet. The employees do not compare student work schedules to ensure that they do not conflict with a student's class schedule.

Suggested Corrective Action

The colleges must develop procedures to verify student work schedules against the class schedule and periodically review time records to ensure students are not working during the time they are expected to be in class.

Citation

2021-22 FSA Handbook, Vol. 6, Ch. 2 , p. 6-46

Working During Scheduled Class Time Prohibited

In general, students are not permitted to work in FWS positions during scheduled class times. Exceptions are permitted if an individual class is canceled, if the instructor has excused the student from attending for a particular day, and if the student is receiving credit for employment in an

internship, externship, or community work-study experience. Any such exemptions must be documented.

Standards of Participation in Title IV Programs – Institutional Eligibility

15. Missing Procedures to Evaluate the Validity of a Student’s High School Completion

The colleges do not have written procedures to evaluate the validity of a student’s high school completion and do not maintain a list of invalid high schools. This requirement exists to ensure that a student did not obtain their high school diploma from a diploma mill.

Suggested Corrective Action

The colleges must develop policies and procedures to review and evaluate questionable high schools to ensure that they meet the conditions of a valid high school and identify possible diploma mills in the area.

NOTE: Beginning with the 2022-23 verification cycle, high school completion status is no longer a required verification item for verification tracking groups V4 or V5 (See Dear Colleague Letter [GEN-21-09](#)). However, the college still must have written procedures to evaluate the validity of a student’s high school completion if conflicting information exists.

Citation

2021-22 FSA Handbook, Volume 1, Chapter 1 , p. 1-13

Checking the validity of a high school diploma If your school or the Department has reason to believe that the high school diploma is not valid or was not obtained from an entity that provides secondary school education, you must evaluate the validity of the student’s high school completion.

Students who indicate on their FAFSA that they graduated high school must give the name, city, and state of the high school. FAFSA on the Web will not allow students to skip these items, and it will have a drop-down list of both public and private high schools populated by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Inclusion on the list does not mean that a diploma from the school is valid, nor does exclusion from the list mean that the diploma is invalid. Acceptable documentation for checking the validity of a student’s high school completion can include the diploma and a final transcript that shows all the courses the student took.

Diplomas from unaccredited high schools can be valid and qualify students to receive Title IV funds, as well as to meet college admission standards. One resource that a school may consider using to determine if a high school diploma is valid is the department of education of the state in which the high school is located, if that agency has jurisdiction over the high school. Colleges are also free to consult with each other as they develop their procedures for checking the validity of high school diplomas. For students who completed their secondary schooling outside the United States,

comparable documents can help, as can the services of companies that determine the validity of foreign secondary school credentials.

A student's self-certification is not sufficient to validate a high school diploma that is in question. If there is conflicting information between the student's certification on the FAFSA and other documentation or information obtained from the student, the institution must resolve this conflict. For an institution to be a Title IV eligible institution, it must admit as regular students only those with a high school diploma or the recognized equivalent and/or those who are beyond the age of compulsory school attendance in the State where the institution is located. As in other areas of FSA administration, schools have final authority in meeting this requirement. The Department does not plan to have an appeal process or to intervene in reasonable judgments of school administrators, such as a decision to move a high school from a college's acceptable to unacceptable list or a case where one school has different lists than another.

Electronic Announcement July 23, 2019, Checking the Validity of a Student's High School Completion

This Electronic Announcement provides clarification regarding the role that institutions have in checking the validity of a student's high school completion as required under 34 CFR 668.16(p). Final regulations published on [October 29, 2010](#) (Program Integrity Issues, 75 Fed. Reg. 66831) require institutions to develop and follow procedures to evaluate the validity of a student's high school completion if the institution or the Secretary has reason to believe that the high school diploma is not valid or was not obtained from an entity that provides secondary school education. If an institution establishes and follows a process to evaluate the validity of a student's high school completion that includes (1) receiving documentation from the secondary school that confirms the validity of the student's diploma, and (2) confirming with or receiving documentation from the relevant department or agency in the state in which the secondary school is located that the secondary school is recognized as a provider of secondary school education, then the institution is in compliance with 34 CFR 668.16(p).

Although institutions may satisfy the requirements of 34 CFR 668.16(p) by establishing and following a process that meets this description, they may also satisfy the requirements of 34 CFR 668.16(p) in other ways that do not meet this description. In order to satisfy 34 CFR 668.16(p) an institution need only "develop and follow procedures to evaluate the validity of a student's high school completion if the institution or the Secretary has reason to believe that the high school diploma is not valid or was not obtained from an entity that provides secondary school education." The Department clarifies today that a process that meets the two-part description above satisfies this requirement, and also clarifies that other approaches used by institutions are still valid to the extent they comply with the language of 34 CFR 668.16(p).

For example, the Department recognizes that this safe harbor provision will not apply to students who completed high school at a secondary school that is not required to be recognized by the relevant department or agency in the state in which the school is located. The Department encourages institutions to consider alternative processes for checking the validity of high school completion for such students.

Nothing in this electronic announcement shall be construed as providing a safe harbor for an institution or an individual involved in this process against claims of fraud or prosecution for criminal activity.

If you have questions about this announcement, please contact Aaron Washington at aaron.washington@ed.gov.

U.S. Department of Education: Program Integrity Questions and Answers – High School Diploma – CVD-Q1 & CVD-Q2 <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/highered/reg/hearulemaking/2009/hsdiploma.html>

Checking the Validity of a High School Diploma (CVD)

CVD-Q1. Do high schools have to be accredited for their graduates to be eligible for Title IV aid? CVD-A1. For Title IV student aid purposes, there is no requirement that a high school be accredited. In determining whether a student’s high school diploma is valid, the Federal Student Aid Handbook suggests that institutions check with the appropriate state agency in the State in which the high school is located to determine if a diploma issued from that school is recognized by that State as a high school diploma. [Guidance issued 1/24/2014]

CVD-Q2. How can an institution determine whether a student’s high school diploma is valid for purposes of establishing Title IV eligibility?

CVD-A2. Final regulations published on October 29, 2010, require postsecondary institutions to develop and apply procedures to evaluate the validity of a student’s high school diploma if the institution or the Department has reason to believe that the diploma is not valid or was not obtained from an entity that provides secondary school education (34 CFR §668.16(p)).

Because we rely on a State’s determination as to what constitutes a high school diploma in that State, we encourage institutions to check with the relevant department or agency in the State in which the high school is located to determine if a diploma from the high school (which does not have to be accredited) is recognized by that State (see Volume 1 of the Federal Student Aid Handbook). Another resource within the State that an institution may want to consult with is the State attorney General’s office. For example, one State attorney General’s office has taken enforcement actions against entities that issue diplomas or other certificates of completion of secondary education without providing a legitimate secondary school education.

Another publication that may be helpful to institutions is the “State Regulation of Private and Home Schools” which provides a brief description for each state’s legal requirements that apply to K–12 private schools in the United States. See <https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/non-public-education/regulation-map/index.html>. [Guidance issued 2/23/2016]

34 CFR 668.31

(a) In general

In order to receive any grant, loan, or work assistance under this subchapter, a student must—

(1)

be enrolled or accepted for enrollment in a degree, certificate, or other program (including a program of study abroad approved for credit by the eligible institution at which such student is

enrolled) leading to a recognized educational credential at an institution of higher education that is an eligible institution in accordance with the provisions of section 1094 of this title, except as provided in subsections (b)(3) and (b)(4), and not be enrolled in an elementary or secondary school;

16. No Annual Code of Conduct Training Provided

Code of conduct training must be provided annually to officers, employees, and agents with student loan responsibilities.

Suggested Corrective Action

The colleges must develop an in-person or online training to be provided annually regarding financial aid code of conduct provisions.

Citations

601.21(a)(2)(iii)

(iii) Administer and enforce such code by, at a minimum, requiring that all of the institution's agents with responsibilities with respect to FFEL Program loans or private education loans be annually informed of the provisions of the code of conduct.

(b) Any institution-affiliated organization of a covered institution that participates in a preferred lender arrangement must—

(1) Comply with the code of conduct developed and published by such covered institution under paragraph (a)(1) of this section;

(2) If such institution-affiliated organization has a Web site, publish such code of conduct prominently on the Web site; and

(3) Administer and enforce such code of conduct by, at a minimum, requiring that all of such institution-affiliated organization's agents with responsibilities with respect to FFEL Program loans or private education loans be annually informed of the provisions of such code of conduct.

(c) A covered institution's code of conduct must prohibit—

(1) Revenue-sharing arrangements with any lender. The institution must not enter into any revenue-sharing arrangement with any lender. For purposes of this paragraph, the term revenue-sharing arrangement means an arrangement between a covered institution and a lender under which—

(i) A lender provides or issues a FFEL Program loan or private education loan to students attending the institution or to the families of such students; and

(ii) The institution recommends the lender or the loan products of the lender and in exchange, the lender pays a fee or provides other material benefits, including revenue or profit sharing, to the institution, an agent;

(2)(i) Employees of the financial aid office receiving gifts from a lender, a guarantor, or a loan servicer. Agents who are employed in the financial aid office of the institution or who otherwise have responsibilities with respect to FFEL Program loans or private education loans, must not solicit or accept any gift from a lender, guarantor, or servicer of FFEL Program loans or private education

loans;

(ii) For purposes of paragraph (c) of this section, the term gift means any gratuity, favor, discount, entertainment, hospitality, loan, or other item having a monetary value of more than a de minimus amount. The term includes a gift of services, transportation, lodging, or meals, whether provided in kind, by purchase of a ticket, payment in advance, or reimbursement after the expense has been incurred;

668.14(b)(27)(ii)

(ii) Must inform its officers, employees, and agents with responsibilities with respect to loans made, insured or guaranteed under the Title IV, HEA loan programs annually of the provisions of the code required under paragraph (b)(27) of this section;

17. Tuition and Fees Reported on FISAP is Incorrect

The colleges' tuition and fee figure on all four FISAP reports is unexpectedly lower than the total Federal Pell Grant amount disbursed. The FISAP reports for all four colleges is completed by one district business office administrator. The amount reported excludes the tuition and fee waivers many students receive at the colleges, which results in an incorrect total tuition and fees figure on the FISAP.

Suggested Corrective Action

The formula or PeopleSoft program used to calculate total tuition and fees on the FISAP reports must be reviewed and corrected to ensure all tuition and fees assessed to students are included.

Citation

2022-23 FISAP Instructions, p. 22

Section E.

Assessments and Expenditures 22.

Total tuition and fees for the award year July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021

The tuition and fees revenue you enter here must be only for those students reported in Section D. Do not include tuition and fees revenue collected from individuals not meeting Section D's description of an enrolled student. If a student enrolled as an undergraduate during an earlier term in 2020–21 but enrolled as a graduate student in a subsequent term in 2020–21, divide the tuition and fees revenue between columns (a) (undergraduate) and (b) (graduate) in proportion to the time spent in each type of class.

To complete Field 22, you will need to determine the amount of tuition and fees assessed (whether or not you collected tuition and/or fees) and subtract from it the amount refunded to students.

“Tuition and fees assessed” means:

- amounts you charged and collected;
- amounts you charged but did not collect;

- remissions or waivers of costs (for example, your school waives a book fee for all low-income students); and
- the types of fees included in the cost of attendance, as allowed under Part F, Section 472(1) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended.

If you charged a total fee for tuition and room and board, do not count the cost of room and board. Allot a reasonable amount to “tuition.”

Every student has a tuition and fee value associated with attendance at your school.

18. FISAP Pell and State Grant Expenditures Not Updated

The district office professional responsible for reporting the FISAP each year does not update FISAP Federal Pell Grant and State Grant expenditure figures after the initial submission on October 1st. The colleges continue to adjust student records after the October 1st reporting date but do not correct the figures to actual expenditures prior to the FISAP edit deadline of December 15th.

Suggested Corrective Action

FISAP figures must be updated or corrected prior to the December 15th deadline if there has been any change to the total disbursements of any program reported on the FISAP including Federal Pell Grant and State Grant disbursements.

Citation

Federal Register, January 26, 2021 – Federal Perkins Loan, Federal Work-Study, and Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant Programs; 2021–22 Award Year Deadline Dates
<https://fsapartners.ed.gov/sites/default/files/attachments/2021-01/FR012621.pdf>

FISAP Edit Corrections must be submitted electronically through the Common Origination and Disbursement website at <https://cod.ed.gov>: Wednesday, December 15, 2021.

Cash Management

19. Lack of Internal Controls in Automated Systems

Financial aid funding is awarded, authorized, and disbursed to students, in batch, by the district financial aid operation. The business office has no involvement in the awarding, authorizing, or disbursing process. Financial aid administrators at the campuses have the ability to award, authorize, and disburse student funds manually. Override capabilities are provided to a number of campus aid administrators.

Suggested Corrective Action

The institutions' internal controls must be reviewed and evaluated to ensure strong checks and balances. Adequate internal controls are part of the standards of administrative capability ensuring that no one office has the responsibility for both functions of awarding and disbursing.

Citation

34 CFR 668.16

- (3) Communicates to the individual designated to be responsible for administering Title IV, HEA programs, all the information received by any institutional office that bears on a student's eligibility for Title IV, HEA program assistance; and
- (4) Has written procedures for or written information indicating the responsibilities of the various offices with respect to the approval, disbursement, and delivery of Title IV, HEA program assistance and the preparation and submission of reports to the Secretary;
- (c)
 - (1) Administers Title IV, HEA programs with adequate checks and balances in its system of internal controls; and
 - (2) Divides the functions of authorizing payments and disbursing or delivering funds so that no office has responsibility for both functions with respect to any particular student aided under the programs. For example, the functions of authorizing payments and disbursing or delivering funds must be divided so that for any particular student aided under the programs, the two functions are carried out by at least two organizationally independent individuals who are not members of the same family, as defined in § 668.15, or who do not together exercise substantial control, as defined in § 668.15, over the institution;

2020-21 FSA Handbook p. 4-117

Since no one person or office may have the ability to both authorize and disburse Title IV funding (see Volume 2, System of checks and balances), if award entries made by the financial aid office automatically roll over and populate award fields in the business office, then the separation of functions must take place elsewhere.

For example, if your system automatically awards funds based on a student's budget, then your system must ensure that only employees with a special security standing can change those budgets or otherwise modify a student's award. In addition, your system must be able to identify any employee who makes a change to a data element that can affect the level of a student's award (anyone who initiates a budget or award override).

20. Missing Notices and Authorizations

Neither the colleges nor district office sends a communication to students prior to disbursement providing information about how and when financial aid funds will be disbursed. Students are provided with the option to log into self-service to view awards and obtain disbursement information.

Suggested Corrective Action

Institution must develop a communication that goes out to eligible students prior to disbursement.

Citations

34 CFR 668.165

(f) Notices.

- (1) Before an institution disburses title IV, HEA program funds for any award year, the institution must notify a student of the amount of funds that the student or his or her parent can expect to receive under each title IV, HEA program, and how and when those funds will be disbursed. If those funds include Direct Loan program funds, the notice must indicate which funds are from subsidized loans, which are from unsubsidized loans, and which are from PLUS loans.
- (2) Except in the case of a post-withdrawal disbursement made in accordance with Sec. 668.22(a)(5), if an institution credits a student's account at the institution with Direct Loan, Federal Perkins Loan, or TEACH Grant program funds, the institution must notify the student or parent of—
 - (i) The anticipated date and amount of the disbursement;
 - (ii) The student's or parent's right to cancel all or a portion of that loan, loan disbursement, TEACH Grant, or TEACH Grant disbursement and have the loan proceeds or TEACH Grant proceeds returned to the Secretary; and
 - (iii) The procedures and the time by which the student or parent must notify the institution that he or she wishes to cancel the loan, loan disbursement, TEACH Grant, or TEACH Grant disbursement.
- (3) The institution must provide the notice described in paragraph (a)(2) of this section in writing—
 - (i) No earlier than 30 days before, and no later than 30 days after, crediting the student's ledger account at the institution, if the institution obtains affirmative confirmation from the student under paragraph (a)(6)(i) of this section; or
 - (ii) No earlier than 30 days before, and no later than seven days after, crediting the student's ledger account at the institution, if the institution does not obtain affirmative confirmation from the student under paragraph (a)(6)(i) of this section.
- (4)(i) A student or parent must inform the institution if he or she wishes to cancel all or a portion of a loan, loan disbursement, TEACH Grant, or TEACH Grant disbursement.

CONSULTANT RECOMMENDATIONS

Blue Icon Advisors defines recommendations as non-regulatory guidance offered to enhance financial aid delivery.

The recommendations fall into the following categories:

- Communication to Students
- Communication – District and Campus Administrators
- Customer Service
- Awarding, File Review, and Processing
- Institutional Responsibilities
- Training
- Technology
- Centralization

Communication to Students

1. Provide Students with Instructional Videos and Expand Chatbot Information

Financial aid applications and processes are confusing and difficult for students to understand, especially for first year, first generation students. Expanding current services by providing short instructional videos, in various languages, and after-hours chat services focused on financial aid will assist students with understanding the financial aid information and processes, thereby improving the student experience. It appears, based on a review of the website, that the only options for students to obtain answers to questions are to read web pages, submit an email, or access administrators during open office hours.

Rationale

Students, faculty, and staff indicate that communication methods are limited to pushed messages in the student's self-service message center. Communications regarding financial aid processes are only provided via written text on the website or brief messages pointing students to the message center. Students prefer to have videos and other service options available to understand complex processes. There are third-party servicers that provide standard financial aid videos and/or automated chatbot services for institutions to embed on their website pages that offer multilingual and accessible resources. Financial aid related videos and chatbot answers can be added in addition to current communication methods and be customized for institutions, are kept current, and provide students with a visual presentation of many financial aid and financial literacy topics. Analytics regarding student use are easily accessible by the colleges.

2. Expand and Scale Effective Communication Strategies and Automate Status Updates

The colleges should consider expanding and scaling effective communications to students using various methods to inform, instruct, and advise students on financial aid. Students are given minimal information about their financial aid requirements and status. The institution should have a more robust financial aid communication plan that informs students of their status, reminders for requirements and expectations, availability of resources and opportunities, and decisions made on their applications and awards. The colleges should include all communication methods in a comprehensive financial aid communications plan including emails, text messaging, push notifications, and social media platforms. These tools are being leveraged throughout Los Rios and the colleges, but are not utilized in a consistent or widespread way by financial aid offices.

Currently, college campus staff respond to and address various User Edit Messages (UEM) which may cause delays or changes to a student's financial aid eligibility, but rarely inform the student. Most of the communications can be developed using triggers in PeopleSoft to automate messages to the student, including each step of the process.

Social media can be used to inform students of upcoming financial aid required tasks, scholarship opportunities, resources, events, deadlines, and upcoming batch system processes such as disbursements of financial aid. District and college social media channels regularly share financial aid information, but the information could be significantly expanded and financial aid offices are not actively involved with communicating with students via those channels. Reminders via social media can help students with other important tasks such as updating addresses or selecting a refund preference using Bank Mobile to ensure timely delivery of refunds.

Due to the size of the Los Rios district and the four colleges, the Los Rios system may want to consider exploring a customer relationship management (CRM) system. Benefits of a CRM program include streamlined and integrated communications, strong analytical data, and increased efficiencies through automation.

Rationale

Staff and students expressed the need for better communication with students regarding their financial aid. Students at institutions outside of Los Rios may be accustomed to receiving information in various forms, such as email, text, message center, and social media avenues from their college and district. Instead, students visit or call the financial aid office to find out their status and get their questions answered. This can be difficult for students who face transportation challenges. A strong communication plan can reduce the need for students to have to visit or call the office. Providing students with expanded communication can mitigate the problem of some students being uninformed and unable to understand expectations, next steps, and available resources.

Communication – District and Campus Administrators

3. Improve Communication Between District and Campus Administrators

There needs to be a person or small group of people tasked with bridging the communication gaps between the district office and campus financial aid operations. As stated earlier in this report, campus offices have strong and consistent policies and procedures manuals. However, the district operation is not familiar with the detailed procedures in the manuals and did not provide a policies and procedures manual for the district operation. For example, the campus policies and procedure manuals include a statement regarding satisfactory academic progress (SAP) appeals in the professional judgment section that the district financial aid director was not aware of.

There should be a person or group that is responsible for communication, coordination, and training for district and campus employees. District is unaware of the policies and procedures put into place for the campuses, however, provides significant technical support and advice regarding systematic processes in PeopleSoft. There is a clear disconnect that should be examined and corrected. Policies and procedures should exist for all Los Rios financial aid operations that are consistent, understood, and followed. Training for all financial aid administrators (district and campus) should be conducted in an organized, consistent, and regular manner.

Rationale

There appears to be limited signs of a collaborative relationship between the two groups, where employees at each operation complete their responsibilities separate from one another, sometimes without informing the other. There are gaps in knowledge from each operation as to what is being done and why. With the exception of consistent campus policy and procedure manuals, the consultants experienced minimal signs of collaboration and information sharing among the campuses and between the campuses and district.

There was one exception to the lack of collaboration: The Cal Grant team at the four campuses work closely together and collaborate on state grant requirements, processing, and reporting. Other than the strong collaboration of the Cal Grant administrators, each entity is on their own to determine what needs to be done to service students.

4. Create a Student Centric Environment at Both the District Office and Campus Offices

The district office and campus operations should share the same mission, vision, and student service expectations. Students should be at the center of all decisions, process improvements, policy and procedure developments, and systematic processes. Student feedback should be gathered regarding all elements of the financial aid operation to determine if the current processes, communications, timing, and automation meets the needs and expectations of students. Feedback and survey opportunities should be provided to students before, during, and after their educational journey. Data from the surveys should be utilized for the purposes of improving both district and campus operations. Survey data from students support the assessment that financial aid campus

employees care about the students and do whatever it takes to serve them. The staff survey results supported our assessment that there is limited collaboration between district office staff and campus office staff. Campus staff feel as though they are not getting the support they need to provide outstanding services to students. Interviews, staffing survey results, and call data all indicate that students are not serviced well when they call or email the financial aid office.

Rationale

Based on many conversations, campus staff appear to be student focused and care about the needs of the students but have no control over or understanding of systematic processes. District operations provide technical and automated support but do not visit the campuses on a regular basis. District operations appear to separate themselves from the student experience leaving each campus's staff to figure it out and support the students any way possible. This causes campus staff to be overwhelmed and overworked during peak periods. Delivery methods, timing, and the student experience differs from campus to campus based on staffing size, experience, and technical abilities. Students do not receive the same experience and aid delivery at each college.

Customer Service

5. Establish and Centralize a Financial Aid Call Center and Email Responses

The Los Rios colleges should consider establishing and centralizing a financial aid call center and email services either internally or by utilizing a third-party servicer. Providing quality and timely services by phone and email has a positive impact on the student experience. The existing centralized District Call Center fields approximately 200 financial aid calls per month (according to data provided by the Los Rios Call Center) but many more are transferred to financial offices because they need more comprehensive or detailed response. Campus office staff can focus on student aid delivery and improved student service if responding to incoming phone calls and emails are removed from their responsibilities. Having a more efficient process for responding to phone calls and emails will increase student satisfaction and reduce campus employee stress levels. Creating a centralized email address and phone number for all financial aid students and assigning responsibility for answering incoming calls and responding to emails to the call center will streamline the services for students and enable centralized data tracking.

The number of staff members needed to answer financial aid calls will depend on expected call volume and service levels. The consultants received minimal call data from two colleges for November and December, but it did not include data from peak periods such as August. Typically, it will take approximately six to eight call center representatives to handle a volume of 500 calls and 150 emails per day. A centralized call center can be employed with full-time, part-time, temporary, or work-study students. There are numerous third-party agencies that provide financial aid call center services and offer various levels of services.

Rationale

The call center data provided by ARC and CRC (Appendix D) demonstrates a high rate of abandoned calls. Each college is struggling with call and email volume during peak periods. According to staff interviewed, the college financial aid offices can get up to 300 calls a day but can only answer about 100 a day. Emails were behind most of the fall semester. Students who cannot reach the financial aid office by phone or email are forced to come into the office to get answers. This can cause frustration for students and could cause the colleges to lose enrollments. Data on email volume and response rate is not tracked and could not be provided.

6. Standardize In-Person and Virtual Services for All Campus Offices

Current college campus financial aid staff members are juggling multiple responsibilities for processing and servicing students. Each campus financial aid office handles these multiple responsibilities differently. Most of these services are provided by part-time temporary staff while trained financial aid professionals are processing in the back office. The trained financial aid professionals have little time to work with students and are available only when the student has a difficult situation. Services provided to students in-person or virtually should be consistent and provided by knowledgeable staff. Students should feel confident in the information being provided and should have the opportunity to speak with experienced, trained staff members as needed without disrupting processing time. Campuses should have trained, dedicated, full-time employees responsible for servicing students, local high schools, and the community as needed. Staff members dedicated to servicing students should have minimal processing responsibilities that can be accomplished after students have been assisted.

Los Rios should consider centralizing the virtual services for all college campuses with one link to a group of staff members assigned to cover virtual services. This can be accomplished by scheduling campus staff members time-blocks to be available virtually rather than in-person. By doing so, this will allow staff the opportunity to work closely with students who need extra assistance and guidance.

Rationale

It is apparent that campus financial aid staff truly care about the students and are very good professional aid administrators. They rely heavily on temporary part-time staff to provide frontline student services to allow full-time professional staff time to complete the necessary manual processes to deliver aid to students accurately. Services are not consistent for all college campuses causing an inconsistent experience for students.

Awarding, File Review, and Processing

7. Create Centralized Online Forms

Online forms and applications have become commonplace for financial aid operations. There are a number of options available that meet the E-Sign Act regulatory compliance requirements. Online forms and applications can be created in PeopleSoft, using functionality of imaging systems (if available through the current vendor), or developed by a third-party servicer. When selecting an online forms solution, integration with PeopleSoft and existing imaging system are important factors. Centralizing online forms and utilizing technology to automate PeopleSoft system updates will decrease processing time, improve accuracy, and provide students with easy access. The solution selected for centralized online forms should be flexible, easily updated, quickly accessed, user friendly, and performed in real-time.

Rationale

Currently, the campus financial aid offices utilize Campus Logic for most, but not all, of their online form needs. Campus Logic is a separate system that requires batch processing and updates rather than real-time updates that can be developed with other online form solutions.

8. Create a Shared-Services Model for File Processing or Centralize Processing

Assign a group of staff members to serve as “behind-the-scenes” processors for all college campuses or create a centralized processing center. The processing group/center can be located in one building, spread among the four colleges, and/or in a remote environment. It is recommended that a leader be assigned to the group/center who would be responsible for the processor training, monitoring/distributing workload, auditing compliance, and troubleshooting system processes and student situations. The leader/supervisor can be responsible for maintaining policies, procedures, and processing guides related to awarding, file review, verification, R2T4 processing, SAP appeals, and other “behind-the-scenes” processes. The processing leader/supervisor can serve as the liaison between the processing group, district team, and college campus services. If a centralized call center is developed (as previously recommended), the processing leader/supervisor should work very closely with the call center leader/supervisor to ensure students are getting timely and accurate information about their applications and awards. The processing leader/supervisor should work closely with district system operations to reduce manual processes and increased automation during all aspects of aid application processing, awarding, disbursing, and refunding.

Distribution of work tasks (i.e. student records) can be automated through PeopleSoft workflows that populate on a daily basis and provide the processing leader/supervisor with the ability to track, measure, and ensure accountability. The distribution of work can be accomplished through caseload assignments using alphabetical, zip code, or other student identifiers. Caseload assignments can be developed using historical financial aid application data.

The key to a successful shared-services model is strong leadership, communication, training, documented policies and procedures, and automated intake processes. A shared-services model provides flexibility and increases consistency for delivery of services to students.

Rationale

Processing of financial aid applications is inconsistent at the college campuses. Even though the campuses have a set of consistent policies and procedures manuals, each college performs the detailed file processing tasks differently, which can result in compliance concerns and processing delays. Staff are overwhelmed at the larger college campuses but feel adequately staffed at smaller campuses. The staffing sizes do not appear to support the size of the population. During the interview process, the consultants were informed that financial aid employees transfer employment from college to college looking for a position with less stress and lighter workload. Data regarding processing times and file volumes cannot be provided with the current system.

Centralizing processing tasks with caseloads and automated workflows will distribute workload in a more equitable manner and enable tracking of file volumes and processing times.

9. Reduce Manual Work and Reliance on Queries

A small group of experienced individuals should be assigned to question and investigate 1) every process that generates a User Edit Message (UEM), and 2) the use of queries. Little by little, each process should be scrutinized and evaluated to ensure that the system is working at maximum capability and UEMs and queried records requiring manual intervention are significantly reduced.

Rationale

According to campus staff, manual intervention requires numerous keyboard strokes to deliver funds to the student. Campus staff run queries on a daily basis to find file exceptions needing manual intervention. UEMs are assigned to student records as a result of batch automation being unable to process a record for numerous different reasons, requiring a campus aid professional to take action on the student record. Some actions are extremely time-consuming, as reported by staff.

10. Returned Refund Checks Delayed Due to Invalid Address Format

The institution is utilizing a third-party vendor, Bank Mobile, to deliver credit balances to Title IV Federal Student Aid recipients. Students are asked to select a refund method prior to aid disbursing to ensure that the credit balance is refunded to the student. If the student does not select a refund method, Bank Mobile is set up to send the student a paper check. The district office has identified a problem related to Bank Mobile not sending the student a check, as expected, and returning the funds back to the Los Rios district office as a result of invalid address formats. When funds are returned to the institution due to an invalid address format, the business office administrator (not the financial aid office) reverses the student's disbursement and award until the address discrepancy can be corrected. This may require the student to take action to correct the invalid address format.

Once the student has corrected their address format, the financial aid office re-awards the financial aid funds. The process causes delays in the student receiving their Title IV credit balance.

Rationale

If a student fails to make a Bank Mobile selection, the institution must ensure that the student receives the full amount of the Title IV credit balance within a reasonable timeframe. The current business practice of reversing awards when a paper check is not delivered by Bank Mobile, as a result of an invalid address format, should be reviewed and the district operation may want to consider technology solutions to ensure correct address formats. A delay in receiving aid is a hardship for students.

Institutional Responsibilities

11. Assign or Hire an Empowered Financial Aid Leader

There should be an experienced and collaborative leader for all Los Rios financial aid operations who can:

- Create consistency
- Work as a liaison between campuses and district
- Write policies and procedures
- Ensure compliance
- Manage a structured training program
- Collect and evaluate financial aid data, with a focus on meeting the needs of first time, first generation, low-income, and/or disproportionately impacted students
- Develop a comprehensive customer service plan that puts students in the forefront of decisions.

A financial aid leadership team should be developed consisting of supervisors and managers from the various areas of the financial aid operation who meet at least weekly. The financial aid leadership team members should all report to the experienced and collaborative leaders removing any current “dotted-line” reporting structures.

Rationale

There is no clear indication of who is ultimately responsible for financial aid processing, compliance, policies, expectations, and service requirements at Los Rios. District operation provides system support and batch processing and limited guidance on policy. Each college is on its own to determine how to meet student needs within the constraints of systematic and manual processes. District operation understands federal policies and regulations and periodically collaborates with campus administrators to discuss changes or improvements. There are “dotted-line” reporting structures but no clear indication of a person who is ultimately responsible. Responsibilities in financial aid for the entire Los Rios system are unclear and scattered.

12. Assign or Hire a Permanent IT Analyst/Programmer Dedicated to the Financial Aid Office

The Los Rios district office should assign or hire a dedicated financial aid analyst/programmer to conduct IT requirements and system needs for the financial aid operation. The position should be responsible for process improvements, ensuring compliance, and developing efficiencies through automation. Once the dedicated IT Analyst/Programmer is acclimated to the position, the district office can work on a plan to phase out the three IT PeopleSoft consultants that are currently assisting with financial aid operations. The analyst/programmer can develop automated workflows in PeopleSoft, create periodic financial aid data reports using PeopleSoft information, provide data and information for federal and state reporting requirements, and design queries (when needed and at a minimum) to identify discrepancies.

Rationale

The financial aid office has a team of people at the district office running processes and queries. However, they do not have a dedicated analyst/programmer for process improvement and developing automation of processes needed to reduce or eliminate manual tasks.

13. Consider Changing the Federal Pell Grant Disbursement Policy

The colleges should consider examining their Federal Pell Grant disbursement policy, which may be indirectly affecting the highest need students. There does not appear to be a process in place for verifying that the student attended classes prior to releasing funds, which may be driving the disbursement policy, but negatively affects the neediest students.

Rationale

The disbursing policies for Federal Pell Grants are set up differently than other aid programs causing delays in the neediest students getting much needed funding for indirect expenses. Students with Pell Grants receive half of their disbursement at the start of the semester and the second half after the mid-point of the semester. Other than Pell Grants, Title IV Federal Student Aid program funds are disbursed to the student at the start of the semester. While different disbursement schedules for federal funds are allowed, the current practice can affect student access and equity.

14. Examine Use of Funding Sources

The Los Rios district operation should examine how the campus-based matches and administrative cost allowances are utilized for students. The colleges qualify for Title III waivers and can utilize institutional funds to set up college resources for awards such as emergency needs, rather than matching campus-based awards. The district and colleges should develop financial aid awarding goals designed to meet the needs of students, such as developing an emergency aid program for students. Institutional funds are less restrictive than federal or state funds. For example, colleges can consider using Cal Grant program funds for matching purposes if taking advantage of the Title III waiver is not appropriate for the established purpose and goals.

Rationale

Los Rios uses a cash outlay to fund the 25% FSEOG match requirement when the Cal Grant can be used for this purpose. A combined total of \$1,197,248 of the college's own funds (i.e., not federal/state) were used to match the federal FSEOG funds. These funds could be used for other purposes throughout the college or as unrestricted institutional grants to students.

34 CFR 676.21

(c) The non-Federal share of FSEOG awards must be made from the institution's own resources, which include for this purpose—

Institutional grants and scholarships;

(1) Tuition or fee waivers;

(2) State scholarships; and

(3) Foundation or other charitable organization funds.

15. Consider an External Review of Consortium Agreements Use

The colleges should seek an external evaluation and examination of the Los Rios consortium agreements process to determine compliance and necessity. The Los Rios colleges are individual institutions with separate OPEID numbers and should determine if all processes, including consortium agreements, meet the requirements and definition of separate institutions. An external review of the consortium agreement processes is recommended to determine necessity and to ensure full compliance with state and federal regulations.

Rationale

The colleges have processes in place that automatically consider courses taken at any of the four colleges when considering the enrollment status for financial aid. There is no evidence that all aspects of the consortium agreement requirements are followed.

16. Data-Driven Decision Making

There should be processes to track, report, and review data in the financial aid operation. The type of data that should be tracked to assist in decision making includes, but is not limited to:

- Weekly/Monthly Phone Call Volume and Averages
- Weekly/Monthly In-Person Services Volume
- Weekly/Monthly Virtual/Electronic Services
 - Website hits
 - Virtual Services
 - Use of Message Center
 - Other Electronic Services

- Weekly/Monthly Awarding, File Review and Processing Figures broken down by demographic data
 - ISIRs received
 - Files Reviewed by type
 - Awarded
 - Awarded and Enrolled
 - Pell Awarded
 - Pell Awarded and Enrolled
 - Loans Requested
 - Files Selected for Verification
 - Files Completed and Time to Completion
 - Files Reviewed and Time to Review
 - Records Automated vs Manual Intervention
 - Student Feedback regarding Services
- Staff/Employee Satisfaction
- SAP Numbers – Including Appeal Results, broken down by demographic data
- R2T4 Numbers, broken down by demographic data
- Fund Reports – Number of Recipients and Total Dollars Received
- Funds – By Demographic Identifiers

Rationale

The review team had difficulty obtaining data to determine adequate staffing and timeliness of aid delivery to students. There are signs of staffing level inadequacies based on conversations with employees but there was no data to support the anecdotal information received. There is no annual comparison data to determine the effectiveness of financial aid processing compared to historical data.

Training

17. Develop a Comprehensive Training Plan

A comprehensive training plan should be developed for all financial aid staff. The plan development should be a team effort that includes personnel that possess strong knowledge and experience in various topics.

Plan Components:

- Mission, vision, purpose, and objectives
- Benefits and expectations
- Process for identifying training needs

- Annual training schedule
- Professional developing tracking
- Various Training Methods
- Training Resources (i.e. NASFAA, State Association, FSA)
- Mandatory and optional trainings
- Institutional trainings opportunities through Human Resources
- Training topics – financial aid and non-financial aid
- Assessment methods
- Responsibility and accountability
- Succession Plan

Rationale

Financial aid campus staff members primarily receive training through shadowing and on-the-job methods. There are no signs of a formalized training plan in place at any of the colleges to ensure staff received annual trainings on topics such as FERPA and Ethics/Code of Conduct. Staff discussed pursuing training opportunities on their own. Based on conversations with staff, there does not appear to be group training opportunities (virtually or in person) for campus staff to ensure that everyone understands financial aid administration consistently. Training topics can be reviewed and presented by a leadership team for the purpose of creating consistency and ensuring compliance.

18. Develop a Structured Succession Plan for the FA Operation

As a part of the comprehensive training plan, the colleges should have a structured succession plan that ensures knowledge transfer, leadership development, and promotional opportunities for talented staff. The succession plan should include detailed tasks and professional development opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills, and abilities of financial aid employees.

Rationale

Current structure and staff development is inconsistent. Financial aid employees at the campuses are responsive to students needs but are unclear on the future direction of the office. Staff turnover and loss of talent is a threat to the strength of the financial aid operation.

Technology

19. Automated Workflows

PeopleSoft is a sophisticated system that can be used to set up automated workflows assigned to employees. Information obtained through queries can be set up on automated workflows and put on a batch scheduler to be populated at the start of each day. Caseload management and automated workflows provide processing data, time to completion information and an equitable

work distribution process. Employees get a sense of responsibility, accountability, and accomplishment when working with workflows that are populated automatically. Workflow items can be labeled to identify required actions such as over-awards, verification, R2T4 (going into the workflow as soon as identified as a withdrawal), file review, Professional Judgment, and SAP Appeals.

Rationale

Campus employees run a number of queries to obtain and determine the need for manual updates on system records. Some of the queries require a great deal of filtering and tracking of records. The process of identifying discrepancies and the need for manual interventions is inefficient and time consuming.

20. Develop Informational Screen for Front-line Staff and Call Representatives

PeopleSoft has the capability to develop a single screen that provides overview information about a student that can be used to effectively and efficiently assist a student. The screen can be developed to include items such as a students' status, enrollment status, class schedule, billing, awards, demographics, and more.

Rationale

Information in PeopleSoft is spread out onto numerous screens requiring multiple clicks to holistically assist students who come into the office or call for assistance. Efficiency and accuracy can be improved through the use of a single screen.

21. Closely Examine and Evaluate Manual Process for Improved Automation

Each manual process completed by campus staff should be documented and reviewed, one process at a time, to ensure that the institution is benefiting from the PeopleSoft system capabilities. Manual processes as described by the staff demonstrate inefficiencies and gaps in automation. Manual processes should be questioned, examined, and researched using PeopleSoft functionality documentation. The colleges should consider national benchmarks and consultation with partner institutions to determine if the current automated processes are maximized and adequate.

Rationale

There are a number of exception reports that require manual intervention and processing. There is room for human error with the current manual processes in place. PeopleSoft is a powerful system that should be utilized at full capabilities and batch processing developed to be used throughout the semester rather than for limited periods during the semester. Employee perception of automation at the district level and campus level is greatly disparate.

NEW OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE: CENTRALIZATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Through remote interviews, documentation and website review, and survey results, the Blue Icon consultants developed three options for Los Rios financial aid operations intended to increase efficiency, improve delivery of services to students, optimize operations, and effectively utilize the existing staff size.

Option one retains the current reporting structure requiring each college financial aid office to implement improvement recommendations separately using a collaborative team approach for communications, training, and system automation processes.

Option two retains the current reporting structure for the campus financial aid services and creates centralized call and processing centers by redistributing staff from campuses to function as part of the centers.

Option three creates a centralized shared-services model requiring structural, operational, and reporting changes. **The consulting team highly recommends the centralized shared-services model (Option 3) to maximize resources, improve delivery services and communications, ensure compliance, and develop consistency.**

Option 1: No Structural Changes – Implement Improvement Recommendations for Each College

Staffing, positions, and reporting structure remain. Each college works to implement improvement recommendations for the benefit of students and staff. District and College Financial Aid Leaders work collaboratively to implement change in the following areas:

- Communication with Students
- Communication – District and Campus Administrators
- Customer Service
- Awarding, File Review and Processing
- Institutional Responsibilities
- Training
- Technology

Estimated Resource Needs

- Assign or hire an experienced FA director/leader
- Communication methods: videos and expanded chatbot services to include additional financial aid information
- Call team technology
- IT support for increased automation, data tracking and workflows
- Professional development funds

Recommended Steps and Timeline

3 – 6 months

- Assemble leadership team and identify student ambassadors to serve on team.
- Identify enhanced/expanded financial aid communication methods.
- Review student communications and develop improvement recommendations.

6 – 12 months

- Develop a comprehensive financial aid communication plan for students.
- Enhance/scale effective communications practices and service options for students Assign or hire an experienced financial aid director/leader charged with bridging communications, evaluating compliance, utilizing data for decisions and managing communication and training plans.
- Develop plan for improved and streamlined communications with district and campuses.

12 – 18 months

- Address financial aid call and email volume challenges during peak periods and set expectations for acceptable response times and call drop rates. Develop a tiered model to adequately address elevated calls.
- Begin tracking financial aid calls and file processing data and set up a schedule for periodic review of data.
- Set up a financial aid feedback system to evaluate student satisfaction.
- Develop a centralized comprehensive financial aid training plan managed by district operations. Conduct trainings with district and campus staff together to ensure consistency and receive the benefit of exploring staff questions during the trainings as a group.
- Identify all manual financial aid processes and put teams together, with assistance from IT, to improve automation and efficiencies.
- Set up awarding, file review, and processing teams at each college to work behind the scenes and create automated workflows using PeopleSoft.

Option 2: Minor Change – Implement Targeted Centralization of Common Functions/Tasks

Reporting structure at the colleges remains but staffing, positions, and centralization of common functions are changed to improve the financial aid operation for the entire system. Establish and centralize a Financial Aid call center and processing center and redistribute staff from campuses to function as part of the centers. Current college financial aid operation and reporting structures remain for providing in-person and outreach services. Add service options for students such as online videos, and virtual services using video conferencing technology. The following functions and tasks can be considered for centralization:

- Financial Aid Communications
- Incoming Financial Aid Calls and Emails

- Processing of Files and Awards
- Resolving Financial Aid Discrepancies
- Program Management and Reconciliation
- Online Forms
- FA System Analyst/Programmer

Estimated Resource Needs

- Assign or hire an experienced FA director/leader
- Assign or hire an FA Analyst/Programmer for financial aid operation
- Enhance and scale communication methods
- Financial Aid Call Center Development and Technology
- Financial Aid Processing Center Development
- Supervisor Positions – Call Center and Processing Center
- Human Resource Department’s Assessment
- Professional development funds

Recommended Steps and Timeline

3 – 6 months

- Assign or hire an experienced, financial aid director/leader, under the leadership of the Dean of Student Services and Enrollment Management, charged with developing and managing call center and processing operations, bridging communications, evaluating compliance, utilizing data for decisions and managing communication and training plans.
- Enhance/expand financial aid communication methods
- Centralize online forms and utilize technology to automate system updates, retention of electronic imaged records, and easy access for students and staff.
- Review financial aid student communications and develop improvement recommendations. Centralize and standardize all financial aid communications to students through available communication methods. Ensure accuracy and consistency of information to students. Develop a comprehensive financial aid communication plan.
- Establish and centralize a Financial Aid call center to handle calls and emails for all colleges. Route all financial aid incoming calls and emails to this call center.
 - Hire or appoint a financial aid call center supervisor responsible for managing processing center staff, monitoring work responsibilities, documenting processes, training, and managing internal communications.
 - Create a centralized phone number for students to reach financial aid.
 - Create a centralized email address for financial aid and assign responsibility for answering emails to the call center.

- Develop a plan for meeting the needs of incoming and outbound financial aid call needs.
- Set expectations for acceptable response times for financial aid calls and emails.
- Identify staffing needs and determine how the call center will be staffed with full-time, part-time, and work-study students.

6 – 12 months

- Centralize and standardize all financial aid communications to students through available communication methods. Ensure accuracy and consistency of information to students.
- Establish and centralize a Financial Aid call center.
 - Expand current Chatbot services
 - Begin tracking call data and set up a schedule for periodic review of data.
 - Set up a feedback system to evaluate student satisfaction.
- Create a processing center to handle verification, file review, awarding, updating records, SAP appeals, R2T4 calculations, and other student record processing.
 - Hire or appoint a processing center supervisor responsible for managing processing center staff, monitoring work responsibilities, documenting processes, training, and managing internal communications.
 - Develop a case management model for assigning responsibilities and setting up accountability measures.
 - Identify current college staff to work in the processing center.
 - Develop automated workflows that populate daily for staff, enabling tracking and review of student records. Automated workflows can be set up in PeopleSoft and populated based on systematic criteria and separated by task categories.
 - Develop compliance and audit plan to ensure accuracy and compliance with centralized processing center operation.
 - Centralize program management and reconciliation functions. Assign a group of experienced staff to work as program coordinators and cross-trained to understand and perform tasks for federal and state programs (e.g. Federal Pell Grant, FSEOG, Federal Direct Loans, Cal Grant, Promise Program).
- Hire a financial aid analyst/programmer to conduct IT requirements for the financial aid operation. Position responsible for process improvement and ensuring compliance and efficiencies through automation. Work on a plan to replace three IT PeopleSoft consultants with a permanent IT professional for the financial aid operation.

12 – 24 months

- Develop a centralized, comprehensive financial aid training plan managed by district operations. Conduct trainings with district and campus staff together to ensure consistency and receive the benefit exploring staff questions during the trainings as a group.
- Streamline financial aid communications with district and campuses – internal communications plan.

- Enhance financial aid processing center operation.
 - Develop compliance and audit plan to ensure accuracy and compliance with centralized processing center operation.
 - Create processing documents/guides to serve as resource and training tools.
 - Centralize program management and reconciliation functions. Assign group of experienced staff to work as program coordinators and cross-trained to understand and perform tasks for federal and state programs (e.g. Federal Pell Grant, FSEOG, Federal Direct Loans, Cal Grant, Promise Program).
- Identify all manual processes and put teams together, with assistance from IT, to improve automation and efficiencies. Work with the FA IT analyst/programmer to prioritize automation and process improvements.
- Phase out the PeopleSoft IT consultants.

Option 3 – Major Change – Full Centralization and Structural Changes

Full centralization and structural changes will require a new centralized reporting structure. This would entail the following:

- Centralizing:
 - Guides and plans utilized by the financial aid staff for processing and delivering services to students.
 - A training plan for the financial aid operation.
 - One website for financial aid information.
 - The financial aid operating budget.
 - Data collection with option to separate data at individual college campuses.
 - Reporting of financial aid data.
 - District operations.
 - Transactional processes-file review, appeal processing, satisfactory academic progress review, etc.
- Reviewing and repurposing of financial aid positions.
- Creating a shared services model for the financial aid operation.
- Developing one policies and procedures manual, instead of having four duplicated manuals, for the entire financial aid operations.

Establish a centralized district operation center for a financial aid call and processing center, along with developing a program coordinator group. Staff would be redistributed from campuses to centralized operation center. Specialists are hired/assigned to focus on marketing and communications, electronic processing and reporting, training, and customer service delivery. Supervisors are assigned to in-person and virtual services conducted at the college campuses by the financial aid clerks and temporary staff. Additional student service options would be added and administered from the centralized district

operation center such as online videos, expanded chatbot services, and virtual services using video conferencing technology.

Timelines for accomplishing a complete centralized solution are extended due to the structural and reporting changes.

Benefits and Rationale for Full Centralization and Structural Changes for Financial Aid

- Consistency across policies, processes, expectations, and student services.
- Group of financial aid leaders working closely to make systematic improvements to benefit all staff.
- Same expectations for all staff members across campuses and district operations.
- Increased expectations for responsibility and accountability.
- Rules and office policies applied equitably and equally.
- All processes are transparent to students.
- Timelines for processing are the same for all colleges and district operations.
- Information and documents provided (e.g. checklists) are the same for all colleges.
- Centralized, system-wide training program for staff.
- Centralized, system-wide customer service assessments and evaluation processes.
- Equal access to and more efficient use of resources.
- Greater flexibility with human resources.
- Faster turnaround time to address staffing and resource deficiencies.
- Expanded open communications among staff.
- Appropriate placement of staff to ensure maximum use of staff abilities and talents.
- Expanded employee experience and opportunities.
- End college hopping of experienced and trained staffing.
- Provide transformational assistance to students; campus staff will be able to provide greater one on one assistance.

Re-design Process Considerations:

- Job security for employees – need to address concerns regarding loss of job as many employees are worried about losing their job as a result of centralization.
- Promote collaboration by encouraging feedback from employees throughout the process.
- Remember the student voice and include students in the planning processes.
- Include external (department leaders outside FA office) perceptions and viewpoints.
- Celebrate the small victories along the way.
- Reward employees for strong contributions to improvement plans.

Estimated Resource Needs

- Assign or hire an experienced FA director/leader.
- Assign or hire an FA Analyst/Programmer for financial aid operation.
- Communication methods
- Centralize online forms
- Develop space for financial aid call center and processing center – including technology needs.
- Supervisor Positions – Call Center (1), Processing Center (1) and Campus Operations (2).
- Human Resource Department’s Assessment.
- Collective Bargaining Unit Assessment.
- Assistance from the Office of Institutional Research.
- Professional development funds.
- CRM system or similar technology for automated communications and data tracking.

Recommended Steps and Timeline

3 – 9 months

- Assign or hire an experienced financial aid director/leader, under leadership established at the District level, charged with developing and managing call center and processing operations, bridging communications, evaluating compliance, utilizing data for decisions and managing communication and training plans.
- Hire or assign a training and compliance specialist (sample job description provided) responsible for developing, maintaining, and deploying centralized training materials, professional development opportunities, and program guides for financial aid employees. Training coordinator can also be responsible for internal compliance audits, bridging communications between district and colleges (including other departments), and coordinating annual audits for all four colleges.
- Hire or assign someone as a communications specialist (sample job description provided) located at the district operations center focused on developing a comprehensive financial aid communication plan, with the goal of expanding the following: marketing, website, social media, email communications, message center communications, chat bot services, CRM messages (if applicable), and knowledge base used by the call center representatives and frontline staff. Review student communications and develop improvement recommendations. Centralize and standardize all communications to students through available communication methods. Ensure accuracy and consistency of information to students.
- Identify work location (i.e. located in one building, spread among the four colleges, and/or in a remote environment) for a centralized district operations center for the director/leader, IT system analyst/programmer, call center, processing center, specialists, and program coordinators.
- Reorganize positions and determine needs of each area based on volume and service needs.

- Establish and centralize a Financial Aid call center to handle calls and emails for all colleges. Route all financial aid incoming calls to the call center.
 - Hire or appoint a financial aid call center supervisor responsible for managing call center staff, monitoring call volume and expectations, training call center staff, and managing internal communications.
 - Create a centralized phone number for students to reach financial aid.
 - Create a centralized email address for financial aid and assign responsibility for answering emails to the call center.
 - Identify call center technology that provides strong analytics and options for monitoring activity.
 - Develop a plan for meeting the needs of incoming and outbound financial aid call needs.
 - Set expectations for acceptable response times for financial aid calls and emails.
 - Identify staffing needs and determine how the financial aid call center will be staffed with full-time, part-time, and work-study students.
 - Develop a knowledge base system to enter, track, and provide consistent answers to questions.
 - Begin tracking call data and set up a schedule for periodic review of data.
 - Set up a feedback system to evaluate student satisfaction.
- Create a processing center at the district operation center to handle verification, file review, awarding, updating records, SAP appeals, R2T4 calculations, and other student record processing.
 - Hire or appoint a financial aid processing center supervisor responsible for managing processing center staff, monitoring work responsibilities, documenting processes, training, and managing internal communications.
 - Develop a case management model for assigning responsibilities and setting up accountability measures.
 - Identify current college staff to work in the processing center. Unable to determine staffing needs in the processing center as file processing data could not be provided.
 - Develop automated workflows that populate daily for staff, enabling tracking and review of student records. Automated workflows can be set up in PeopleSoft and populated based on systematic criteria and separated by task categories.
 - Develop compliance and audit plan to ensure accuracy and compliance with centralized processing center operation.
 - Centralize program management and reconciliation functions. Assign a group of experienced staff to work as program coordinators and cross-trained to understand and perform tasks for federal and state programs (e.g. Federal Pell Grant, FSEOG, Federal Direct Loans, Cal Grant, Promise Program).
- Have the financial aid call center and processing center report to the same supervisor to allow for consistency between the two groups.
- Hire a financial aid analyst/programmer to conduct IT requirements for the financial aid operation. Position responsible for process improvement and ensuring compliance and efficiencies through

automation. Work on a plan to replace three IT PeopleSoft consultants with a permanent IT professional for the financial aid operation.

9 – 18 months

- Remove financial aid employees reporting to the colleges and change the reporting structure creating one financial aid department from the district operation.
- Hire or assign two people to manage the in-person and virtual services provided at the college campuses who will be responsible for identifying staff with exceptional customer service delivery, managing schedules to ensure coverage, providing guidance, manage outreach services, handling escalated student situations, and managing an online resolution center, with each manager/supervisor assigned to two colleges (one large and one small) and will be required to visit each college weekly. Serve as liaison for other departments. Managers/Supervisors can be located at a college campus but should work closely with district operations. Sample job description provided.
- Determine appropriate reduced staffing at the campuses to perform in-person and virtual services to students, families, high schools, and the community.
- Revise financial aid job titles, descriptions, and expectations. Work with Human Resources to ensure compliance with state and institutional regulations.
- Centralize a comprehensive financial aid training plan developed and provided by the centralized district operations center. Train in group settings to ensure consistency and receive the benefit of exploring staff questions during the trainings as a group.
- Review student financial aid communications and develop improvement recommendations. Centralize and standardize all financial aid communications to students through available communication methods. Ensure accuracy and consistency of information to students. Develop a comprehensive financial aid communication plan.
- Identify enhanced communication methods.
- Centralize financial aid program management and reconciliation function. Assign a group of experienced staff to work as program officers and cross-trained to understand each program and perform tasks for federal and state programs (e.g., Federal Pell Grant, FSEOG, Federal Direct Loans, Cal Grant, Promise Program).
- Centralize online financial aid forms/intake processes and utilize technology to automate system updates, retention of electronic imaged records, and easy access for students and staff. Place the responsibility of online forms/intake management with the call center supervisor and their team.

18+ months

- Develop leadership team that consists of AVC, Executive Director, IT System/Analyst, College Services Managers, Processing Manager, Call Center Manager, Communications Coordinator, and Training and Compliance Coordinator. Set up standard weekly meetings with a formalized agenda and report-out of

weekly numbers/data.

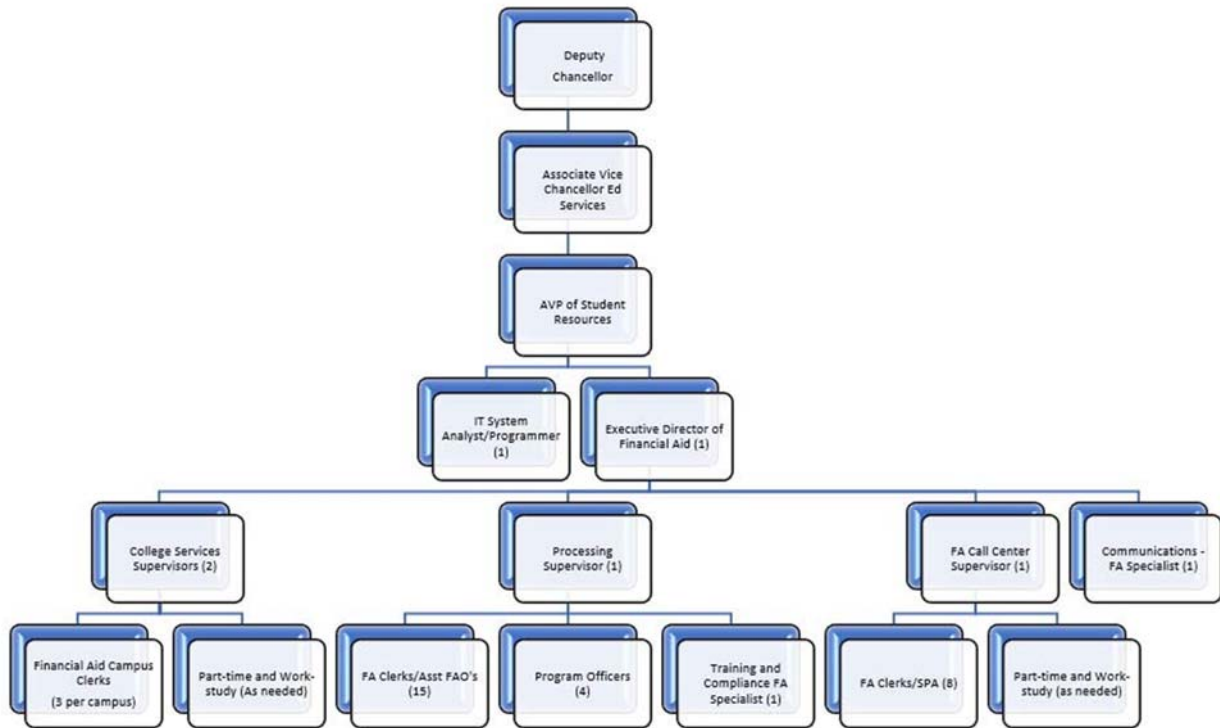
- Develop a centralized comprehensive financial aid training plan managed by district operations. Conduct trainings with district and campus staff together to ensure consistency and receive the benefit of exploring staff questions during the trainings as a group.
- Identify all manual processes and put teams together, with assistance from IT, to improve automation and efficiencies. Work with the FA IT analyst/programmer to prioritize automation and process improvements.
- Create an online financial aid resolution center that allows students to submit issues or concerns via the website using technology that sends submissions to be immediately addressed. Sample screen provided.
- Develop an online financial aid outreach request process for other departments, high schools, and outside agencies to request services from financial aid administrators to perform outreach services such as high school presentations, FAFSA/CADAA filing events, and any assistance another department needs from financial aid. Sample screen provided.
- Create one website URL for the Los Rios district financial aid information, instructions, services, and requirements. Eliminate separate web pages, phone numbers, email addresses, and any other information or electronic services that are split up into four different colleges.
- Determine data analytics and reporting needs – develop weekly/monthly data reports through data dashboards or excel spreadsheets shared with the leadership team. Sample provided.
- Develop student FA lifecycle process improvement plan for continuous evaluation, student feedback, review, and improvement implementation.
- Phase out the PeopleSoft consulting team.

Proposed New Financial Aid Organizational Chart

Proposed leadership team positions = 8

Proposed full-time positions = 39

Temporary positions can be utilized during the transition to ensure no disruption to services.



CONCLUSION

In general, the consultants found the employees of the Los Rios Community College District to be friendly and committed to serving students. It was evident they are serious about improving their processes and adhering to all applicable federal and state regulations. Everyone the team interviewed shared this outlook, and therefore, took the entire consulting engagement as an opportunity to learn of any areas needing attention and ideas for overall improvement.

The college system should develop a plan of action to prioritize and address the compliance concerns at their earliest opportunity. The compliance findings cover several high-risk areas, such as Consumer Information, Return of Title IV Funds (R2T4), Federal Direct Loans, Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP), Federal Work-Study (FWS), and Standards of Participation in Title IV Programs – Institutional Eligibility, and Cash Management. Detailed information regarding each of the areas listed was included in the report under the Compliance Concerns section with suggested corrective actions. We hope this report will be the basis for a timely corrective action plan.

Throughout the engagement there were concerns voiced about training, staffing, communication, technology utilization, and streamlining processes. The problems and concerns the review team identified are not limited to the financial aid office. There are institutional communication gaps that could jeopardize the institution's participation in the Title IV Federal Student Aid programs. Los Rios Community College District should evaluate how it shares information among various college offices and implement processes and mechanisms for effective and timely communication. In addition, the financial aid office must be included as an active participant in the decision-making process on issues that directly and indirectly impact the administration of the Title IV Federal Student Aid programs and the delivery of financial aid funds. The consultants provided three models for centralization along with recommended next steps, estimated timelines, and estimated resources needed. The consultants highly recommend a fully centralized model with structural and reporting changes (Option 3 provided in this report).

Overall, the financial aid staff is aware of the institutional policies and procedures; however, professional development and training does not appear to be a high priority. It is important that financial aid employees have the opportunity to regularly attend financial aid training sessions such as those offered by the U.S. Department of Education, NASFAA, and regional and state financial aid associations to learn how to put regulations into practice. There are also online training options as outlined in the Resources section of this report.

Blue Icon Advisors wishes to express its appreciation to the Los Rios Community College District employees and administration for the cooperation shown during the review. The financial aid staff provided invaluable assistance to the consultants, as did all college personnel with whom the team interacted during the engagement. Blue Icon Advisors and the consultant review team commend the Los Rios Community College District for its willingness to undertake this self-assessment and work toward continued quality improvement. We are confident that, armed with this report and a collaborative corrective action plan, there will be positive improvements in the administration of its Title IV programs.

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RESOURCES: NASFAA AND BLUE ICON ADVISORS FINANCIAL AID MANAGEMENT TOOLS

The following is a list of resources and website addresses where the Institution can find financial aid management tools to assist in correcting some of the compliance exceptions and implementing some of the recommendations made in this report.

Blue Icon Advisors, NASFAA Consulting

<http://www.blueiconadvisors.com>

For over 50 years, NASFAA has served as a trusted resource for financial aid administrators. That legacy of support and commitment to excellence continues with Blue Icon Advisors. Blue Icon's team of experienced consultants are ready to help schools with a range of services, including compliance and operational evaluations and improvement plans, writing and reviewing policies and procedures, developing and delivering customized staff training, providing interim leadership, coaching and support, and consulting on financial aid and enrollment management issues. These services may help you implement observations presented in this SOE review report.

NASFAA AskRegs

<http://www.nasfaa.org/AskRegs>

Our AskRegs service provides personal assistance with regulatory or compliance questions. Questions are fielded by financial aid experts in the NASFAA Training and Regulatory Assistance department who thoroughly research your question and provide you a comprehensive answer, including regulatory citations.

NASFAA's Code of Conduct

https://www.nasfaa.org/Code_of_Conduct

NASFAA's Code of Conduct provides very basic and specific expectations for conduct with which NASFAA members are required to comply as a condition of membership. Reported violations of the Code of Conduct may trigger Enforcement Procedures.

NASFAA's Compiled Title IV Regulations

https://www.nasfaa.org/compiled_title_iv_regulations

Our Compiled Title IV Regulations area available as web pages for each of the major parts of the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 34—Education (CFR 34), that together govern the Federal Student Aid programs. We incorporate new regulations for each award year in a format that shows what text will change the following July 1, while retaining the compiled regulations from previous years for reference.

NASFAA Compliance Engine

<https://www.nasfaa.org/engine>

The NASFAA Compliance Engine provides online centralization of compliance data, which reduces the risk of unnecessary findings during an audit or program review. Schools can use the Compliance Engine to complete a self-evaluation checklist of its adherence to federal financial aid rules and regulations. Checklists may be shared inter-departmentally to allow collaboration and shared responsibility of compliance with federal provisions. Each checklist item links to NASFAA's Compiled Title IV Regulations and Legislation or to the appropriate U.S. Department of Education resource for quick reference.

The institution can use this management tool to:

- Conduct a follow-up self-assessment after the institution has implemented the corrective actions and/or recommendations identified in this report; and
- Conduct a preliminary evaluation of areas that the institution may want to target for a future Standards of Excellence Review.

NASFAA P&P Builder

<http://www.nasfaa.org/engine>

NASFAA's P&P Builder, a module of our Compliance Engine, provides institutions with a user-friendly, online centralization of its policies and procedures manual.

NASFAA U

http://www.nasfaa.org/NASFAA_U/

Now you can earn professional credentials for your professional development activities! NASFAA U offers a nationally-recognized, consistent, and rigorous program of education in administering the Title IV student financial aid programs. Both new and seasoned financial aid professionals will benefit from a NASFAA U education.

NASFAA Webinars

http://www.nasfaa.org/Webinars_Live_and_On_Demand

NASFAA Webinars bring continuing education to you via streamed live Web events or self-paced study. You can invite an unlimited number of people from your organization to participate with just one site license. Learn at your desk, with others around a computer, or with a large group in a conference room.

EMPLOYEE ASSESSMENT SURVEY

Financial aid employees were asked to provide written comments on selected issues, including financial aid operations, student service, and financial aid delivery to students. Thirty-seven assessments were completed, with responses compiled below.

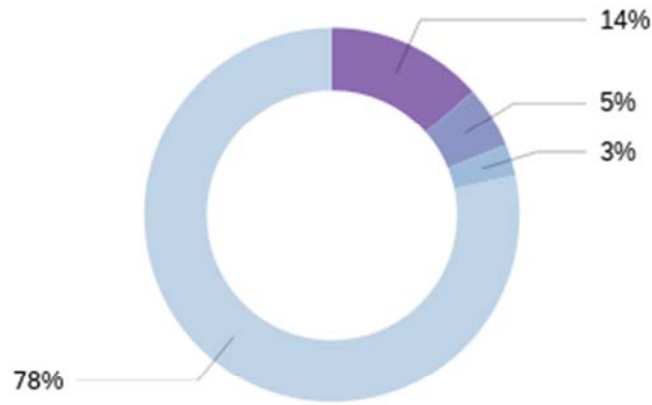
The survey comments from the staff echo what the review team heard throughout the review:

- There is a need for additional staff due to the significant amount of manual work that has to be done to deliver aid to students.
- Staff is overworked as a result of inefficiencies and vacant positions not being filled.
- College campus staff need technical support from the district office.
- Staff training is needed – training is inadequate and not enough staff are well-trained.
- Rely too heavily on temporary and part-time staff.
- No clear guidelines – trial by fire.
- Inefficient, inconsistent, under-resourced, and no compliance oversight.
- Unable to meet the volume of phone calls and emails.

Financial aid college campus staff demonstrate a strong care and concern for the needs of students. They will do whatever it takes to meet the needs of the students but recognize that they are met with challenges and inefficiencies that can be solved with process and technology improvements.

Please note: Appraisal responses were not edited for spelling or grammar, but personally identifiable information was redacted to retain confidentiality.

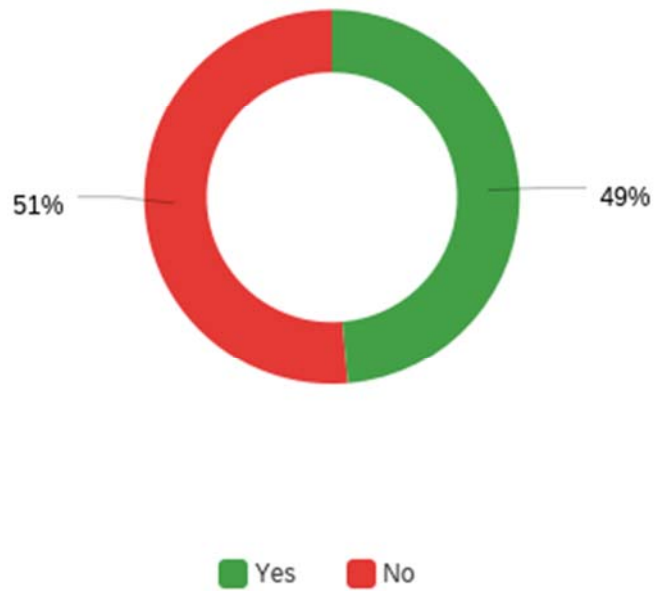
How many total years of financial aid experience or working in a financial aid office do you have?
 (Include your student work experience, if applicable.)



Less than 1 year
 1 to 3 years
 4 to 6 years
 7 to 9 years
 10 years or more

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Less than 1 year	0%	0
2	1 to 3 years	14%	5
3	4 to 6 years	5%	2
4	7 to 9 years	3%	1
5	10 years or more	78%	29
	Total	100%	37

Is your office adequately staffed?



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	49%	18
2	No	51%	19
	Total	100%	37

Please explain why your office is not adequately staffed

We do a lot of manual work that can only be completed by a Financial Aid Officer per our job description. We don't get a lot of support by the rest of the campus/district to make our processes more efficient. Financial Aid is really seen as "separate". Our Business Office is also short staffed and I believe that we do many things that should be handled by that office.

We have 2 permanent full-time positions vacant right now.

we are short on staff

We have vacant FA Clerk II, Assistant FA Officer and FA Officer positions

not enough people to do the work requested

Existing position vacant and has not been filled.

I do not know why the office isn't adequately staffed. However, way that I know it isn't adequately staffed is our inability to keep up with student phone calls and the larger workloads that some staff members have

we have lost people from retirement or other wise and are still in process of rehiring people

Everyone is overworking. the majority of our staff does many hrs of overtime. our work is always behind. many of us have to do projects that are not our regular duties. Also the number of permanent staff in our office hasn't been increased in the last ten years when as of the studs we served has increased significantly in the same last 10 years. Also people soft fin.aid program since implamentation has become very manual and our projects that only required one person to manage them now requires 2 or more persons to do the job.

There's not enough people to take on the workload that we have. Staff have multiple programs that they are responsible for so depending on the time of year some staff struggle to keep up.

Some staff retired, part time staff/FWS students left the office, new are not trained enough

Staff members are retiring and have transferred to another department. The positions have not been filled yet.

Not enough budget to fund staff and never approved to hire more staff from DO/Institution.

FLC Financial Aid currently has no full-time FA Clerks. The college has ~ 8,500 - 9,000 students and only four full-time staff and a FA supervisor.

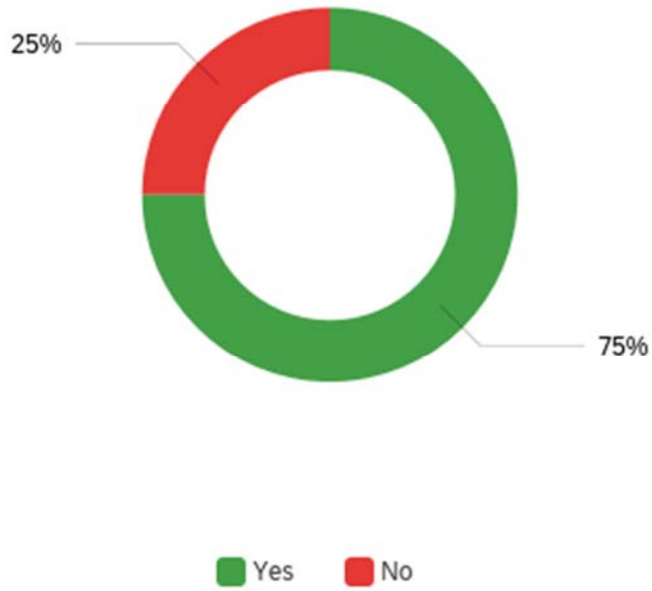
in the process of hiring -there was a hiring freeze for 18 months

We are have only recently begun filling open positions because there was a hiring freeze in the beginning of the pandemic. Before the pandemic we already had a couple of open position that were not filled until recently. Currently there is an open position for a Clerk II and an Assistant Officer in our office.

Based on the number of programs that we have, we are unable to adequately delegate work evenly. Right now the balance is uneven. In addition, with this current staffing, some students may not get their disbursement timely due to being on a long list that needs to be reviewed.

We have a few positions empty. Additionally, we have two staff members retiring.

Do you have the appropriate resources and support to effectively do your job?



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	75%	27
2	No	25%	9
	Total	100%	36

Please explain what resources and/or support you need to do your job.

Each campus really needs a support person at the District Office IT who can help us with technical issues and reports to be more efficient. We have little control over Peoplesoft per campus. Prior to Peoplesoft, in PowerFAIDS, we used to be able to create reports, create fields, batch merge letters with information specific to the student, etc. Now, if we have a modification that we would like, we have been told that all four colleges have to agree on it. Sometimes all four colleges will agree on something and the District Office will tell us no, that there is no time, or that it is not a priority. Sometimes we would like a query modified or developed and we are told that because a training was provide to a small group of staff 3 years ago, we should be able to contact one of those people to create/modify that query. No one on our campus feels confident enough to do this. Then we are also told that any campus based queries are not upkept by the District and it is a bad idea to use them.

Need more computer access to build our own reports in PeopleSoft to do our job instead of waiting for District Office to do it. Often they will reject our request anyway. In the past, we have autonomy to set up the system (PowerFAIDS) to do our job but not anymore when District Office took over 95% of the access when we switch over to PeopleSoft.

Work stations with actual monitors (not laptop) would be nice

Technological resources are needed, particularly for training new staff. For example, a phone system that allows call monitoring and dual usage

this is hard to respond since we do have support and assistance from our District, but it is not enough. even in our DO the # of staff supporting our fin.aid office needs it is not that many and they are always overworking and sometimes cannot do our request right away as we need them.

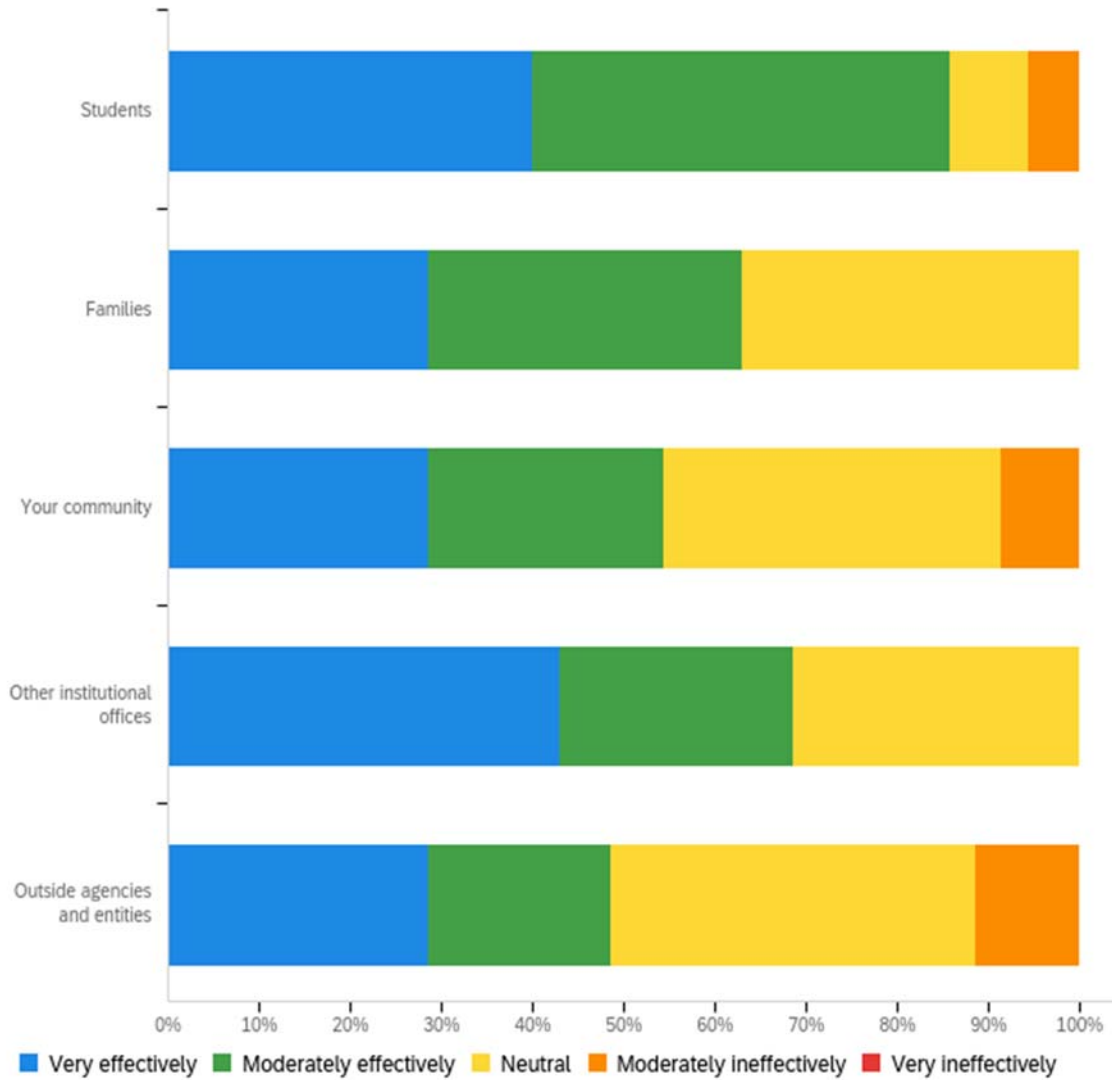
access to certain screens in PeopleSoft to perform the job

The office relies on part time support a lot to complete multiple tasks. We don't have enough trained part time staff that can assist us due to the loss seasoned during remote environment. Also we need an IT staff and improvements in FA software (PeopleSoft).

We need more permanent assistance. We rely too heavily on our Temp staff for financial aid issues which result in compliance concerns. Los Rios has random requirements such as only Officers can have NSLDS/COD access. Therefore, our Clerks can't check origination, Pell Lifetime limits, etc. There are more restrictions. In addition, the job that the FA Clerk II's are doing are under-classed. The work they do is not represented in the current job description.

Clear instructions, or "how to manual" more staff at the District Financial aid to help with our tickets and our daily operations

Please rate how effectively your office serves the following groups.



#	Question	Very effectively		Moderately effectively		Neutral		Moderately ineffectively		Very ineffectively		Total
		%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	
1	Students	40%	14	46%	16	9%	3	6%	2	0%	0	35
2	Families	29%	10	34%	12	37%	13	0%	0	0%	0	35
3	Your community	29%	10	26%	9	37%	13	9%	3	0%	0	35
4	Other institutional offices	43%	15	26%	9	31%	11	0%	0	0%	0	35
5	Outside agencies and entities	29%	10	20%	7	40%	14	11%	4	0%	0	35

Please explain why your office does not adequately serve these groups.

Note: There was an error with the survey instrument, and this question displayed only for those individuals who indicated the service was "very effective."

Beside serving our students and their families, we do not work with outside agencies. We do work closely with Dept of Ed, CA Student Aid Commission, and CA Community College Chancellor's Office.

our office adequately serve all the groups

During pandemic we lost contact with some nonprofit organizations.

As my knowledge, our office does adequately serve all the groups, you mentioned.

More financial aid outreach could benefit the institution overall.

n/a

N/A

it does

I feel SCC, Financial Aid Office serve all students very adequate

We try our best always to serve all groups adequately

our office do serve all the groups adequately

Our team runs various bulk processes for the colleges and we do not have direct contact with students or their families.

We adequately serve the groups that are applicable to our office

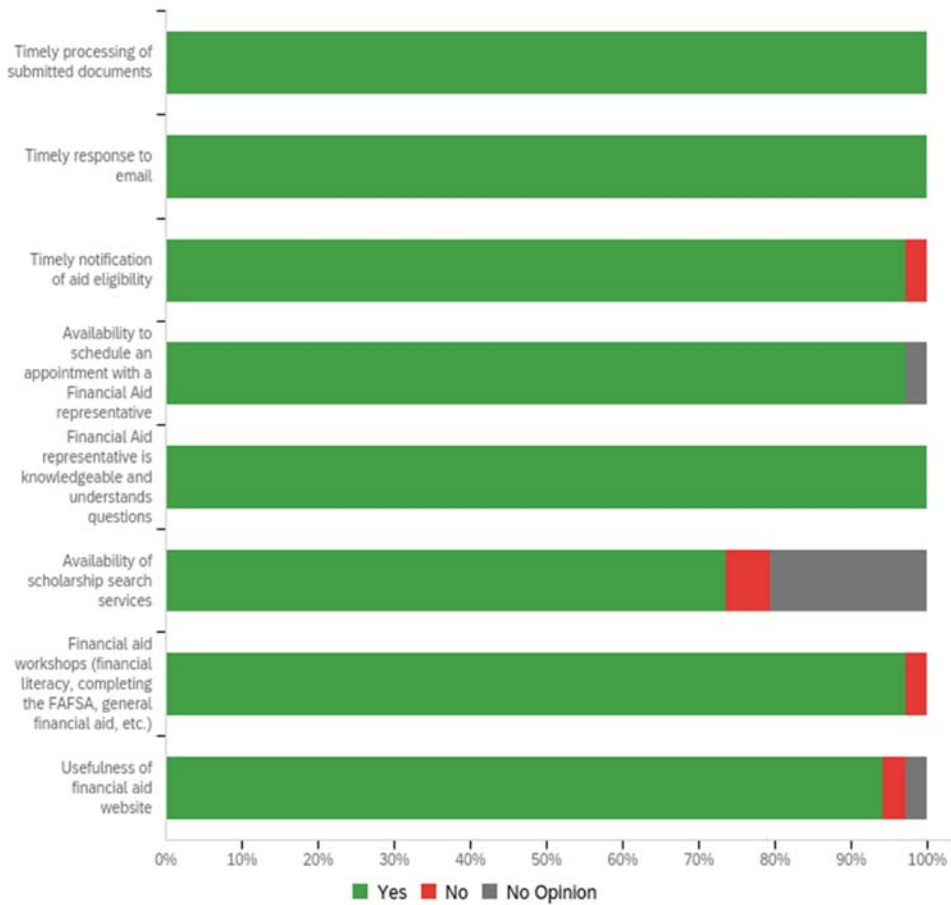
N/A

we would need more staff for outreach purposes

We have mainly focused on serving students, and we do not have sufficient staffing to focus on serving families and communities.

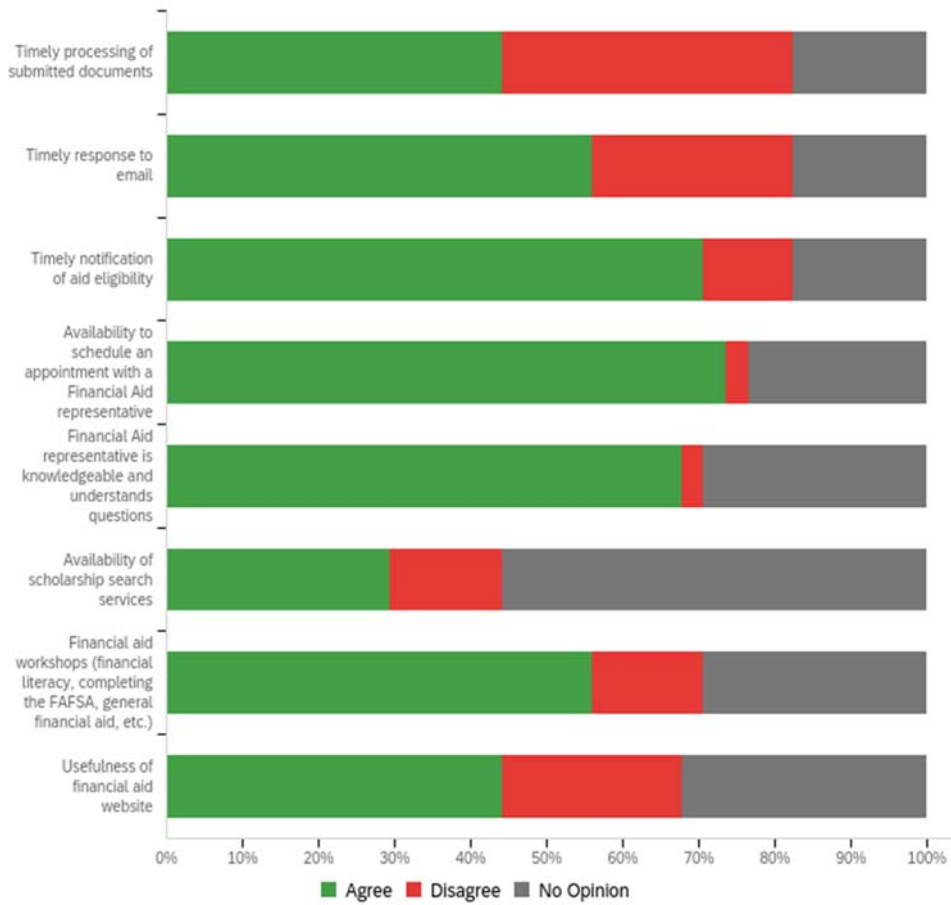
I didnt say we didnt adequately serve any groups.

Please check the relevant boxes for each topic that reflects your perception of how students at your institution would respond. - This is important to students



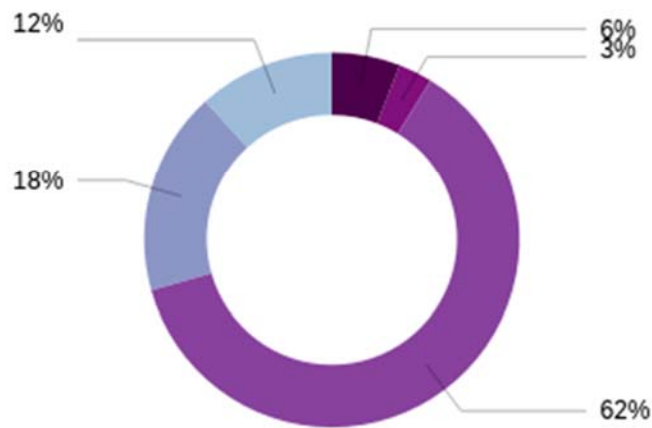
#	Question	Yes		No		No Opinion		Total
		%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	
1	Timely processing of submitted documents	100%	34	0%	0	0%	0	34
2	Timely response to email	100%	34	0%	0	0%	0	34
3	Timely notification of aid eligibility	97%	33	3%	1	0%	0	34
4	Availability to schedule an appointment with a Financial Aid representative	97%	33	0%	0	3%	1	34
5	Financial Aid representative is knowledgeable and understands questions	100%	34	0%	0	0%	0	34
6	Availability of scholarship search services	74%	25	6%	2	21%	7	34
7	Financial aid workshops (financial literacy, completing the FAFSA, general financial aid, etc.)	97%	33	3%	1	0%	0	34
8	Usefulness of financial aid website	94%	32	3%	1	3%	1	34

Please check the relevant boxes for each topic that reflects your perception of how students at your institution would respond. - Students feel the financial aid office does this well



#	Question	Agree		Disagree		No Opinion		Total
		%	n	%	n	%	n	
1	Timely processing of submitted documents	44%	15	38%	13	18%	6	34
2	Timely response to email	56%	19	26%	9	18%	6	34
3	Timely notification of aid eligibility	71%	24	12%	4	18%	6	34
4	Availability to schedule an appointment with a Financial Aid representative	74%	25	3%	1	24%	8	34
5	Financial Aid representative is knowledgeable and understands questions	68%	23	3%	1	29%	10	34
6	Availability of scholarship search services	29%	10	15%	5	56%	19	34
7	Financial aid workshops (financial literacy, completing the FAFSA, general financial aid, etc.)	56%	19	15%	5	29%	10	34
8	Usefulness of financial aid website	44%	15	24%	8	32%	11	34

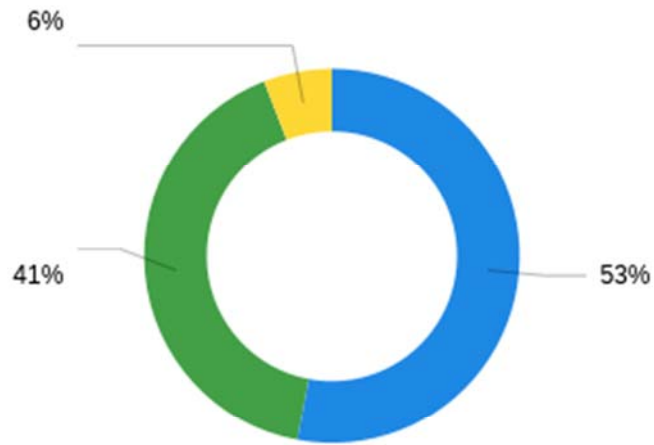
How often does your office meet as a group? If you are in a large office, answer this question regarding your unit or area of responsibility.



Frequently, each day
 2-3 times a week
 Once a week
 Every two weeks
 Once a month
 Infrequently, every 3-4 months
 Never

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Frequently, each day	6%	2
2	2-3 times a week	3%	1
3	Once a week	62%	21
4	Every two weeks	0%	0
5	Once a month	18%	6
6	Infrequently, every 3-4 months	12%	4
7	Never	0%	0
	Total	100%	34

Please rate the effectiveness of your group meetings.



■ Very effective
 ■ Moderately effective
 ■ Neutral
 ■ Moderately ineffective
 ■ Very ineffective

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Very effective	53%	18
2	Moderately effective	41%	14
3	Neutral	6%	2
4	Moderately ineffective	0%	0
5	Very ineffective	0%	0
	Total	100%	34

How can meeting effectiveness be improved?

I think the group meetings are very helpful.

1) Create an agenda 2) Discuss what's being worked on by you and/or other team members. 3) Sharing information, new or old, and what can improve. 4) Setting a goal for you and next meeting you can discuss if that goal was met. Whether its reaching out to x amount of students to finish up on their file, submit documents. Or, even touching base with students if they have follow up questions. 5) Team collaborations on a topic

We have office every Wed for all the permanent staff and it is very effective.

Reduce meeting length and schedule follow-up on agreed tasks.

Everyone is clear on the purpose of the meeting. The purpose is relevant to all participants. Participants feel heard and understood during the meeting. Desired outcomes for the meeting are achieved. Commitments to action and next steps are clear.

I do not know.

by people listening

Our meetings up to now have simply been a way to pass information to and from the supervisor so that every one is on the same page as far as important information goes. However, it would be nice to get together and discuss how we want to work on things as a team. For example, we all handle family contribution appeals slightly differently. It would be nice if we had a consistent methodology.

no much comments on this. i think we are doing well in this area.

Not sure. Occasionally not much is said during the meetings because there's not much to update each other on; everyone's just trying to get work done. So some meetings aren't as productive as others.

Set an agenda in advance

Our team is small, but we work closely with DO-IT staff that are working with us. We all have different meetings to attend and work hours vary. We meet as a large group at least monthly and then at least weekly within our small groups.

no suggestion

No need for improvement at this time.

Have meeting notes and circulate minutes.

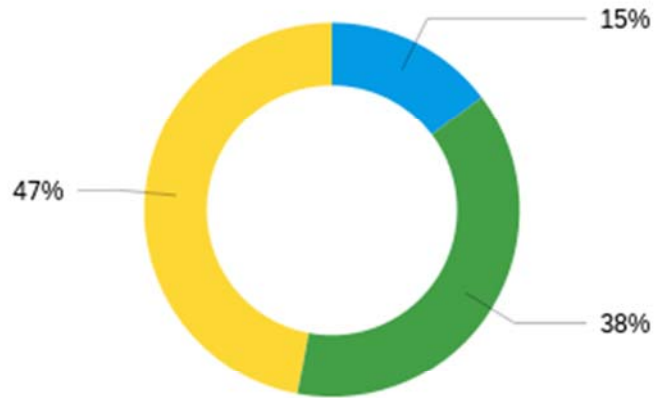
Effectiveness could be improved if we meet more regularly and have more frequent updates to see where other staff is at in regards to their area of responsibility.

I think everyone needs to be as succinct as possible. Sometimes staff will go on and on about their standard weekly duties, but it is already well known about those things.

I think effectiveness is hard to pinpoint since so many of our decisions have to then go through the district Financial Aid dept and then wait to see if changes can be made.

Outside resources prepared for each meeting. A location for notes and documents.

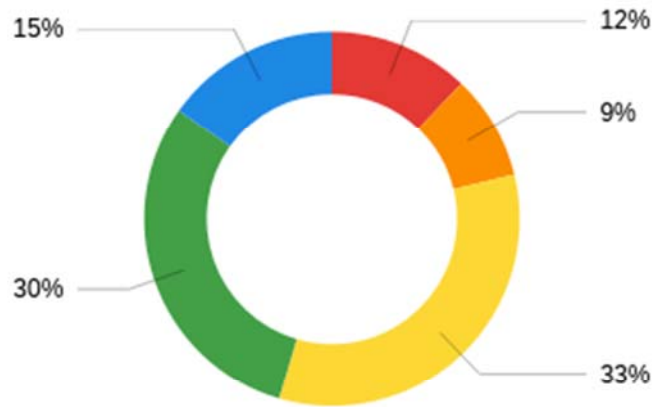
How much input do you have into the operational decisions related to your unit or area of responsibility?



■ A lot
 ■ A moderate amount
 ■ A little
 ■ None at all

#	Answer	%	Count
1	A lot	15%	5
2	A moderate amount	38%	13
3	A little	47%	16
4	None at all	0%	0
	Total	100%	34

Please rank the level you feel your input is used to help inform decision making to help students have a better experience.



■ 1 (low)
 ■ 2
 ■ 3
 ■ 4
 ■ 5 (high)

Answer	%	Count
1 (low)	12%	4
2	9%	3
3	33%	11
4	30%	10
5 (high)	15%	5
Total	100%	33

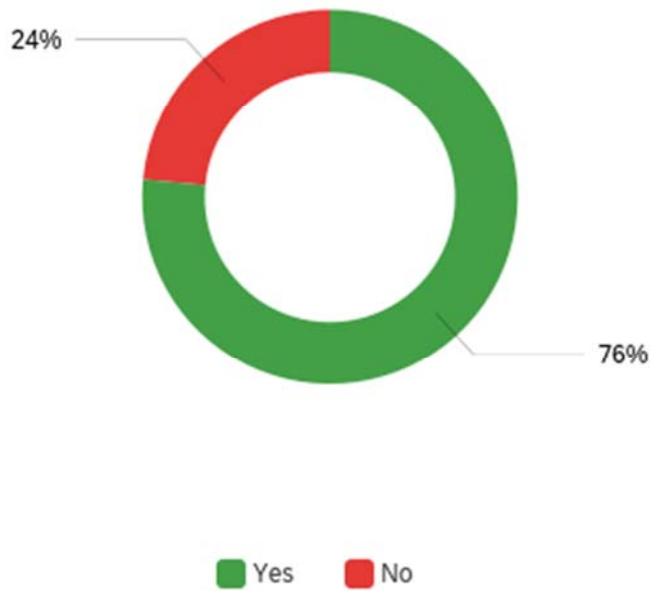
Please explain why you feel your input is not valued

still the new person

Nearly all decisions are made higher up the food chain. Supervisors may have SOME input but most decisions are made at the district level and we are informed after the fact.

I usually don't provide much input to begin with.

Do you feel you have adequate training to do your job?



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	76%	26
2	No	24%	8
	Total	100%	34

Please explain why you feel you do not have adequate training to do your job.

To be honest, I preferred to have hands on training and not watch someone talk about it or look at a PowerPoint. I know creating and hosting a training is a lot of work and takes a lot of time but for those who are visual learners and need the hands on training would benefit from it more. Also, training from the student's view is a must so when we are helping students over the phone and we do not see what they see can cause frustration on both sides. Knowledge on all programs from start to finish is a must too since certain staffs are assigned to certain programs and do not know the whole process on other programs.

There are many situations that cannot be trained on until the issue occurs. Not all knowledgeable team members are willing to assist in training.

100% remote training was detrimental

Even though I can go through and read the regulations and rules, it doesn't teach me how to do things within PeopleSoft. The district does have manuals for certain programs but not all programs. If I get stuck, then I would ask a coworker or a colleague from another school for help.

I feel that when I began as a permanent employee, there were a lot of changes going on in the office that I was not given an in person one-on-one training. I feel that I need additional training on PeopleSoft. I don't just want to know how to process a file. I want to know what all the screens do and what information is found there. I do better if someone sits down with me and shows me instead of just reading a manual.

More training could be done on how to budget the various budget strings and how to manage them. They are overly complicated.

Not one of our job duties has a training manual/procedures created by district. It is understandable and can see the importance that all four campuses to do things the same but when no procedure exist then how can you say you have been trained adequately?

Much of the current training requires trail by fire with no clear notes or guidelines. Most are outside sources due to ever changing process.

In your opinion, what are the most pressing issues facing your office?

Technological support and interdepartmental cohesiveness. If we could have more efficient processes including support from areas like the Business Office, Counseling, Instruction, things could run a lot smoother. Right now, issues such as Financial Aid disbursements (including inactive Bank Mobile accounts, stale dated checks, stop payments), course applicability, and attendance verification are "Financial Aid issues". This takes our focus off actual Financial Aid issues and away from assisting students, as well as requires us to do much more manual work, leading to staff burn out.

1) Some staffs don't want to be on campus because its too cold in the office (controlled by someone else) and is uncomfortable because of covid despite being fully vaccinated. 2) We do not transfer or share certain documents (i.e.HS Diploma, academic transcripts, Tax Returns for the year requested) in one database to our sister colleges. This frustrates student because its still within the district. 3) File processor's access level is limited in Peoplesoft/Campus Logic versus old system PowerFaid. We can't do certain things anymore such as batch post, pull our own reports (FA Officers only have access or District Office), package/award student's file. 3) Many students cannot print out a copy of their FA Award letter from their student E-services account because it does not have their name and ID on it which is something that the third party wants. So that increases a lot manual release of information. 4) Not enough or routine office supplies given to us on a regular basis. We have to buy our own supplies such as pen, sticky notes, binders. etc (we have some extra organizers and folders but can use more filing tabs). 5) Crowded space or need to re-arrange our cubicles in order to make room for our filing cabinets and more. Documents should not be stored in an open space for privacy of students PII. 6) Our FA computer lab or waiting room gets taken away from us. How do we better assist our students if we have no room of our own to use to help our needy students. Example, our computer lab was taken away in the Business building, our computer lab at Student Services building, and now our waiting room is being taken over. I feel we are being pushed around and last one on the list to deal with when we are one of the most important department on campus.

Low staff in the office to do the work. Not getting the support from District Office in terms of the computer system to make our job easier, faster, and more accurate. I feel like we are working harder (not smarter) because we don't have access to set the system like we use to in PowerFAIDS.

Non-standard district reports require heavy filtering and merging and manual processing demands. Packaging & Repackaging accurately and more frequently. Major changes and ineligible majors combined with the lack of restricted enrollment and student groups. Easy to find clear instructions that help students navigate and resolve issues through self-service or in-person. Retraining staff and students due to frequent systems changes. Assisting & communicating with students without a computer (using a phone), or low-level computer navigation skills, and/or limited English understanding.

no comment

Most of our work is done manually and is time consuming.

FA Officer have a lot of reports that they are working on daily.

Drafting the right response to emails.

turnover is really high

Students reaching a counselor for issues that are impacting their financial aid

Processing/reports, etc. made at the District Office that affect our work being made without fully working with us at the campus to see if the changes are beneficial. Working in Campus Logic to process paperwork which causes some backlogs as the submission process for students isn't intuitive. So it causes quite a bit of back and forth, thus prolonging the process. Complicated navigation of our website. There isn't good tagging to allow students to just search for the information they need. Instead they have to navigate the site, causing frustration and errors.

new people who are not fully trained for the position

coming back to work on campus

From an officer point of view, we have too much "busywork". Running the same reports every week, looking for errors/misses caused by system processes, seeing if we can manually fix those errors. There are many things we do that are a real waste of time. Ex: If a student hasn't completed a Master Promissory Note for loans, there is nothing we can do about it but they will still come up on our reports.

being under staff

Overworking staff. I don't personally do a lot of overtime but I do see that other staff put in a lot of overtime just to keep their heads above the water. I always end up feeling bad that they're struggling and if I'm able to help and have the time to help I always offer.

student emails student phone calls

The processing time frame for student financial aid files and satisfactory academic progress appeals during the peak days of the academic year, especially the beginning of each semester.

Not having enough student helps or temps during the peak processing time.

PeopleSoft itself is not friendly and set up is not correct to make the processes more efficient and smooth.

I feel that as a team, we can do a better job responding to student emails in a timely manner. I feel that everyone should have a better idea of what each person does and that communication amongst staff is really important. Also, it seems that we could be making better use of the PeopleSoft system so that we get our students their financial aid quicker.

The lack of trained staff (including FWS/TCL/Student Help) as this has caused for there to be a delay in assisting students over the phone or over email. Additionally, a lack of staff who want to come back to campus and work as it has increased pressure for our very little front counter staff who are having to assist students in person, take phone calls and take lab appointments for FAFSA.

Technology, System needs to be revamped

Keeping up with all the changes with DOE - staffing for out reach

Nothing major, we have a great team and we have been caught up on all our processes. The only thing I can think of is the document submission process can be confusing to some of our students who are not as familiar with technology. Currently, most of our options for document submission is online, and even if a student wants to come to our office in person to submit documents, they have to schedule an appointment on our website or by calling us to come visit our office in person. Also, during peak times, it can be difficult for students to get a hold of us via phone just because our call volume increases significantly.

The system itself can be difficult due to our set up. The way PS was set up years ago before FA began using it is very difficult for our multi college system. we have had to find ways to work within the limitations and build mods to help us with the process.

Staffing. Administrative Capability. No Compliance Director in charge of Los Rios. Our Systems Director sometimes will act as this when it is convenient for him to do so but will never put anything in writing. Ensuring that everyone who is working is on task and being productive. Queries are a joke.

Are you asking just about my particular office? My campus office runs smoothly. If you are asking overall, district wide then I would say in part it runs smoothly, there is always room for improvements especially with concern to processing and procedures

No pressing issues to report.

Processing documents in a timely manner for students. Better work structure to support this. Improvements to PeopleSoft and eServices.

What would help you be more successful in your job?

Having more efficient processes so that we are under less stress of falling behind. There is never a time I don't have a deadline to meet or that I feel like I am caught up.

1) Hands on training on real cases, different scenarios on every program. Example: What happens if parents are no longer married, what documents do we request for, how do we split their tax return transcript if filed jointly, etc., How do students verify that they have a dependent child to qualify for the Cal Grant, Loan process walkthrough from student's perspective. This may be something that my office can work on - cross training and expand knowledge in other financial aid programs (Loans, RT24, Cal grant, FWS, etc.) from start to finish process by being in teams. So that we are not always depending on the person in charge of the program to come back from lunch or vacation just to get an answer.

Have more staff and have more access to the computer system.

Improve queries and packaging activities. Improve course eligibility and major selection information. Clear, thorough, easy to find Financial Aid self-service navigational information with pictures on each campus website. Reduce changing processing systems.

I have everything I need to do my job successfully

Full manual on PeopleSoft for each screen used. More than is what is listed in Canvas.

Be more technically educated to run, filter, process reports.

Positive feedback.

more access to co-workers

Pairing up with partners in admissions and counseling

A more efficient method of processing files, reviewing SAP appeals and requesting additional documentation from student. Reports that are consistent with student name, Id, SAP status, Enrollment status and EFC. All reports should have this information as a baseline.

being able to learn more

cross training

Having actual Peoplesoft experts who know how to make the system work as it should. An analogy: it's like we bought a 747 but didn't want to pay for the people who could actually maintain and fly it. Instead, we just hired some very smart aviation enthusiasts who have gotten us to the point where we can drive it around on the tarmac.

by having the adequate # of staff will help each member to do their projects on time

It would help to have more staff. But it would also help to have more guides for different processes in PeopleSoft.

to have more tools, support and resources available

Participate in training and workshops each year to cover all updates related to student financial aid. Follow up FSA messages about all the amendments and updates. Develop and improve self-experience in using financial aid processing programs and systems.

Better cooperation between other departments

The better programming and PS design/set up that can be done by District Office. A designated IT person for financial aid office. Support part-time staff

I enjoy learning especially when it relates to helping our students. I believe that perhaps an evaluation of the processes I work on would help me improve. I want to get feedback on my work and make sure that I am working smarter not harder. This will help me to keep giving it my best every day.

Increasing staff and having more seasoned staff come onto campus instead of being remote.

Automate processes compliance officer to review the processes/practices

A additional person to help oversee office processes so I can considerate on policy and regulations

Currently, I have no complaints. However, when we first started working remotely, I was not given a laptop or computer to work from home, and I had to use my own laptop that was sometimes not adequate enough to run the remote desktop. We recently were assigned new work laptops a couple of weeks ago, so I no longer have this issue.

I'm not sure, i feel like we are doing pretty well.

Detailed procedures. Methods to easily quantitatively measure our team. Yearly calendars. If DO puts out a new process, they need to provide the written procedures instead of requiring everyone to take notes.

District Team meetings (Pell, R2T4, State grant, Loans, etc) to create district procedures with a district financial aid staff to help navigate the workings of the system.

More training to grow in my career.

Better training and calendar for important dates.

Additional comments

Give us more access to the computer system. We were told we have limited access to PeopleSoft system because it has something to do with having 4 different Title IV school codes. Maybe combine the 4 Los Rios Colleges in one Title IV code school with DOE?

The rating system before this free text space was difficult to answer. As far as I know, I am unaware of any formal assessment of student opinions. I am only aware of student opinions when they contact us for assistance. Additionally, at times we have enough staff and at times we don't. Lastly, form processing timelines due to changing verification requirements have greatly changed.

Thank you for this helpful survey.

Having guides for PeopleSoft for all programs would help with new hires as well. I know when we had new hires in our office they struggled to learn PeopleSoft, especially since a lot has changed since the initial switch to using PeopleSoft.

thank you

PeopleSoft configuration was already completed over a decade ago without Financial Aid in mind. The setup was done based on a department's need and each college within the district was setup as a Career. The PeopleSoft Financial Aid module had to be setup around the current PeopleSoft setup which has resulted in many modifications to accommodate the setup. Our team has inherited the existing setup and we have been working diligently with DO-IT to make several improvements within the system. Processes have been created to alleviate the manual workload for colleges (i.e. consortium process). Due to the PeopleSoft setup, CampusLogic StudentForms was setup for each college. CampusLogic StudentForms allows students to complete eForms which was beneficial during the pandemic, however, StudentForms definitely has its limitations. There is quite a bit of manual cleanup when they deploy their system changes. When certain tasks have already been assigned to students in StudentForms, but the system change impacts those tasks, college are required to manually cleanup those tasks. When we have large colleges with thousands of students, that is not feasible. There is no batch task waive functionality despite us being told the system had that capability. Instead, the updated recommendation was to expire the transaction type. Expiring the transaction type has consequences and since CampusLogic and PeopleSoft are separate systems, they must be in sync with student records. If not, that can cause issues with file processing. We utilize the Bulk Action feature for StudentForms to request additional information when there is conflicting data between what is reported with the Records department and what was reported on the ISIR. The Bulk Action feature has a bug with lifetime documents in subsequent years that still has not been resolved. An update has not been provided to for months. As a result, our team has more back end monitoring and cleanup for all four colleges.

I think that the meetings we had with the consultants might have worked out better if they meet with staff from one college at a time before meeting with all colleges together. If given more time with each college, more information and concerns would have presented themselves and given a better idea of the similarities and differences that each college has.

Overseeing 13 to 16 people is a lot to handle and manage

The district financial aid team is wonderful. They are doing their best given the dysfunctional system which they inherited. They need additional help. I cannot see how they can help with creating these procedures without additional help. I am certain that one person there is doing the job of several and working more hours than required.

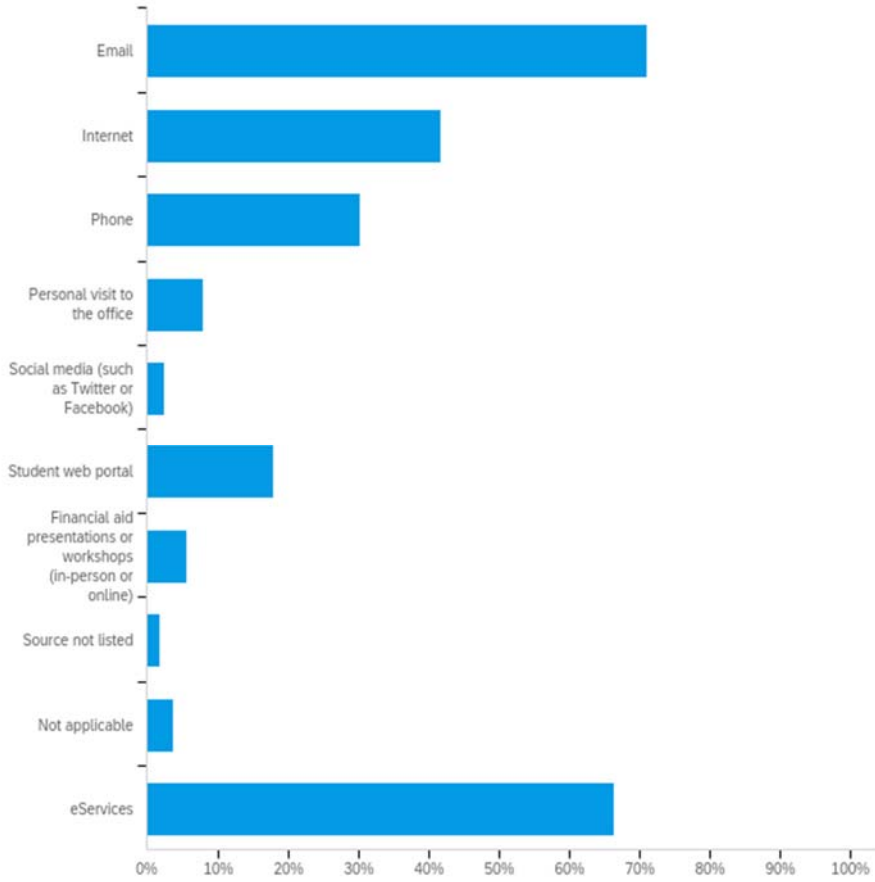
FINANCIAL AID OFFICE STUDENT SATISFACTION SURVEY

Students were asked to provide feedback on timeliness of processing, communications from the FAO, response rates, and general impressions. A total of 526 students started the survey and 150 assessments were received (students answered all questions), responses compiled/summarized below.

The feedback students provided in the student satisfaction survey was generally positive regarding their interactions with the FAO, which was consistent with employee responses. The majority of responders rated the financial aid quality and accuracy of services either excellent or good. Efficiency and timeliness of communication received the lowest ratings. Student survey comments were very positive regarding services provided by the financial aid employees. Areas of improvements expressed by the students focused around communications and response rates to emails and phone calls. The results of the survey are included below.

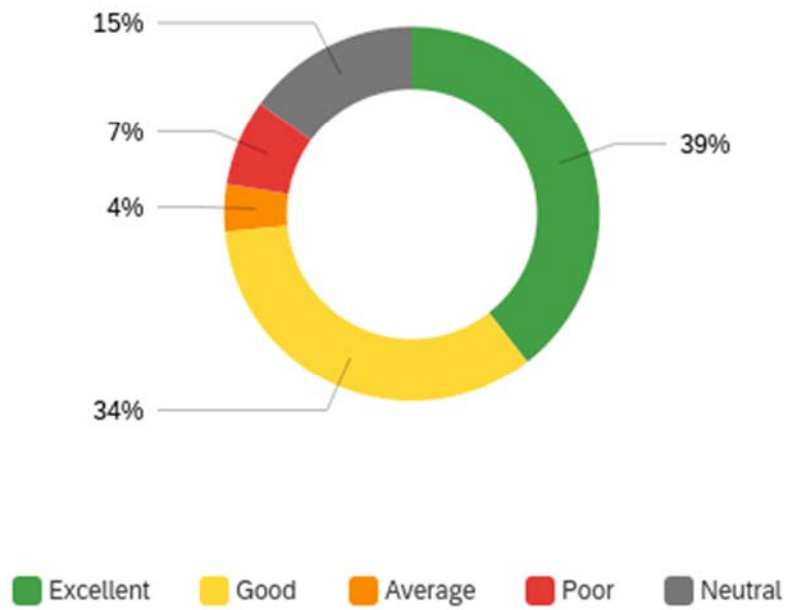
Please note: Appraisal responses were not edited for spelling or grammar, but personally identifiable information was redacted to retain confidentiality.

What are your primary sources of financial aid information? (Please select all that apply)



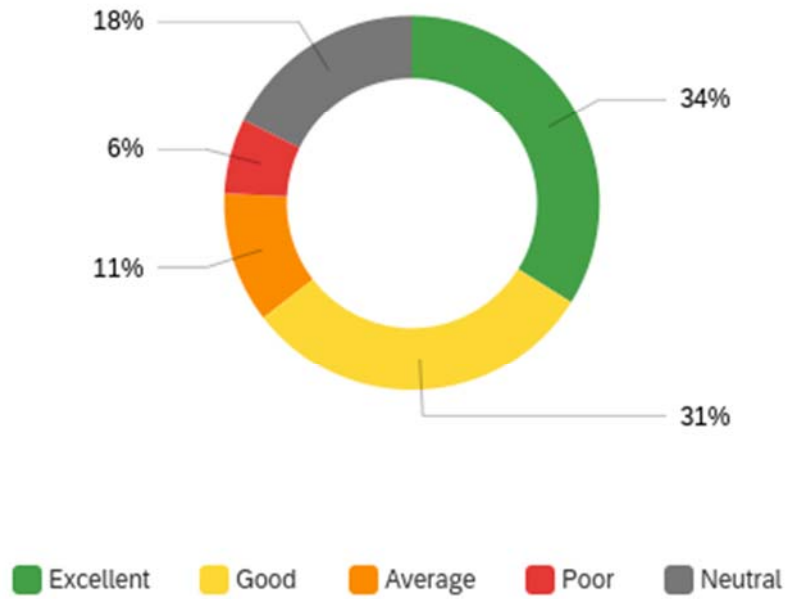
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Email	29%	150
2	Internet	17%	88
3	Phone	12%	64
4	Personal visit to the office	3%	17
5	Social media (such as Twitter or Facebook)	1%	5
6	Student web portal	7%	38
7	Financial aid presentations or workshops (in-person or online)	2%	12
8	Source not listed	1%	4
9	Not applicable	2%	8
10	eServices	27%	140
	Total	100%	526

Please rate the quality and accuracy of the information you received via email.



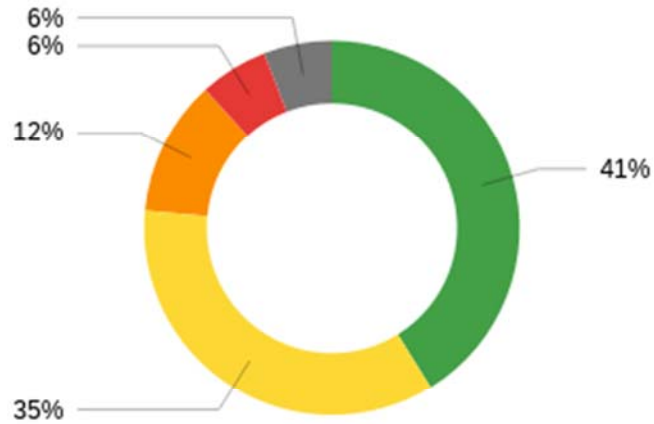
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Excellent	39%	58
2	Good	34%	50
3	Average	4%	6
4	Poor	7%	11
5	Neutral	15%	22
	Total	100%	147

Please rate the quality and accuracy of the information you received via phone.



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Excellent	34%	21
2	Good	31%	19
3	Average	11%	7
4	Poor	6%	4
5	Neutral	18%	11
	Total	100%	62

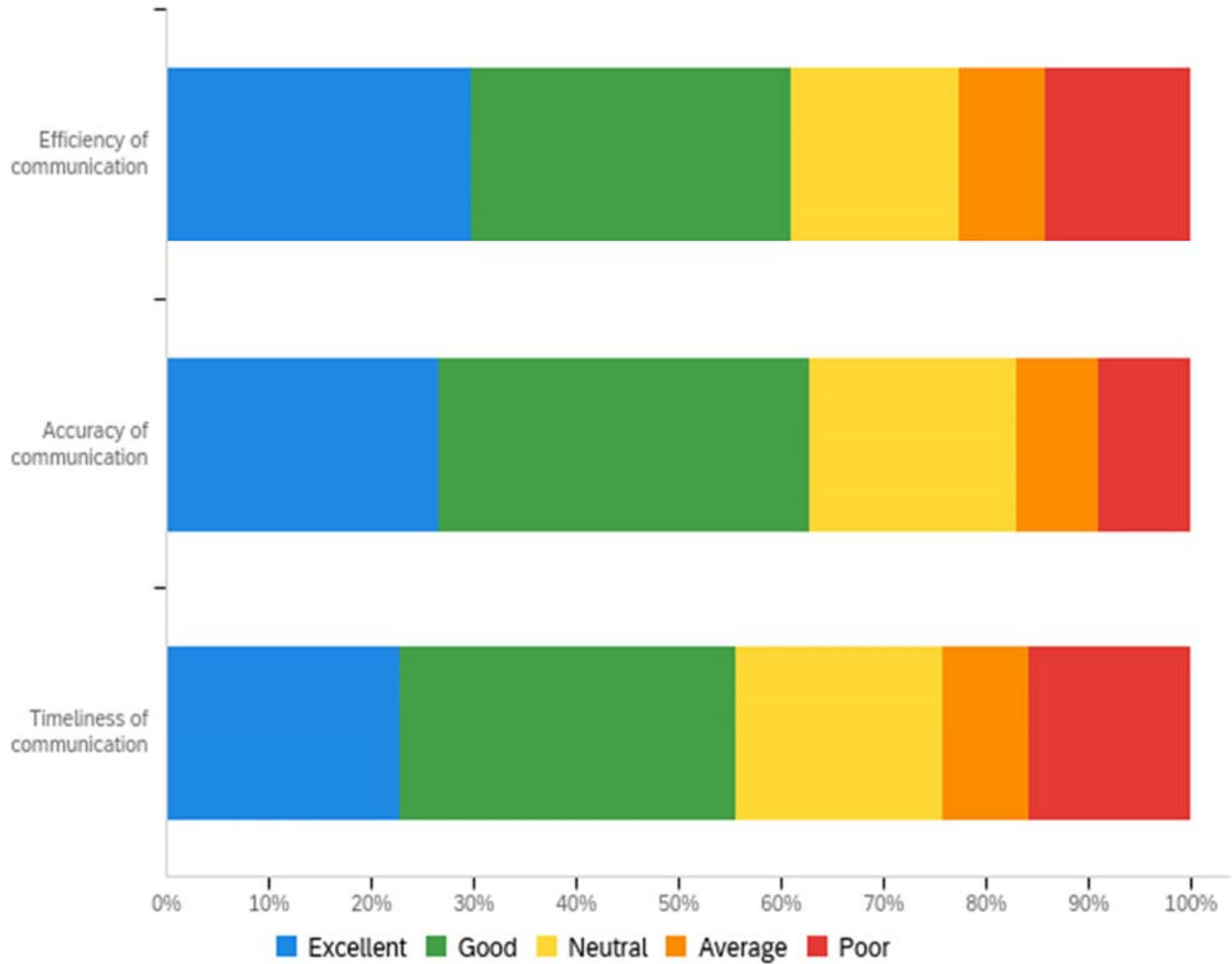
Please rate the quality and accuracy of the information you received by visiting the office.



■ Excellent
 ■ Good
 ■ Average
 ■ Poor
 ■ Neutral

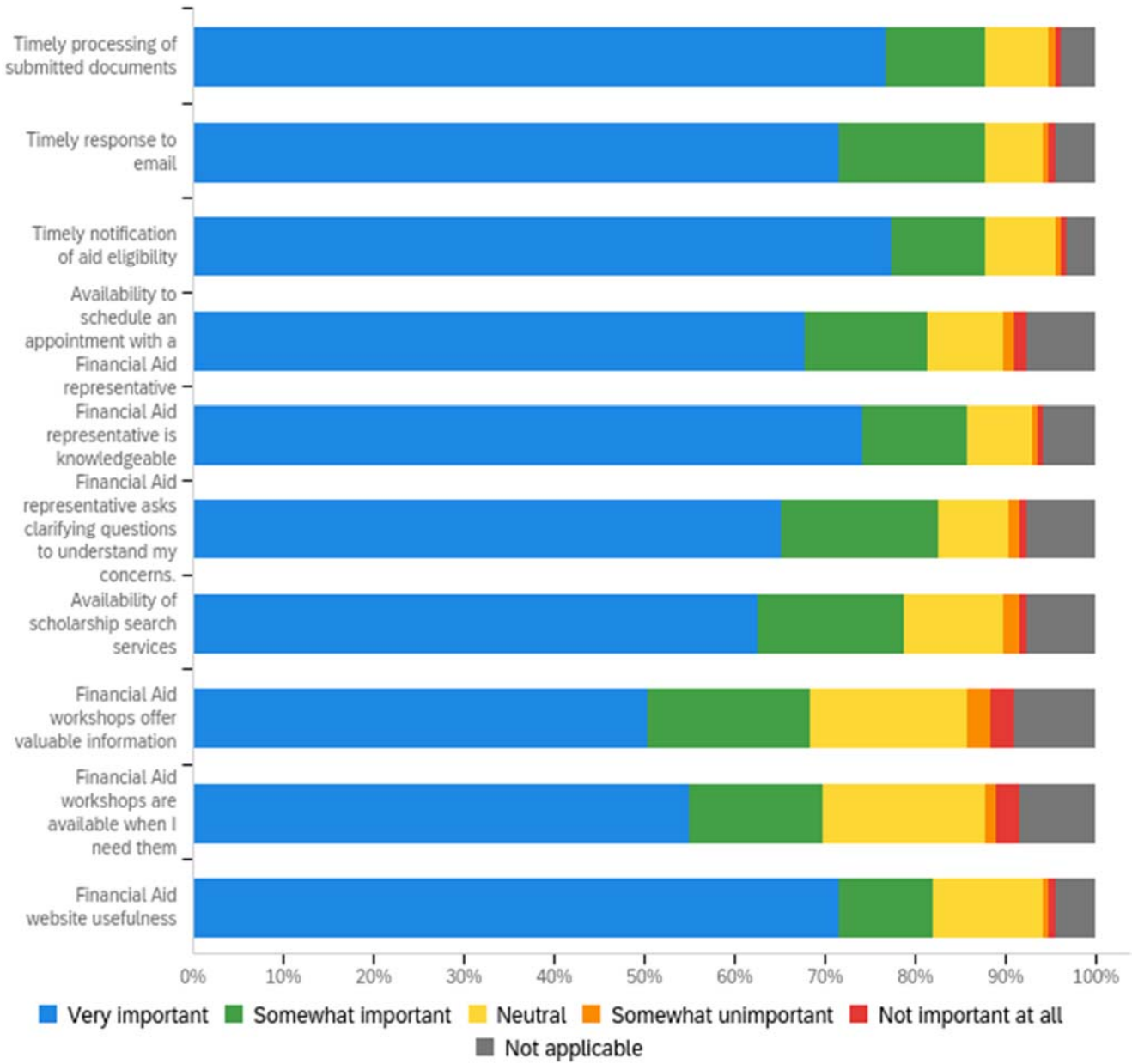
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Excellent	41%	7
2	Good	35%	6
3	Average	12%	2
4	Poor	6%	1
5	Neutral	6%	1
	Total	100%	17

Please rate the communication from the financial aid office.



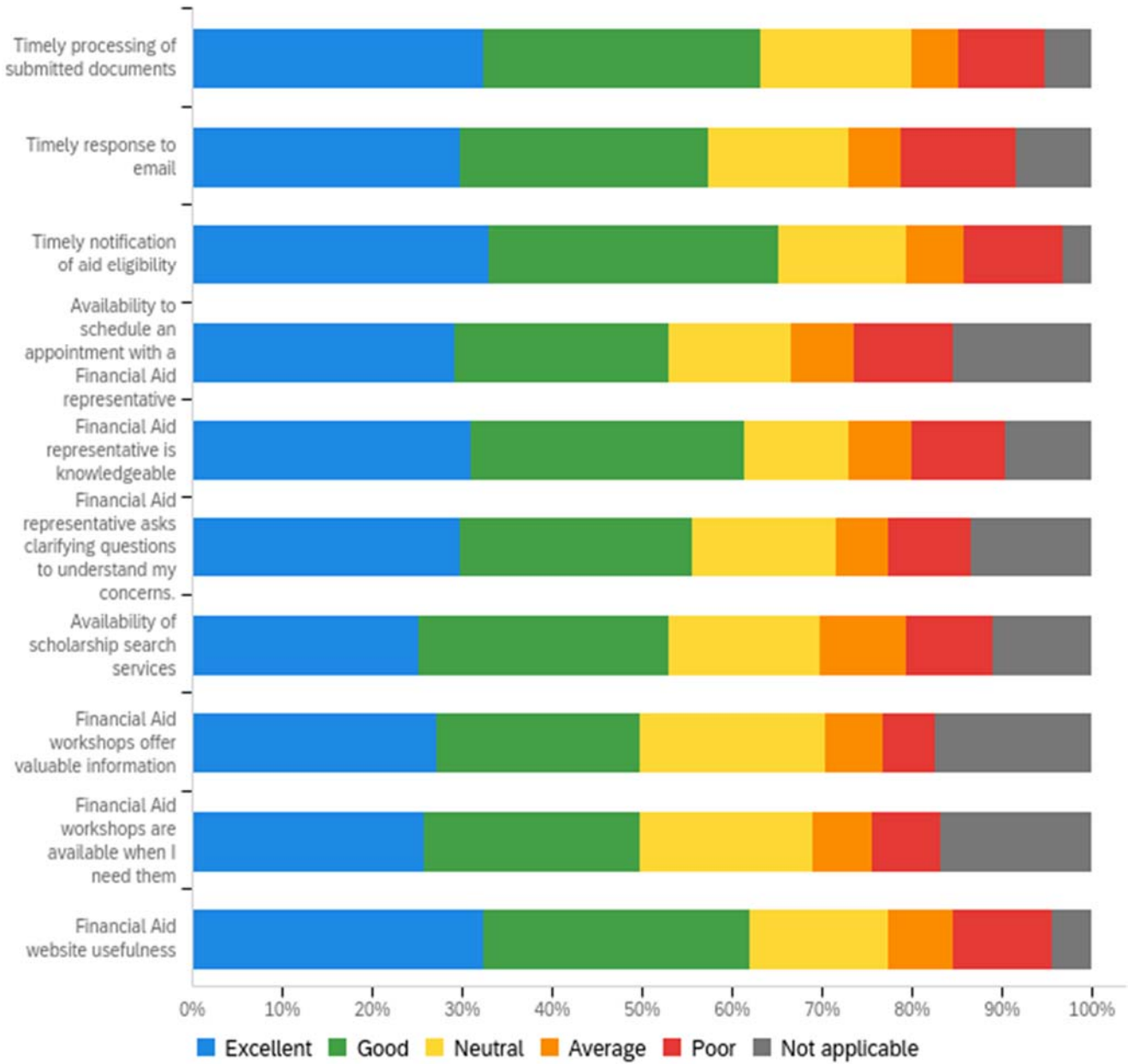
#	Question	Excellent		Good		Neutral		Average		Poor		Total
		%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	
1	Efficiency of communication	30%	56	31%	59	16%	31	8%	16	14%	27	189
2	Accuracy of communication	27%	50	36%	68	20%	38	8%	15	9%	17	188
3	Timeliness of communication	23%	43	33%	62	20%	38	8%	16	16%	30	189

Rank the following areas of financial aid. - This area is important to me



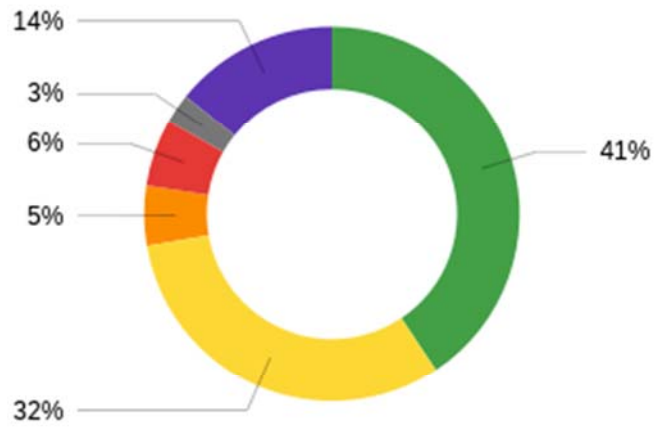
#	Question	Very important		Somewhat important		Neutral		Somewhat unimportant		Not important at all		Not applicable		Total
		%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	
1	Timely processing of submitted documents	77%	119	11%	17	7%	11	1%	1	1%	1	4%	6	155
2	Timely response to email	72%	111	16%	25	6%	10	1%	1	1%	1	5%	7	155
3	Timely notification of aid eligibility	77%	120	10%	16	8%	12	1%	1	1%	1	3%	5	155
4	Availability to schedule an appointment with a Financial Aid representative	68%	105	14%	21	8%	13	1%	2	1%	2	8%	12	155
5	Financial Aid representative is knowledgeable	74%	115	12%	18	7%	11	1%	1	1%	1	6%	9	155
6	Financial Aid representative asks clarifying questions to understand my concerns.	65%	101	17%	27	8%	12	1%	2	1%	1	8%	12	155
7	Availability of scholarship search services	63%	97	16%	25	11%	17	2%	3	1%	1	8%	12	155
8	Financial Aid workshops offer valuable information	50%	78	18%	28	17%	27	3%	4	3%	4	9%	14	155
9	Financial Aid workshops are available when I need them	55%	85	15%	23	18%	28	1%	2	3%	4	8%	13	155
10	Financial Aid website usefulness	72%	111	10%	16	12%	19	1%	1	1%	1	5%	7	155

Rank the following areas of financial aid. - The financial aid office does this well



#	Question	Excellent		Good		Neutral		Average		Poor		Not applicable		Total
		%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	
1	Timely processing of submitted documents	32%	50	31%	48	17%	26	5%	8	10%	15	5%	8	155
2	Timely response to email	30%	46	28%	43	15%	24	6%	9	13%	20	8%	13	155
3	Timely notification of aid eligibility	33%	51	32%	50	14%	22	6%	10	11%	17	3%	5	155
4	Availability to schedule an appointment with a Financial Aid representative	29%	45	24%	37	14%	21	7%	11	11%	17	15%	24	155
5	Financial Aid representative is knowledgeable	31%	48	30%	47	12%	18	7%	11	10%	16	10%	15	155
6	Financial Aid representative asks clarifying questions to understand my concerns.	30%	46	26%	40	16%	25	6%	9	9%	14	14%	21	155
7	Availability of scholarship search services	25%	39	28%	43	17%	26	10%	15	10%	15	11%	17	155
8	Financial Aid workshops offer valuable information	27%	42	23%	35	21%	32	6%	10	6%	9	17%	27	155
9	Financial Aid workshops are available when I need them	26%	40	24%	37	19%	30	6%	10	8%	12	17%	26	155
10	Financial Aid website usefulness	32%	50	30%	46	15%	24	7%	11	11%	17	5%	7	155

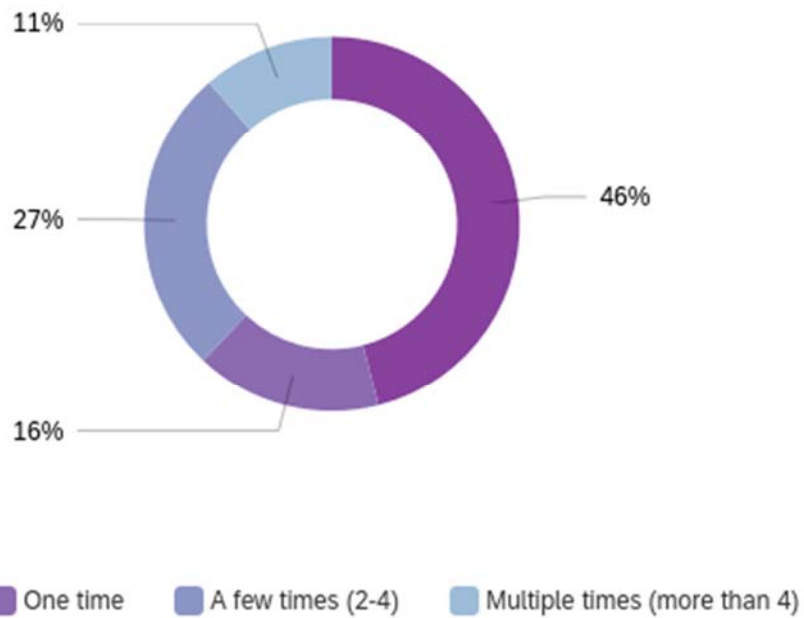
Please rate the helpfulness of the financial aid portion of eServices.



■ Excellent
 ■ Good
 ■ Average
 ■ Poor
 ■ Not applicable - didn't use it
 ■ Neutral

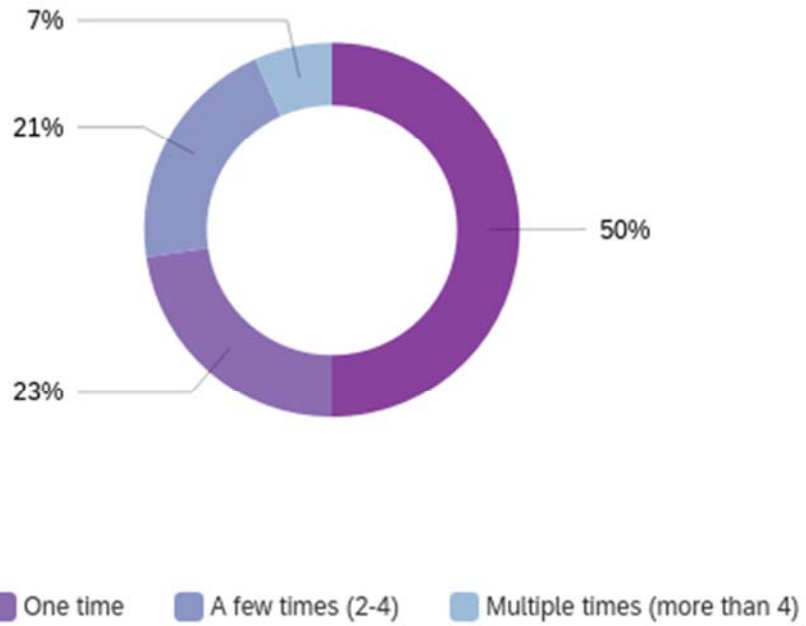
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Excellent	41%	63
2	Good	32%	49
3	Average	5%	8
4	Poor	6%	9
6	Not applicable - didn't use it	3%	4
7	Neutral	14%	22
	Total	100%	155

In the past 6 months, how many times have you contacted the financial aid office via phone?



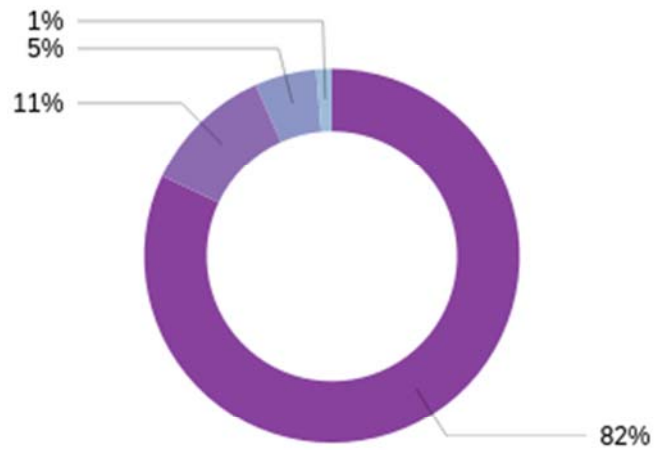
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Never	46%	69
2	One time	16%	24
3	A few times (2-4)	27%	40
4	Multiple times (more than 4)	11%	17
	Total	100%	150

In the past 6 months, how many times have you contacted the financial aid office via email?



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Never	50%	75
2	One time	23%	34
3	A few times (2-4)	21%	31
4	Multiple times (more than 4)	7%	10
	Total	100%	150

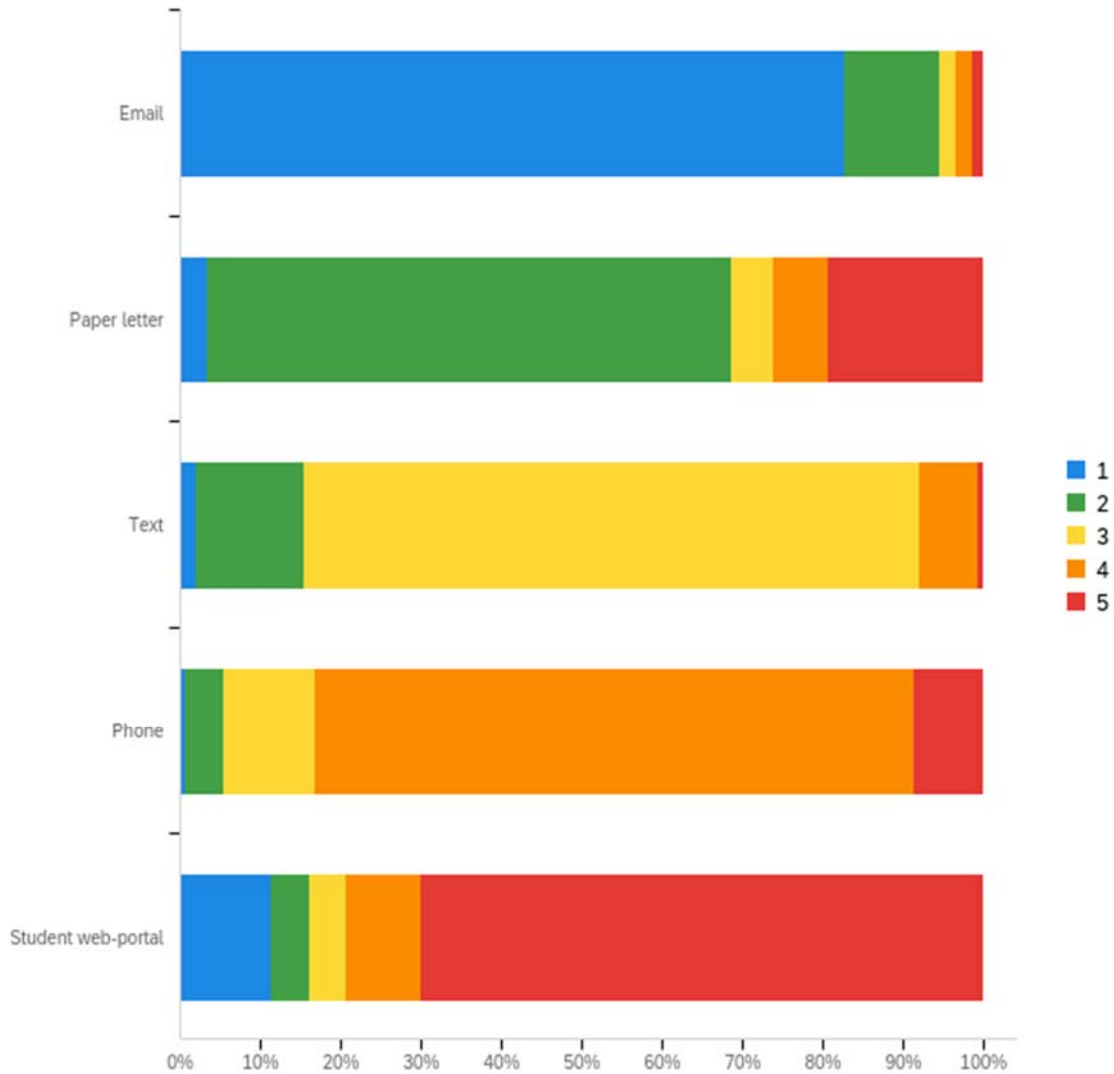
In the past 6 months, how many times have you visited the financial aid office in person?



■ Never
 ■ One time
 ■ A few times (2-4)
 ■ Multiple times (more than 4)

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Never	82%	123
2	One time	11%	17
3	A few times (2-4)	5%	8
4	Multiple times (more than 4)	1%	2
	Total	100%	150

Drag and drop to rank your communication preference in receiving financial aid information/notifications about your financial aid status, with the top space (#1) being the most preferred way to contact you.



#	Question	1		2		3		4		5		Total
		%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	
1	Email	83%	124	12%	18	2%	3	2%	3	1%	2	150
2	Paper letter	3%	5	65%	98	5%	8	7%	10	19%	29	150
3	Text	2%	3	13%	20	77%	115	7%	11	1%	1	150
4	Phone	1%	1	5%	7	11%	17	75%	112	9%	13	150
5	Student web-portal	11%	17	5%	7	5%	7	9%	14	70%	105	150

Please share one thing the financial aid office does best. (300 character maximum length.)

One time, I wasn't aware that I had to make changes to my chosen course since it affected my financial aid, and so the financial aid office contacted me and they did a really good job helping me so I wouldn't lose my financial aid.

That Is Good not very

I like that they are very understanding and clear.

got my financial aid in time for the book that I enrolled in.

knowledge base is very good with when speaking to a live agent

Process Paperwork timely

They aim to make sure students have successfully received their disbursement that they are eligible for.

They are great at forwarding important dates and deadlines.

Providing information

They got me the answer and they seemed knowledgeable about what I asked and reassured me of my situation.

The financial aid office is good at receiving all the emails.

communication

According to my experience, the best thing that the financial office are doing the best is sending the email when there is a new action such as sending money to account or reply to email. I really am satisfy with the financial office action. In fact, the office responsibility is very good.

all are good

Welcoming

Informing me when certain changes must be done to my fafsa packet.

the accuracy

I love the service I receive thus far from financial aid from communication via email.

Nothing

Provides accurate information.

FAO does a good job of making me aware of its existence.

Financial aid is amazing at helping students with social security fill out their bog waiver and reduces their price on their class fees for the next semester.

they didn't have people to help me to talk Vietnamese person

answer by phone

I haven't been to the financial aid office in more than 6 months.

Best? They actually reply... not quickly, and not to all your questions. But that's more than what I've experienced with your other staff at this point.

Updated student web portal

I have not visited or dealt with the financial aid office in my time at ARC (first year student). I have not dealt with the financial aid office because I have been satisfied with the money I have gotten through my FAFSA aid, I have not had a reason to go to the financial aid office/ contacted them

Hire unknowledgeable staff

Great communication

Update information in eservices.

Process financial aid promptly. I never have an issue or delay in reimbursements.

Honestly some are just as lost As I am.

solve my problem with fafsa

I don't know what to compare it to but they are good at getting back to you.

Using E services to communicate and have the info online

answer questions

Help you with your problems

Helps pay for my education

It good that there are people working in the financial aid office speaking different language. The last time I went to an employee who spoke Arabic helped me and facilitated the thing I inquired a bout and he answered me on all my questions.

I think everything is good.

If you didn't receive the correct amount of funds in one semester and due to not having a student educational plan will be automatically corrected the following semester with no calls from the recipient needed

Communication and Making sure every needs are meet.

gets my paper looked at timely matter, and financial Aid.

Good information on eservices about scholarships or financial aid information

The financial aid office does best is giving out information about someone financial aid resources.

The keep their appointments.

Offers online options.

Releasing information to the eServices portal.

Haven't used it.

Getting back to me in a timely manner after sending an email with a question about my financial aid.

The best thing that financial aid doing is they send the aid on time. Thanks

Getting out information

I have had zero interaction with the financial aid office. I have only used the eServices portal.

The financial aid office is very good at communicating with their students via email, text, and other primary sources.

The financial aid officers are knowledgeable and helpful.

The financial aids office is good at sending notifications.

Everything

They will email

They did well on answering the phone and solve my problems.

They are upfront.

Give more proper information with the deadlines

When I had problems they solved my all problems good.

Very clear on how much you owe and what programs you qualify for.

Depending on who it is they are very helpful but some people are not very helpful

Updates info on eservices

When you get the right person, in person, they are helpful

SCCC financial aid office had been top notch and on point NOT anymore

At just sitting there and being mean to students

phone calls and reminders

nice, friendly

They keep good records.

Eligibility notification

They are very informative and helpful.

Provides the information needed

Sends reminders

They call you back

Keep me up-to-date in a timely manner

Gets back to you in a timely manner

The people who work at the office are very helpful

Made it easy to apply

Help with required documents

Please share one thing the financial aid office needs to improve the most. (300 character maximum length.)

I currently don't have anything bad to say since I barely had any issues with them. I think they did a good job helping students and is always approachable and cooperative.

I need that The Financial aid email me after each paying or sending me the checks 😊

Not anything I can think of

in replying back to email inquiries by the student the dept often does not respond back.

Give accurate information the first time, so that a correction is not made afterwards that leads to confusion

The timely manner of a response.

They can improve on better communication.

I think everything is good

Email timeliness. In a world that operates effectively by emailing, not getting a response within 1-2 business days seems incredibly long, especially when dealing with something that can be very time sensitive.

The financial aid office needs to improve on their response time.

sending out information about grants

In my opinion, the office is doing well and I hope it will be consistently. If all employees be responsible about their work, everything will be good and all students will be satisfy with the financial office.

Understand and help students better

Maybe communication...

the ability to contact

I have no complaints thus far concerning financial aid.

Answer the phone answer the emails

Respond in a more timely manner.

FAO needs to let me know why I should use their services if I can, otherwise, I'll never go/contact them.

One thing that financial aid could improve on is having students do the refund online if they have any fees left over if they did the bog waiver.

They didn't nice to me when I need help how to applied financial aid

explane detaile of opportunity

I think the financial aid office is doing well.

Status of aid...every time I reached out it was because I was still waiting to hear what was happening.& btw I STILL NEVER RECEIVED FASFA. I've been told if it hasn't been issued to me that it's you guys I should be contacting.I gave up because between full time school & work I don't have time to ke

I can not think of anything that the financial aid office that needs to improve. Thank you all for your hard work this year.

Work more efficiently in getting the correct information out to students who cannot actually afford college

Nothing

Email me when aid is approved and available right away.

Due to the pandemic, processing times are longer than usual, but I don't think it is professional to reply to an email after eight days. They should acknowledge the request and respond promptly.

Information, do not just tell me there's something missing, verify what exactly is missing. If the person I'm working with does not know then how will i.

provide Calgrant opportunity

Scholarship and grant awareness.

Getting in touch with students

Not much it is easy to apply for financial aid

I don't know. Every thing was good with my experience. I did not face any difficulties.

keep doing as well as you did. With deep appreciation.

To be so aware of the recipients situation and knowledgeable in financial aid areas that they would ask questions that would better the financial aid recipients understanding and possibly give a call to a student just in case a student is not calling in as far as a welfare or a checkup if possible

I don't see anything that they need to improve on at this moment.

more communication and looking at papers in detail.

Provide faster and more available appointments

The financial aid could be better by giving more precise time when they some information to people.

I understand that the team is busy but it's difficult to get through.

Timely responses with stronger communication skills and information.

Communication between them and the colleges.

I go to all 3 campuses and I always get a task telling me which school I want to use. It really doesn't matter to me since I am online and next semester will be at 2 schools in person. I wish there was 1 central financial aid.

Financial aid appointments

I have had zero interaction with the financial aid office. I have only used the eServices portal.

One thing the financial aid office needs to improve the most is providing us a list of all upcoming financial aid funds. That way we know when our money will be coming.

The trainees in the office were not knowledgeable or helpful. The process described was incorrect and the information I submitted was not processed timely or accurately. This damaged my financial aid for the semester and led to personal stressors.

Offer more aid

I don't think they need to improve. So far my experience has been pretty good!

knowing when to stop using people aid when they are under sponsor

None

No thing need to improve.

They need explain things better and be knowledgeable in general. Often can't answer my questions.

Reaching out to students through different means

Good

NA Didn't need help

They are nice I rate them 10/10

What are the requirements for certain programs

Communication and being patient with students, actually helping students

Communication. I've had an issue with applying for emergency grants and have not received a reply or resolution in over a month. The grant opportunity expires in a week and I am still experiencing an emergency

"The left hand doesn't know what the right hand is doing " and we are left running in circles trying to make things match up. And some of the language in portal&emails is ambiguous, above our understanding.

Honest up to date communications.

They need to improve on their attitude

waiting time and acknowledge of the issue

They need to offer more in person or phone assistance in AL LEAST half hour increments to get all the information and questions answered.

Disbursement notification and explaining how to receive funds

I don't think there needs to be any improvements with the financial aid office but the online service needs to have more options for students to get up to date information on our grants or scholarships. response times to emails and calls

More helpful information on e-Services and website. Emails sometimes are difficult to understand when they use non-student language/terms

Processing aid faster

If i had to pick something.. just to make sure when a link is sent for to update info, that the link works

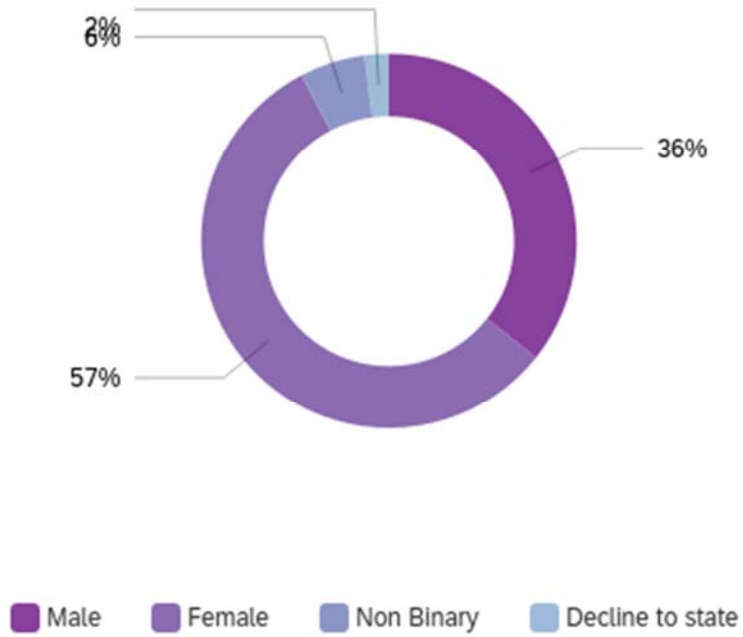
It's hard to file the application it can be confusing and complicated

Clear communication about how we get payments, how much and when they will be. I thought Bank Mobile was trying to scam me before they started sending checks and then still felt nervous.

Being timely and knowledgeable about how to provide aid such as scholarship checks. My scholarship check was lost at the financial aid office for a while. Respond to fixed issues in FAFSA errors or financial aid application errors quickly.

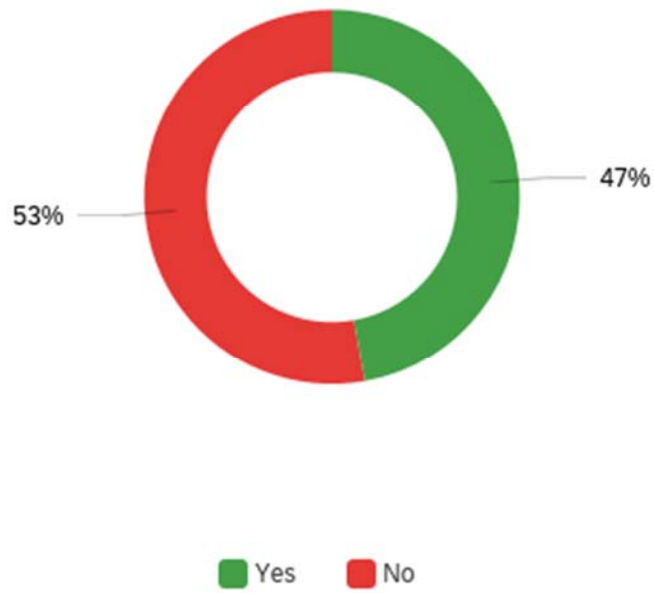
Correspondence

Gender



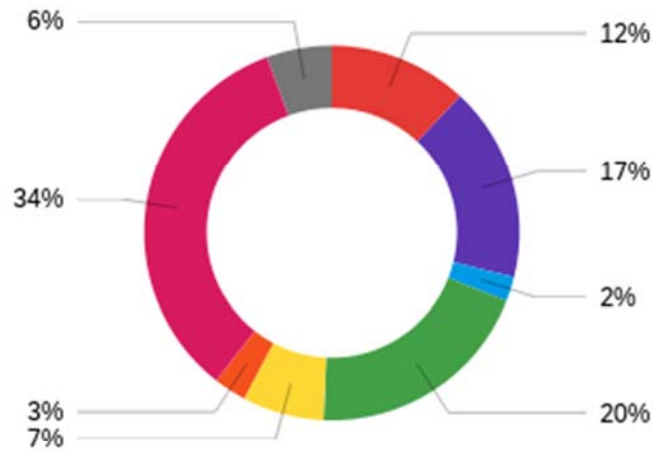
Answer	%	Count
Male	36%	51
Female	57%	81
Non Binary	6%	8
Decline to state	2%	3
Total	100%	143

Are you the first generation in your family to attend college?



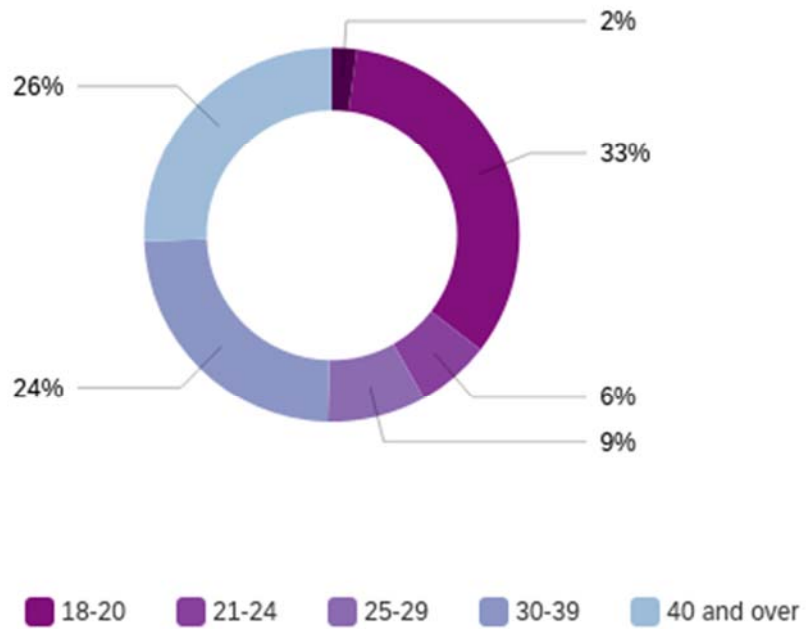
Answer	%	Count
Yes	47%	67
No	53%	75
Total	100%	142

What is your race/ethnicity?



Answer	%	Count
African American	12%	17
Asian	17%	24
Filipino	2%	3
Hispanic/Latino	20%	28
Multi-Race	7%	10
Pacific Islander	3%	4
White	34%	48
Decline to state	6%	8
Total	100%	142

What is your age group?



Answer	%	Count
Under 18	2%	3
18-20	33%	47
21-24	6%	9
25-29	9%	12
30-39	24%	34
40 and over	26%	36
Total	100%	141

Is this your first semester attending a Los Rios college?

current student

I took classes in highschool but this is my first semester as a college freshman.

Returning after an absence

Yes, but I also have a BS

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Weekly Summaries

Appendix B: Documentation Review

Appendix C: Data Review

Appendix D: Call Center Data

Appendix E: Sample Job Descriptions

Appendix F: Sample Monthly Customer Service Report

Appendix G: Sample Online Resolution Center

Appendix H: Sample Online Outreach Request Form

Appendix I: Sample Student Feedback Survey

APPENDIX A: WEEKLY SUMMARIES

The following interviews were held during the review process.

Week of October 11, 2021		
Kickoff Meeting	October 11, 2021	Blue Icon Consultants and Los Rios Leadership
Week of October 18, 2021		
Planning Meeting	October 18, 2021	Blue Icon Consultants
Planning Meeting	October 19, 2021	Blue Icon Consultants
Week of October 25, 2021		
Documentation Review Discussion	October 26, 2021	Blue Icon Consultants
Week of November 1, 2021		
Documentation Review Discussion	November 2, 2021	Blue Icon Consultants
Week of November 8, 2021		
Staff Interviews	November 8, 2021	Blue Icon Consultants with Roy Beckhorn and Chad Funk
Staff Interviews	November 9, 2021	Blue Icon Consultants with Randi Callow, Pam Tuzza, and Ali Padash
Staff Interviews	November 10, 2021	Blue Icon Consultants with All FA Supervisors
Team meeting to discuss Interviews	November 12, 2021	Blue Icon Consultants
Week of November 15, 2021		
Programmatic Staff Interviews	November 15, 2021	Blue Icon Consultants with FA Processing Staff – Grants, R2T4, Loans and Reconciliation
Programmatic Staff Interviews	November 16, 2021	Blue Icon Consultants with FA Processing Staff – SAP, Disbursements, and District Specialist Processes
Programmatic Staff Interviews	November 17, 2021	Blue Icon Consultants with FA Processing Staff – User Edit Messages and FSEOG
Week of November 22, 2021		
Programmatic Staff Interviews	November 23, 2021	Blue Icon Consultants with FA Processing Staff – FWS, COD, Outreach, Customer Service
Programmatic Staff Interviews	November 24, 2021	Blue Icon Consultants with FA Processing Staff – File processing, verification, FACA, Census, and Bank Mobile

Week of November 30, 2021		
Programmatic Staff Interviews	November 30, 2021	Blue Icon Consultants with Departmental Staff – Business Office, Accounting, Admissions
IT Staff Interviews	December 2, 2021	Blue Icon Consultants with IT Staff
Week of December 6, 2021		
Interview with Faculty	December 9, 2021	Blue Icon Consultants with Faculty Members
Week of December 13, 2021		
Programmatic Staff Interviews	December 15, 2021	Blue Icon Consultants with Departmental Staff – Institutional Research and Roy Beckhorn
Programmatic Staff Interviews	December 16, 2021	Blue Icon Consultants with Departmental Staff and Work-study Students – Cal Grant Team
Week of January 10, 2022		
Meeting with Executive Team	January 11, 2022	Blue Icon Consultants with Chancellor, College Presidents, VC of Finance, VC of IT, and VC of Communications

APPENDIX B: DOCUMENTATION REVIEW

The following documents were received and discussed during the review process.

TOPIC	DISTRICT	ARC	CRC	FLC	SCC
P&P MANUAL		Policy and Procedure Manual - 61 pages	Policy and Procedure Manual - 61 pages	Policy and Procedure Manual - 61 pages	Policy and Procedure Manual - 61 pages
ANNUAL FISAP		FISAP	FISAP	FISAP	FISAP
AUDITS/PROGRAM REVIEW	Financial Statements/Auditor's Report	Cal Grant Program Review 17-18	Cal Grant Program Review 17-18		Program Review 2019
THIRD PARTY SERVICES	Campus Logic Documentation				
	ECMC Default Prevention				Communication - FA Messages
	EdgeRock Technologies FA PeopleSoft Consultants				
	EdAmerica Call Campaigns				
STAFFING	Organizational Chart and Job Descriptions	Staff Listing - Name, Title, Duties	Staff Listing - Name, Title, Duties	Staff Listing - Name, Title, Duties	Staff Listing - Name, Title, Duties
				Financial Aid Process Chart	

PROCEDURES	FACA Course Applicability - 7 documents - 56 total	BankMobile Instructions	Degree Questionnaire Process - 2 pages	Decline of Aid Processing	ATB and 5 units process
	Help Desk Ticket Guidelines	Origination Rejected Due to Citizenship	FAO-Accepting Dual Major Process - 1 pg	File Review Procedures - 29 pages	Consortium Process
	FA Production Flow Jobs	Total and Permanent Disability Process	Homeless Youth Determination	Recalculation T4 Debt Processing - 1 pg	Dependency Override Process
	FD0009 and Subsequent ISIRs	Updating Citizenship Procedure	MRR Instructions	RETRO File Review - 1 page	FACA Process
	Manually Repackage a Student - 85 pages	Program Responsibilities	PGPO Files to be done after 8		Reviewing Fraud Std
	Manual Summer (Re)Package - 27 pages	Running the Loan Program at ARC - 3 pages			Subsequent ISIR Process
	Intra District College Change Processing Guide - 68 pages	Some DL Programs Tips and Tricks - 1 page			
	Rebuild FA Term and Budes - 60 pages				
	Crossover Pell Guide - 91 pages				
	LRCCD External Award Processing Guide - 33 pages				
	Generic Student Financial Feed External Guide - 27 pages				
	Run BI Publisher Report - R2T4 49% Connected Query				
	How to Add a Checklist Item - 15 pages				
	How to Process Zero Unit Consortium for Summer - 18 pages				
	Special Disbursement and Refund Process - 7 pages				
	Adding a PJ Appeal - 1 page				
	Broad Overview of Systematic and Manual Processes				

COMMUNICATION	Communication Emails and SMS			FAFSA-CADAA Opens Oct 1	SCC FA Messages - 27 pages
	Communication Emails and Campus Logic			Repayment Courtesy Notice	
	Consolidated FA Letters with first review - 50 pages			Repayment Template	
	14 On Demand Communications				
REPORTS	Living Query List	Authorization Fail Report Instructions	How to Complete FC0007 Query		
	User Edit Messages List - 212 UEMs	Authorization Failure Report Reasons	How to Complete FC0016 Query		
	How to Run the DL Reconciliation Report 2 pages	How to Run DL Reconciliation Report - 5 pages	How to Complete FC0031 Query		
		LRCCD Living Query List	Listing of UEM Codes-Descriptions		
		Loan Report Schedule - Reports to Run			
		16 Reports			
		Loan PKG Detail Report - AREC			
		LR_FA_STDNT_DRO PPED_DISBURSED			
		Overaward Report			
		Report - Over Award Report			
		Report - Failure to Authorize Instructions			
		Report - ARC Loan Aggregate Exceeded			
		Report - DL_LOAN_VAR_NOT AWARDED			
		Report - Loans on Hold_FA854 Procedure			
		Report - LR_FA_LOAN_AGG REGATE_EXCEEDED			
		Report - Rejected Orig Rpt Loans			
		Reports and Descriptions			

INFORMATIONAL	Promise Program Eligibility	ARC Loan Program Calendar		FACA Flowchart	
	20-21 Financial Aid Dates and Deadlines	Fail to Auth Reasons and			
	Generic Daily Schedule	Continuous Enrollment Requirement			
	Yearly Processing Cycle				
	Fall 2021 Census Playbook				
	FA Census Calendar for October 18 - 22				
	SAP Statuses				
	Tentative Fall 2021 - College - Packaging/Disb Schedule				
	20-21 Checklist Items Cheat Sheet				
	Consortium Comparison				
	Consortium Update Documentation				
	Direct Loan School Account Statement				

APPENDIX C: DATA REVIEW

The following information represents data provided by the institution in emails and data reports, including data from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office:

https://datamart.cccco.edu/Services/FinAid_Summary.aspx.

Academic Year 2020-2021	ARC	CRC	FLC	SCC	TOTAL
Annual Student Count	39,366	22,843	14,874	31,133	108,216
Any Aid or Waiver Recipients	23,545	15,479	9,226	19,949	68,199
California Promise Recipients	23,017	15,225	9,093	19,446	66,781
Total ISIRS	23,669	13,907	7,163	19,417	64,156
Total CPS Verification Selected	8,747	4,879	2,295	6,765	22,686
Selected for Institutional Verify	6	54	43	0	103
Pell Recipients	7,902	4,479	2,025	6,381	20,787
Direct Loan Recipients	994	379	209	857	2,439
FWS Recipients	41	56	82	26	205
R2T4 Population	154	74	45	106	379
SAP Deny	2,505	1,613	600	2,138	6,856
SAP Disqualify	480	196	71	412	1,159
SAP Warning	813	513	206	793	2,325
SAP Appeal Approved	910	319	206	804	2,239
SAP Appeal Denial	36	49	0	78	163
Ethnicity Count of Enrollment					
African-American	2,918	2,110	703	2,705	8,436
American Indian/Alaskan	214	100	92	141	547
Asian	4,973	4,945	1,750	5,087	16,755
Filipino	999	1,029	398	962	3,388
Hispanic	10,086	6,125	3,152	9,572	28,935
Multi-Ethnicity	2,506	1,533	940	2,070	7,049
Pacific Islander	380	333	93	359	1,165
White	15,450	5,697	7,015	8,904	37,066
Unknown	1,840	971	731	1,333	4,875
Gender Count of Enrollment					
Female	22,114	13,370	8,349	18,802	62,635
Male	16,415	9,042	6,224	11,592	43,273
Non-Binary	105	50	33	119	307
Unknown	732	381	268	620	2,001

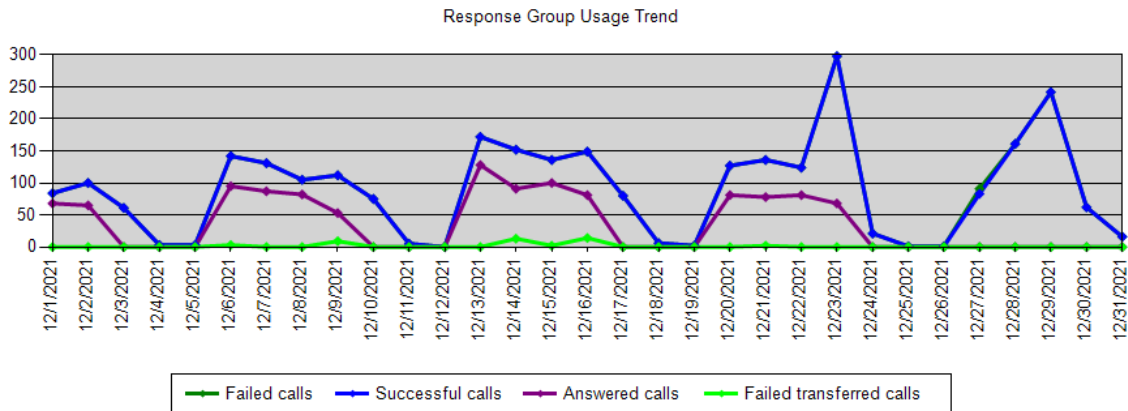
Academic Year 2020-2021	ARC	CRC	FLC	SCC	TOTAL
Age Group of Enrollment					
Under 20	9,273	6,453	4,654	8,519	28,899
20-24	11,277	7,520	4,611	9,774	33,182
25-29	6,268	3,249	1,855	4,851	16,223
30-34	4,478	2,041	1,225	3,046	10,790
35-39	2,889	1,292	852	1,796	6,829
40-49	3,221	1,410	981	1,839	7,451
50+	1,960	878	696	1,308	4,842

APPENDIX D: CALL CENTER DATA

The following information is call center data provided American River College and Consumnes River College. Folsom Lake College and Sacramento City College did not provide data.

American River College

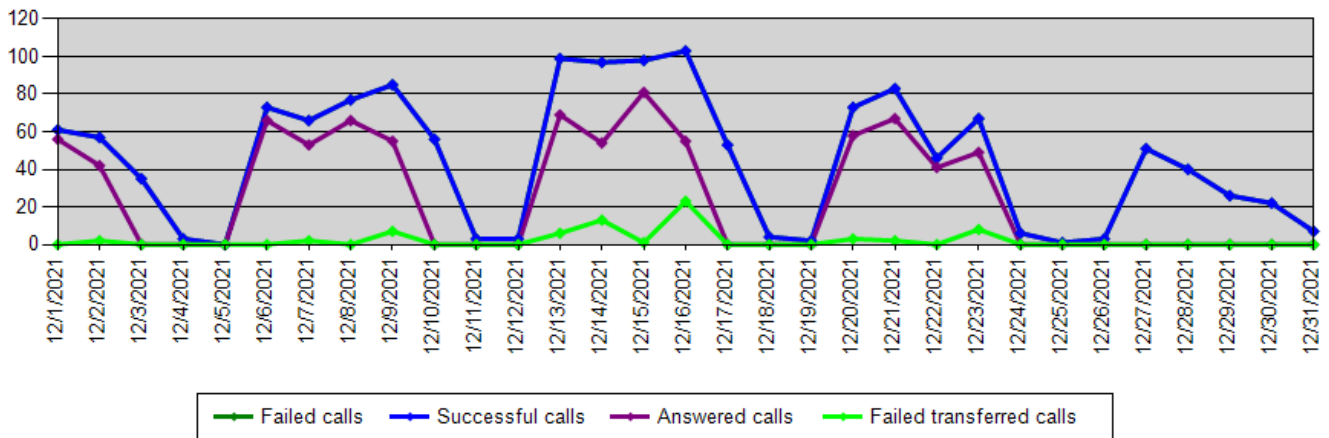
Daily	Received calls	Successful calls	Offered calls	Answered calls	Percentage of abandoned calls	Avg. call minutes by agent	Transferred calls
12/1/2021	84	84	176	68	19.048%	8.47	0
12/2/2021	100	100	108	65	35.00%	9.75	0
12/3/2021	61	61	0	0	100.00%		0
12/4/2021	3	3	0	0	100.00%		0
12/5/2021	3	3	0	0	100.00%		0
12/6/2021	142	142	320	95	33.099%	8.38	3
12/7/2021	131	131	210	87	33.588%	7.43	0
12/8/2021	105	105	342	82	21.905%	7.37	0
12/9/2021	112	112	156	53	52.679%	10.85	9
12/10/2021	75	75	0	0	100.00%		0
12/11/2021	5	5	0	0	100.00%		0
12/12/2021	0	0	0	0			0
12/13/2021	172	172	431	128	25.581%	8.65	0
12/14/2021	152	152	268	91	40.132%	9.05	13
12/15/2021	136	136	300	100	26.471%	9.18	2
12/16/2021	149	149	207	81	45.638%	8.52	14
12/17/2021	80	80	0	0	100.00%		0
12/18/2021	6	6	0	0	100.00%		0
12/19/2021	2	2	0	0	100.00%		0
12/20/2021	127	127	159	81	36.22%	7.22	0
12/21/2021	136	136	131	78	42.647%	8.30	2
12/22/2021	124	124	179	81	34.677%	8.17	0
12/23/2021	298	298	107	68	77.181%	7.42	0
12/24/2021	21	21	0	0	100.00%		0
12/25/2021	1	1	0	0	100.00%		0
12/26/2021	1	1	0	0	100.00%		0
12/27/2021	91	83	0	0	100.00%		0
12/28/2021	161	161	0	0	100.00%		0
12/29/2021	242	242	0	0	100.00%		0
12/30/2021	62	62	0	0	100.00%		0
12/31/2021	16	16	0	0	100.00%		0
Total	2798	2790	3094	1158	58.613%		43



Consumnes River College

Daily	Received calls	Successful calls	Offered calls	Answered calls	Percentage of abandoned calls	Avg. call minutes by agent	Transferred calls
12/1/2021	61	61	211	56	8.197%	4.87	0
12/2/2021	57	57	253	42	26.316%	10.65	2
12/3/2021	35	35	0	0	100.00%		0
12/4/2021	3	3	0	0	100.00%		0
12/5/2021	0	0	0	0			0
12/6/2021	73	73	440	66	9.589%	6.97	0
12/7/2021	66	66	657	53	19.697%	5.52	2
12/8/2021	77	77	324	66	14.286%	5.47	0
12/9/2021	85	85	427	55	35.294%	9.48	7
12/10/2021	56	56	0	0	100.00%		0
12/11/2021	3	3	0	0	100.00%		0
12/12/2021	3	3	0	0	100.00%		0
12/13/2021	99	99	352	69	30.303%	10.37	6
12/14/2021	97	97	821	54	44.33%	7.40	13
12/15/2021	98	98	417	81	17.347%	7.92	1
12/16/2021	103	103	951	55	46.602%	7.55	23
12/17/2021	53	53	0	0	100.00%		0
12/18/2021	4	4	0	0	100.00%		0
12/19/2021	2	2	0	0	100.00%		0
12/20/2021	73	73	823	58	20.548%	8.53	3
12/21/2021	83	83	836	67	19.277%	8.18	2
12/22/2021	46	46	351	41	10.87%	6.73	0
12/23/2021	67	67	268	49	26.866%	6.80	8
12/24/2021	6	6	0	0	100.00%		0
12/25/2021	1	1	0	0	100.00%		0
12/26/2021	3	3	0	0	100.00%		0
12/27/2021	51	51	0	0	100.00%		0
12/28/2021	40	40	0	0	100.00%		0
12/29/2021	26	26	0	0	100.00%		0
12/30/2021	22	22	0	0	100.00%		0
12/31/2021	7	7	0	0	100.00%		0
Total	1400	1400	7131	812	42.00%		67

Response Group Usage Trend



APPENDIX E: SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Below are sample job descriptions for a Financial Aid College Operations Supervisor, Financial Aid Training and Compliance, and Financial Aid Communications and Social Media.

FINANCIAL AID COLLEGE OPERATIONS SUPERVISOR

- Manage a set of college campus financial aid offices.
- Responsible for working with the Executive Director and Leadership Team to develop system-wide policies and procedures, consistent messaging, and consistent documents and brochures utilized by the financial aid offices.
- Responsible for working with the Leadership Team to develop, implement, update, and monitor a system-wide training program for all aid staff members at the financial aid offices.
- Responsible for working with the Leadership Team to develop, implement, update, and monitor a system-wide customer service plan to be utilized by all of the college campus financial aid staff.
- Responsible for working with the Executive Director to adequately staff the college campus financial aid offices with qualified staff members who demonstrate a strong commitment to excellent customer service.
- Responsible for working with the Executive Director on the office operating budget including recommending budget needs, monitoring, evaluating, and seeking cost saving measures.
- Responsible for determining technology needs and ensuring that the operation is running at high efficiency and utilizing technology for delivering the highest customer services.
- Responsible for attending all mandatory trainings and meetings and requesting additional assistance when needed. Trainings may include, but are not limited to, traveling to college campuses and the District Office for extended lengths of time.
- Responsible for working with the Leadership Team to maximize human resources and ensure that students have access to financial aid services during the open hours of operation.
- Responsible for researching and recommending new innovations in technology and services used to increase customer satisfaction and student success.
- Responsible for working closely with all student services offices, managers, and administrators for the purpose of providing excellent communication and collaboration among offices that service the needs of students.
- Responsible for complying with FERPA regulations and ensuring that all FERPA regulations are met by the employees of the campus financial aid offices.
- Responsible for keeping up with regulatory changes and ensuring that information provided to students is accurate and up-to-date.
- Responsible for working with other student services departments to assist students with unusual situations and resolving issues to enable the student to be academically successful.
- Responsible for monitoring student satisfaction within the financial aid operation and developing methods of quickly and adequately addressing student needs and concerns.
- Responsible for monitoring and evaluating employee performance and addressing concerns or deficiencies with the services provided to students.
- Responsible for ensuring that all financial aid staff members have the knowledge and tools needed to provide a high level of customer service to students.

- Responsible for working with the Executive Director of Financial Aid and the Leadership Team when positions become vacant to hire the best qualified candidates that possess the knowledge and customer services skills needed to service students.
- Responsible for developing community outreach services and providing staff members to cover community events that provide education to students and families on the financial aid application process.
- Responsible for working with the Leadership Team to develop marking materials and information pamphlets.
- Responsible for attending planning meetings, trainings, conferences, community events, and serve on various committees and advisory groups as needed.
- Responsible for meeting with parents and students and providing assistance with the financial aid application process and answer financial aid questions.
- Responsible for working with the Executive Director of Financial Aid and the Leadership Team to develop and implement a customer feedback system that is timely, measurable, and monitored.
- Responsible for tracking and reporting on customer service activities at the college campus financial aid offices.
- Responsible for working with the district processing manager to coordinate training and strong communications between the district processors and the college campus financial aid employees.
- Responsible for working with the district compliance coordinator to ensure that all activities conducted at the college campus financial aid offices are fully compliant with regulations as well as college policies.
- Responsible for providing coverage and leadership at the financial aid offices as needed.
- Responsible for covering college events, high school workshops, and other external community events that require financial aid professionals to perform presentations and assist the community with the financial aid process. This includes events that occur in the events and on weekends.
- Responsible for other duties as assigned in order to provide outstanding customer service to financial aid applicants and their families.

FINANCIAL AID TRAINING AND COMPLIANCE

- The coordinator will provide leadership and management of compliance and training for the financial aid operation. Oversees functions related to regulatory compliance of Title IV federal and state financial aid programs. Available to staff regarding regulatory guidance; researching regulatory questions and concerns; prepares system and local reports adhering to state, federal, system, and the local guidelines; updates policy and procedures manual; maintains focus on quality assurance and training to the financial aid staff and the financial aid employees.
- Position is responsible for compliance review and the development and delivery of all training programs related to Title IV, Federal and State regulations, company policies and procedures, and established goals and objectives. The coordinator will guide, train, and evaluate Financial Aid staff in support of effectively administering student financial aid programs and related processes
- Works with program officers to understand daily functions and ensure compliance of fund management and reconciliation. Implements policies and procedures to ensure the accurate, timely and ethical compliance of the Title IV program funds according to federal and/or state regulations.
- Monitors the administration of all federal, state and institutional financial aid programs including the review of these programs through federal, state, and institutional audits.
- Performs routine audits on active and inactive student files to ensure compliance with Title IV regulations.
- Prepares and coordinates responses to any internal/ external audit related to the management of Title IV program.
- Makes periodic visits to college campuses to ascertain training needs and regulatory compliance deficiencies.
- Prepares reports for the U.S. Department of Education and the Texas Department of Education and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board as required.
- Assist the Leadership Team in developing communication pertinent to financial aid programs through the design of calendars, flyers, poster, brochures, and articles.
- Works with Processing Manager to ensure accurate completion verification and documentation of students' status.
- Collaborates with other System Campus Solution groups to maintain and promote efficiency in the overall delivery of student services.
- Conducts personnel evaluations and assists staff member in planning professional and developmental experiences.
- Assist in the research, development, implementation and enforcement of policies and procedures. Communicate updates of financial aid, cash management, credit and collections policies and procedures through college campus visits, teleconferences, webinars, training workshops and interdepartmental meetings.
- Assist in the development and delivery of training programs in support of Financial Aid Operations and Cash Management procedures.
- Review campus financial aid processes to ensure the accurate and timely processing of student financial aid files and the proper processing of federal funds in accordance with Title IV

regulations. Collaborate with campus leadership team to ensure campus compliance to regulations, and company policies and procedures.

- Conduct Financial Aid audits and file review using discretion and independent judgment to ensure compliance with the Title IV Program, Federal, and state regulations.
- Assist in the coordination of the institution's response to any internal audits related to Financial Aid Operations ensuring adequate and timely corrective action.
- Train and develop assigned personnel in performing highly structured time sensitive work with extensive standard operating procedures.
- Attend all applicable conferences and training workshops to remain current on Title IV Program, Federal and State regulations, and Credit/Collection practices.
- Ensure that assigned personnel attend applicable related trainings.
- Serve on state, college and district committees as required.
- Serve as a community resources person and represents the college to outside group as requested.
- Responsible for other reasonable, related duties as assigned.

FINANCIAL AID COMMUNICATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

- Responsible for working with the IT staff, telecommunications, public relations, and the financial aid Leadership Team to develop and create financial aid messaging, web content, videos, social media content, student feedback questionnaires, student focus groups, and marketing materials for the entire financial aid operation – system and campus locations.
- Responsible for the quality of the information that is provided to students through the following platforms:
 - College Portal (once available)
 - Web Site Information Pages
 - Web Site Videos
 - Facebook Messages and Videos
 - Video Screens at the Financial Aid Physical Offices
 - Materials Distributed to Students
 - Messages fed through a Mobile Application
 - Emails
 - Chatbot content and answers
 - Twitter Messages and Videos
 - Orientation Videos
 - Short Message Vine Videos
 - Snap-Chat Messages or Pictures
 - Event Materials or Coordination of Information for Events
 - Information Videos
 - Required Online Counseling Sessions
 - CRM Messages and Content
- Responsible for developing and monitoring student surveys and feedback requests from student visits, calls, events, and other avenues for collecting student input.
- Responsible for attending all mandatory trainings and meetings. Trainings may include, but are not limited to, traveling to various college campuses including the district office for extended lengths of time.
- Responsible for working with financial aid professionals to coordinate and post public information about community organizations and high schools in which professional assistance is provided by financial aid staff covering financial aid events including speakers, volunteers, and aid application assistance.
- Responsible for posting announcements on the web site, social media platforms, videos, and posters about college events, high school workshops, and other external community events that require financial aid professionals to perform presentations and assist the community with the financial aid process.
- Responsible for working with the Leadership Team to develop information and orientation videos for all student related financial aid topics. Videos will be utilized for the purpose of streaming to video screens in financial aid waiting rooms, various social media sites, web site, mobile application, CRM and the college portal.
- Responsible for assisting with developing and monitoring a student survey system using technology and creating information solutions when students are not obtaining information and answers needed about the financial aid applications and processes.

- Responsible for developing information, videos, and materials that respond to student concerns submitted through the Student Resolution Center.
- Responsible for assisting the Leadership Team with implementing and evaluating the customer service plan for the financial aid office.
- Responsible for working with other student services departments to coordinate student information, processes, orientations, videos, social media, and web site information to ensure that students understand the interrelationships of all the aspects of their education experience.
- Responsible for assisting the Leadership Team with training materials provided to financial aid coordinators, advisors, customer service representatives, and other financial aid staff members.
- Responsible for working with the Managers and Executive Director of Financial Aid to develop online training courses for financial aid staff and work-study students.
- Responsible for monitoring the timeliness and accuracy of information going out of the financial aid operation from the various media platforms.
- Responsible for the phone messaging system and recording timely and accurate messages on the financial aid phone tree. Responsible for updating the primary phone message for updates and important announcements.
- Responsible for annual updates of the information on the web site, portal, videos, and such.
- Responsible for monitoring the use and content of Financial Aid Online forms and posting the links to the appropriate locations as needed.
- Responsible for providing answers to student and parent inquiries via various communication methods (email, phone, chat, text, etc).
- Responsible for other duties as assigned by the Executive Director of Financial Aid.

APPENDIX F: SAMPLE MONTHLY CUSTOMER SERVICE REPORT

LOCATION	Walk-In Traffic	Incoming Phone Calls	Emails Received	FA DOCS Received	Chat Line Serviced	SAP Appeals Received	Resolution Center Requests	Feedback Survey Results	Webcam/Skype Services	FA Website (Hits per page)	FATV-Videos Accessed
Campus 1	2,940										
Campus 2	547										
Campus 3	1,885										
Campus 4	485										
Campus 5	1,421										
Campus 6	2,668										
Campus 7	2,059										
Campus 8	1,665										
Campus 9	623										
Campus 10	2,202										
Campus 11	1,958										
MONTHLY TOTAL:	18,453	16,574	250	1,378	134	881	135	340	120	77,027	355
Prior Year, Same Mnth	18,115	13,587	129	227	382	1,305	89	346	80	74,348	792
% Change in Activity [Compared to Last Year, same Month]	1.83%	18.02%	48.40%	83.53%	-185.07%	-48.13%	34.07%	-1.76%	33.33%	3.48%	-123.10%

Financial Aid Student Resolution Center

Financial Aid Student Resolution Center

Please complete information below if you have a financial aid issue that needs review and resolution. A financial aid manager or customer service coordinator will review and provide an appropriate response in approximately 48 to 72 hours. If you need immediate assistance, please call our financial aid student information center at 713-718-2000 or utilize our chat line on the main page of the financial aid web site.

Student Resolution Center

You Speak. We Listen.

First name *

Last name *

Student ID: *

Email *

Best contact phone number *

Describe your concern/issue: *

Which aid year are you inquiring about? *

Did you meet with an financial aid advisor to address the matter? *

What is the concern or problem you are having? *

What could [] have done better *

What campus do you primarily attend? *

Send me a copy of my responses

Powered by []
[Privacy Notice](#) | [Report Abuse](#)

Financial Aid Outreach Request

Our experienced financial aid outreach representatives provide support to help make the financial aid processes easy and straightforward for students, their families and college access professionals.

We make every effort to educate the community by developing collaborative relationships with staff and faculty, K-12 schools, universities, college/career prep organizations, and community programs. With topics ranging from **applying for aid through student loan repayment**, our Financial Aid Department is committed to educating communities about **resources available to students who plan to or are attending college**.

OUTREACH SERVICES AVAILABLE

- Financial aid presentations for students, parents, and educators
- Hands-on assistance with financial aid applications (FAFSA)
- Host on-campus events and workshops
- Resource tables available for events
- Support for on-campus and community events
- Training for College Access Professionals
 - Recognizing that college access professionals play a key role in helping demystifying the financial aid process for students, we also focus our outreach efforts on **Financial Aid U Training for College Access Professionals** ([learn more](#)) and **cross-training** for Admissions, Enrollment, Student Success and Financial Aid staff.

We would appreciate the opportunity to educate your group about options to fund their education. Once you submit a request, a member of our team will respond within 24-72 hours. For additional questions, please feel free to email us at faoutreach@...edu.

[CLICK HERE TO REQUEST FINANCIAL AID EXPERT FOR YOUR EVENT](#)

[Continued on next page]

Request a Financial Aid Expert for your Next Event

We appreciate the opportunity to come to your school/organization and provide funding options to students and families who are interested in attending college. Please tell us about the type of event you are planning, how it will be set up, the information you would like for us to cover and what you're hoping the participants/attendees take away.

...

* Required

1. Are you a: *

- On-Campus Event (request for events happening on a campus)
- K-12 School
- Community Organization
- Other

2. For internal requests, please select a department or initiative. *

- Cross-departmental Financial Aid Training
- Instructional Days
- New Student Orientation (NSO)
- PSOAR
- Project Grad
- Recruitment
- Summer Bridge
- Upward Bound
- Other

[Continued on next page]

3. Please share which school district or type of school you are or are submitting request on behalf of. *

- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- Private School
- Charter School
- Alternative School (in any district)
- Other

4. Name of Organization or School *

[Continued on next page]

5. Event Day Contact Name *

Enter your answer

6. Event Day Contact Title *

Enter your answer

7. Event Day Contact Telephone Number *

Enter your answer

8. Event Day Contact E-mail *

Enter your answer

[Concludes on next page]

9. Virtual or In-Person Event? *

- Virtual
- In-Person

10. Date of the event *

Please note that if you have multiple events, you will have to submit this form for each event individually.

Please input date (M/d/yyyy) 

11. Event start time *

Input time in format of HH:MM AM/PM

Enter your answer

12. Event end time *

Input time in format of HH:MM AM/PM

Enter your answer

13. Location of event (Address, building, room #): *

If this is a virtual event, please enter the meeting URL.

Enter your answer

14. Are you requesting someone to deliver a presentation? *

- Yes
- No

Submit

Never give out your password. [Report abuse](#)

APPENDIX I: SAMPLE STUDENT FEEDBACK SURVEY

User Name is the employee who met with the student.

Survey Answers by Student

From 2/1/2017 to 2/28/2017

Department Name: CC: Financial Aid

Student Name:

Student ID:

User Name:

Visit Date: 02/22/2017 12:00:00 AM

Survey Saved On: 02/22/2017 4:00:36 PM

Survey Results

Question: 1. What was the reason(s) for your visit?

Answer: Check status

Question: 2. Overall, how satisfied are you with the service you received today?

Answer: Excellent

Question: 3. In your opinion, how knowledgeable do you think the representative was with his/her ability to assist you today?

Answer: Very knowledgeable

Question: 4. In your opinion, how would you evaluate the customer service you received today? (check all that apply)

Answer: Friendly and Courteous

Question: 5. Please rate your overall satisfaction with the financial aid office (scale 1 thru 5).

Answer: Extremely Satisfied (5)

Question: 6. Please provide any additional comments or suggestions regarding financial aid services that will allow us to better improve and/or offer effective customer service to you.

Answer: Thanks fo your help!

Trusted Advisors to the Financial Aid Community

blueicon
advisors



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