



**Annual Unit Plan Template
2013-2014 Academic Year
Financial Aid & Scholarship Department**

STEP I: DESCRIBE YOUR DEPARTMENT/UNIT

a. Mission

The Financial Aid and Scholarship Office (FAO) provides resources necessary to decrease financial barriers to higher education. This is accomplished by assisting a diverse population in the process of applying for and receiving aid through Federal, State, institutional, and private organizations to ensure student learning. The FAO office is devoted to providing quality customer service, efficiency and accuracy in application processing, and the timely delivery of financial aid funds to students in compliance to align with the CCCC's commitment to excellence. The FAO supports eligible students to enable their retention and support the student learning experience. The FAO programs are essential for students who would not be able to attend college due to a lack of financial resources.

b. Program Applicability

The FAO supports all programs at the college increasing student access to education by providing financial assistance. The FAO coordinates Federal Work study student hiring and placement to assist various college departments. Out of 357 students surveyed, 94% stated that financial aid helped them stay in college. The FAO works closely with Admissions and Records, Counseling, Special Services, Transfer Center, and Veteran's Affairs office. The Kern River Valley, South Kern, Eastern Sierra and Mammoth Lakes college center's staff must work closely with the IWW Financial Aid staff to assist the financial needs of the Cerro Coso students encompassing our 18,000 mile service area.

c. Partnerships

The FAO maintains Cerro Coso Foundation scholarships and outside scholarships from other sources.



Cerro Coso Community College has an Institution Participant Agreement with the California Student Aid Commission and Federal Student Aid. The FAO maintains the agreement requirements. The FAO coordinates closely with BC, PC and the district office in the administration of financial aid programs. Elements of the processing are centralized at the district office and developed and supported by a program analyst there. The administration of financial aid relies on a number of external systems, such as Cal Grant, National Student Loan Clearing House System (NSLDS) and the FAA Central Processing System. Financial Aid is administered according to the Department of Education regulations.

d. Distance Education

The FAFSA process is an online process. The FAO provides information, resources, and instructions for the process through the financial aid website. The FAO supports distance education by providing information and updates through the students Cerro Coso Community College online portal system, "Inside CC." Students can see outstanding and satisfied information along with their award amount. The Banner system is set up with email notifications to students concerning their financial aid awards. Additional information needed from students can be faxed or emailed. Students can request assistance via telephone and email. Cerro Coso students can complete the financial aid process without coming to the college.

STEP 2: EXPLAIN YOUR PLANNING

a. Review of Previous Goals (of last completed academic year)

[List the goals/action plans included in your plan for the previous year and describe progress made towards accomplishing them.]

b. Review of Overall Department/Unit



Financial Aid has experienced some challenges over the last year with multiple transitions in management oversight. The previous long-time financial aid director was in and out during the fall semester and on extended medical leave beginning in November before retiring in June. The extended leave was unexpected and the outcome of retirement uncertain, so management oversight of Financial Aid was provided by the Vice President of Student Services through the end of the spring term, when an interim director was hired. The interim director was only in place for 2 months before leaving the position for a permanent job.

Since then, oversight of the Financial Aid has been coordinated between the Vice President of Student Services and the Director of the Child Development Center, who has assumed partial responsibility for both Financial Aid and Admissions and Records. These transitions in management oversight and the lack of a manager with primary responsibility for Financial Aid has resulted in an extended period where the goal has been, by necessity, maintaining the ongoing services and functions of Financial Aid.

The unexpected absence of the director presented some particular challenges in some of the financial aid programs administered by financial aid, as the director maintained sole access to and knowledge of the administration of such processes as CAL Grant, Return to Title IV and the Overpayment process. Additionally, financial aid requires use of numerous outside systems, a number of which were only available to the director. Two new staff members were hired just before the director started experiencing significant health issues and having extended periods of absence. Consequently, these staff members have not been trained in the full functioning of the positions into which they were hired.

The Indian Wells Valley (IWV) FA department is the official site for the security maintenance of all Cerro Coso College student financial aid records and the processing of awards to eligible students.

Current Staffing:

IWV Campus:

3 Financial Aid Technicians

Department Assistant II

Director of Admissions and Records and Financial Aid- to be hired

KRV Campus:

Part-time Financial Aid Assistant

South Kern Campus:

Adjunct counselor providing financial aid advising and assistance

Bishop Campus:

Counselor providing financial aid advising and assistance

Mammoth Campus

Counselor providing financial aid advising and assistance



Based on district-wide reorganization discussions and current and pending budget concern, a task force was formed to discuss and evaluate Financial Aid functions to assess workload and to determine if there are opportunities for centralization. Based on this evaluation and the reorganization planning at Cerro Coso initiated with our Future by Design discussions, the reorganization decisions have been made.

Projected staffing for 13-14

IWV Campus:

3 Financial Aid Technicians

Department Assistant II

Director of Admissions and Records and Financial Aid- to be hired

KRV Campus:

Educational Advisor financial aid advising and assistance

South Kern Campus:

Adjunct counselor providing financial aid advising and assistance

Bishop Campus:

Counselor providing financial aid advising and assistance

Mammoth Campus

Counselor providing financial aid advising and assistance

The FAO has experienced an unprecedented number of changes in a relatively short timeframe. There have been significant regulatory changes impacting the processing of state and federal financial aid. Some examples:

- Changes in SAP
- Changes in BOG eligibility requirements
- Changes in lifetime eligibility
- Removal of Ability to Benefit
- Additional focus on required educational planning
- Accountability measures such as Gainful Employment

These regulatory changes and increase in accountability requirements are likely to continue.

Consistent with this, the Cerro Coso FAO was the subject of a Department of Education audit of federal aid programs. This audit was intensive and comprehensive. While the final results have not yet been received, there were some preliminary findings that have indicated areas that



will require some changes in processing district wide. These potential findings include:

- Changes in some aspects of Clery reporting
- The need for a more significant and comprehensive drug and alcohol awareness program
- Additional requirements for attendance accounting
- Potential changes in Return to Title IV processing

Since the position providing Financial Aid advising and assistance at the sites are not financial aid specialists, there is a need for training in this area and ongoing coordination. The new director will establish a schedule of monthly meetings with representation from each site. Students who self-identified as attending another campus site, tended to rate their satisfaction with financial aid services as lower than IWW and onsite students, indicating the need for more structured support for the financial aid process at the sites.

The number of financial aid application has increased every year, as have the number of students packaged and awarded, as indicated by the Application Status by Aid Year. As this trend is expected to continue, the FAO will need to continue to employ technology and automation to meet the increased student demand. This will also allow for technicians to spend needed time with direct student support, which should decrease the number of students who are required to be verified because of errors on the FAFSA. Additional focus is needed in determining the barriers that prevent students from completing the packaging process. In the 2011-2012 year, only 35% of students who had their FAFSAs sent to Cerro Coso completed the packaging process. While those students who have their applications sent to Cerro Coso is not a true reflection of those who end up attending Cerro Coso, this low number suggests a need for further evaluation. Additionally, the program needs to evaluate further the disaggregated financial aid award information to determine if there are any gaps. For example, the percentage of African American students enrolled at Cerro Coso is about 5%, but the percentage of African American students packaged for Pell Grant is less than 1%, suggesting a gap the needs to be addressed.



c. Goals for Upcoming Year (next academic year). *If more goals needed, copy and paste additional boxes.*

Goal 1- Increase student access to FAO Technicians for assistance

1. Connection to College Strategic Goals: Goal 1, D

2. Specific internal or external condition(s) the goal is a response to: Internal- The FAO office has a Department Assistant receiving documents, three Technicians with two packaging and one doing initial verification of forms. This causes students to go through three stages with three different people during the financial aid process. The information given to the students that need verification has been confusing and inconsistent at times.

3. Action Plan: 1.) The Technician currently doing verifications will be trained on the complete packaging process 2.) The Department Assistant will be trained initial verification of documents as received. 2.) Process change- Once the documents are received and verified by the Department Assistant, the student will be assigned to one Technician to complete the process.

4. Measure of Success: Student survey will show increased satisfaction with financial aid process with a goal of 90%.

Goal 2- Response to students will be timely, accurate and consistent.

1. Connection to College Strategic Goals: Goal 1, C & D

2. Specific internal or external condition(s) the goal is a response to: Internal- Responsiveness to students is a concern with returned phone calls up to 3 weeks out. Outside- The financial aid process is complicated and often students make mistakes on their FAFSA. Students are left on their own to fix the mistakes with little direction from the FAO. This often results in more mistakes which delays the financial aid process for the students. Out of the students surveyed that received financial aid, 25-30% was dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the overall services received. Several of these students commented on the lack of responsiveness and helpful information from the FAO. At this time, the SARS system used for documenting student contacts does not indicate the time between receiving a request for services and answering that request.

3. Action Plan: 1.) Technicians will schedule drop in and appointment times to assist students 2.) Student's final verification and packaging process will be with one technician 3.) Technicians will assist students on the front end of the process helping with FAFSA and applications especially when multiple mistakes are made. 4.) Create a phone log that will document when a message was received and when a call was returned.

4. Measure of Success: Phone logs will show students are responded to within 48 hours. Average transactions on FAFSA will be lower. Student survey



will show increased satisfaction with financial aid process with a goal of 90%.

Goal 3- Create and implement a Staff Training Plan that includes opportunities for conference attendance

1. Connection to College Strategic Goals: Goal 6, D

2. Specific internal or external condition(s) the goal is a response to: Internal- The FAO staff have not attended a Federal financial aid conference in several years for Federal updates and interaction with peers. External- Federal financial aid TITLE IV regulations changes every year. It is important to keep up to date on the interpretation of the regulations.

3. Action Plan: 1.) Director with Staff input, will create a Staff Training Plan 2.) Send all FAO staff to a Federal conference in 2012/13 3.) Alternate sending staff to conferences every other year 4.) Incorporate Webinars for staff development each semester.

4. Measure of Success: Staff Training Plan will be created, incorporated and continued by the end of Fall 2012.

Goal 4- Implement updates and changes of federal and state regulations for financial aid programs to maintain compliance and currency.

1. Connection to College Strategic Goals: Goal 6, D

2. Specific internal or external condition(s) the goal is a response to: Internal- The FAO staff have not attended conferences in many years and new staff are in need of comprehensive training External- Federal and state financial aid regulations change every year. It is important to keep up to date on the interpretation of the regulations. Audit findings have raised compliance issues that will have to be addressed.

3. Action Plan: 1.) Director with Staff input, will create a Staff Training Plan 2.) Send all FAO staff to a Federal conference in 2012/13 3.) Alternate sending staff to conferences every other year 4.) Incorporate Webinars for staff development each semester 5) Address audit findings 6) Develop a financial aid handbook of written policy implementation and procedures

4. Measure of Success: Staff Training Plan will be created, incorporated and continued by the end of Fall 2012. Procedural handbook will be developed in coordination with sister colleges. Audit will be satisfactorily addressed and compliance verified by DOE.

Goal 3- Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the application and packaging processes.



1. Connection to College Strategic Goals: Goal 6, D

2. Specific internal or external condition(s) the goal is a response to: Internal- Responses from Service Department Assessment suggests areas where improvement is needed in timely and efficient response to students. External- Applications received is increasing every year, as the financial aid process becomes more complicated for student.

3. Action Plan: 1.) Install student use kiosks for facilitated assistance with the FAFSA process and verification 2.) Realign packaging process so that all technicians are packaging and responsible for a caseload of students. 3.) Establish a schedule of in-reach and workshops 4.) Complete planned office move to co-locate Admissions and Records and Financial Aid for student convenience and to facilitate oversight of programs with shared director 5) Establish structured strategies for serving students at other campuses, such as schedule drop-in times and campus visits for FA workshops and appointments at strategic points in the semester 6) Develop clear, instructional resource materials for students 7) Continue to refine data collection for the evaluation and assessment of financial aid, with a particular focus on demographic groups and service equity

4. Measure of Success: Increased student satisfaction on Service Department Outcomes, particularly with students at other sites, reduced time to complete packaging, reduced number of applications that have to be verified due to errors

STEP 3: SUBSTANTIATE REQUESTED RESOURCES (Note: All items must be prioritized.)

a. **1000 Category.** Please indicate below any requests for temporary or new permanent certificated positions. (Do not request adjunct instructors for normal teaching assignments as this is captured in the Academic Affairs division plan.) *If more lines are needed, place cursor in the bottom right box and press [Tab].*

Description	Location	Priority: 1 = high 2 = med 3 = low	Strategic Plan goal addressed by this resource	If a full-time faculty member is being requested, use the box below. Use this space to provide a detailed rationale for temporary certificated positions only. The rationale should refer to your unit's mission and goals, recent program review or SLO assessment gaps, planning assumptions, and/or the College's strategic plan.	Estimated amount of funding requested (temporary positions only)	Will this be one-time or on- going funding?	Funding Source (check <u>one</u>): G = General Fund, O = Other	
							G	O



Full-Time Faculty Staffing Justification:

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are there too few or too many students enrolling for particular classes or majors? 2. Are there too many courses or programs that are under capacity? 3. Are courses “core mission”? 4. Are courses overscheduled? 5. Is there capacity to offer courses or programs at different times and/or locations? 6. Is there a workforce shortage in the service area or region? 7. What are the costs and/or lost revenue from gaps between student demand and course or program capacity? 8. In support of your proposal, provide the following data: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Size of wait lists in the discipline b. Department productivity c. Number of faculty currently in the department d. Number of adjunct faculty e. Number of certificates awarded f. Number of degrees awarded g. Core curriculum classes h. CTE classes with workforce data (wage/high demand) i. Number of students at first day and census
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b. 2000 Category. Please indicate below any requests for temporary or new permanent classified staff. Include labor amounts only; benefits will be calculated separately. *If more lines are needed, place cursor in the bottom right box and press [Tab].*

Position Title	Location	Priority: 1 = high 2 = med 3 = low	Strategic Plan goal addressed by this position	Salary Grade	Number of Months	Number of Hours per Week	Salary Amount	Are alternate funding sources available? G = grant (specify) V = VTEA

Classified Staffing Justification. *If more than one position requested, copy and paste additional boxes.*



1. Describe how the position is linked to your unit's mission and goals, recent Program Review or SLO assessment gaps, planning assumptions, and/or the College's strategic plan.
2. Explain why the work of this position cannot be assigned to current staff.
3. Describe the impact on the college if the position is not filled.

c. 4000 Category. Use the space below to itemize and explain budget requests in the category of supplies and equipment. *If more lines are needed, place cursor in the bottom right box and press [Tab].*

Describe resource requested	Location	Priority: 1 = high 2 = med 3 = low	Strategic Plan goal addressed by this resource	Provide a detailed rationale for the requested resource. The rationale should refer to your unit's mission and goals, recent Program Review or SLO assessment gaps, planning assumptions, and/or the College's Strategic Plan	Estimated amount of funding requested	Will this be one-time or on-going funding?	Funding Source (check <u>one</u>): G = General Fund, O = Other	
							G	O

d. 5000 Category. Use the space below to itemize and explain budget requests in the category of service, utilities, and operating expenses. *If more lines are needed, place cursor in the bottom right box and press [Tab].*



Describe resource requested	Location	Priority: 1 = high 2 = med 3 = low	Strategic Plan goal addressed by this resource	Provide a detailed rationale for the requested resource. The rationale should refer to your unit's mission and goals, recent Program Review or SLO assessment gaps, planning assumptions, and/or the College's Strategic Plan	Estimated amount of funding requested	Will this be one-time or on-going funding?	Funding Source (check <u>one</u>): G = General Fund, O = Other	
							G	O

e. 6000 Category. Use the space below to itemize and explain budget requests in the category of capital outlay. *If more lines are needed, place cursor in the bottom right box and press [Tab].*

Describe resource requested	Location	Priority: 1 = high 2 = med 3 = low	Strategic Plan goal addressed by this resource	Provide a detailed rationale for the requested resource. The rationale should refer to your unit's mission and goals, recent Program Review or SLO assessment gaps, planning assumptions, and/or the College's Strategic Plan	Estimated amount of funding requested	Will this be one-time or on-going funding?	Funding Source (check <u>one</u>): G = General Fund, O = Other	
							G	O

STEP 4: ATTACH NARRATIVE SUMMARY OF PRIOR YEAR'S SLO ASSESSMENTS

See attached

STEP 5: ATTACH COMPLETED BUDGET WORKSHEET (provided separately)



See Attached

STEP 6: ATTACH PRIOR YEAR'S STUDENT PERFORMANCE DATA (as provided)

See attached