Financial Aid Department
Annual Planning for Academic Year 2015-2016
Planning Year 2014

Description Of Department/Unit

Mission/Connection to College Mission

The Financial Aid and Scholarship Office provides resources necessary to decrease financial barriers to higher education. This is accomplished by assisting a diverse population with the process of applying for and receiving aid through federal, state, institutional and private organizations to ensure student learning. The FA office is devoted to providing quality customer service, efficiency in application processing, and timely delivery of financial aid funds to students aligning with the CCCC's commitment to student success. 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.

Student Equity

Student Equity

Using the Achieving the Dream data consisting of 3 cohort groups, the following gaps were found in the success rate between financial aid students and non financial aid students.

- Overall course completion of C or better for financial aid students was 9.6% below non financial aid students
- Completion of award or transfer of financial aid students was 3.4% below non financial aid students
  The trend in this study indicated a continual increase in the Hispanic student population with a growth from 22.94% in Fall 2011 to 35.62% in Spring 2014.(CA Chancellors office MIS Data Mart report) This is the second largest population of students with the first being the white/non hispanic population at 50.2%/1921 students.
  This trend was also identified in the FA Institutional Reasearch and Reporting data showing from 08/09 to 12/13 an increase from 374 students to 706 students. Additional trend data will be supplied by Oct 30, 2014. I believe there will be a continued increase with the new eligibility of Cal grants and Board of Govenors waivers for AB540 students beginning Fall 2013, therefore identifying this group as a "subpopulation" of financial aid students.

  Using the Achieving the Dream data, the following gaps were found in the success rate between hispanic students and white non hispanic students:

  - Overall course completion of C or better for hispanic students is *5.4% below white non hispanic students
  - Completion of award or transfer of hispanic students is 5.5% below white non hispanic students and 1.9% below the total financial aid student population.

Review And Planning

Progress Made on Program Review

Financial Aid

Year of Last Program Review:

2008/2009

Progress in the last year on Three-Year Strategies:

Progress in the last year on Six-Year Strategies:

Progress Made on Outcome Assessment

Decrease financial barriers while implementing processes that encourage student behaviors that increase success and completion

Type:

AUO

Semester Assessed:

Fall 2013

Target Missed/Gap Detected:

Financial aid students have lower success rates than non financial aid students. Among financial aid students, the hispanic subgroup has a lower success rate than the general population of financial aid student. The retention rate from one Fall to the next Fall in the Acheiving the Dream 3 cohort groups showed that the financial aid student had a slightly higher retention rate than non financial aid students.

Analysis and Plan:

Financial Aid students have to be enrolled to receive awards and maintain full time to maximize those awards. I believe this is the reason for the higher retention rate and an underlying cause for the lower success rate. Although under federal regulations a student should only be paid for classes that go towards their program, at this time our Banner system does identify classes in the students program. This encourages late adds and adding classes indiscrimanantly while discouraging initial contact with counseling services that have been proven to increase student success.
FA has made great progress on removing barriers for students to receive financial aid over AY 1314. The main strategies were eliminating students bringing in paperwork that was not required in regulations and batch processing of approximately 60% of our financial aid students that are not chosen for any verifying documents. This change in process directly relates to the increased Pell financial aid award students from 12/13 to 13/14 by 23.74% and the total award amount by 24.64% .
The Financial Aid Directors and District IT are aware fo the requirement to match classes to students programs. Beginning Fall 2014, a new requirement to report the students program in the MIS reporting to the National Clearing House was implemented. The next steps to be compliant and help increase student success, will be to pay only for classes going toward students program. At this time the set up is problematic in our banner system, but with this new focus on completion and limited financial aid, possible solutions are being explored.

Maximize the number of students eligible and receiving Pell and Scholarships

Type:

AUO

Semester Assessed:

AY 1314

Target Missed/Gap Detected:

There was a gap identified between students completing the application for financial aid and receiving financial aid. It was noted that students not receiving financial aid often had paperwork due that was not required by regulations.

Scholarship applications and awards had decreased due to lack of advertisement and out of date criteria.

Analysis and Plan:

The main strategies were eliminating students bringing in paperwork that was not required in regulations and batch processing of approximately 60% of our financial aid students that are not chosen for any verifying documents. This change in process directly relates to the increased Pell financial aid award students from 12/13 to 13/14 by 23.74% and the total award amount by 24.64% .

Schlarships increased in 13/14 by 31.75%. This was due to changes in the process of initial awarding of all scholarship money, advertisement of scholarships, and updating critieria on scholarships to current programs being offered. The scholarship program improvement will continue with an online automated software that will increase efficiency in identifying student's eligibility and awarding scholarships.

Progress Made on Prior Year Initiatives

Increase student access to FAO Technicians for assistance

Progress Made:

The FAO office has 1 Department Assistant and 3 FA Technicians. Until Spring 2014, 2 technicians were packaging awards and 1 technician was doing initial verification of forms. This caused students to go through three stages with three different people during the financial aid process resulting in inconsistent information given to the students that needed verification.
Progress:
1.) The Technician that was only doing verifications was trained in Fall 2013 on packaging and packages FA awards as of Spring 2014.
2.) Students are assigned to one Technician to complete their verification requirements.
NOTE: With the ongoing absence of the Department Assistant and the current opening of that position, the verification documents are still being received by the FA Technician.
3.) The FA Office also implemented a "Technician of the Day" as a way to have a technician available for walk in or calls that go beyond the expertise of the Department Assistance, to provide more information at the front end of the FA process.
4.) Financial Aid Technician trained and responsible for Cal Grants, Chaffee Grants, Return to Title IV and Dream Act applications. These areas are identified as Technician duties throughout the district but at CC rested solely on the previous FA Director. The areas are now assigned with Technicians and the Director advises and assist as needed.
5.) The FA Office implemented the use of a "hot line" with our new phone system to increase walk in service at the Cerro Coso sites. The Technicians answer the hot line in the same order as a walk in student giving walk in students at the sites equal access to FA services.

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

Progress Made:

As of 2012, the FAO staff had not attended a Federal financial aid conference in several years for Federal updates and interaction with peers. .
Progress:
1.) Two technicians were sent to an FA conference in 12/13 and all FA technicians were sent to a conferences in 2013/2014
2.) We held annual district trainings in 12/13 and 13/14. Specific area webinars were attended by appropriate staff such as Cal Grant webinar and Academic Works webinar.
3.) The FA office has regular meetings with Director and FA Technicians.

Initiatives for Next Academic Year

Increase knowledge and use of Financial Aid

Strategic Plan Goals Addressed:

1

Action Plan:

Financial Aid Literacy Program- Implement the following programs as part of the FA literacy program

1. Financial Aid T.V.- purchase the FA T.V. program that provides customized videos on all aspects of financial aid
2. Financial Aid in orientation- provide financial aid advising and information in student orientations on ground and online
3. Events- Provide learning events on financial aid and financial budgeting

Measure of Success:

The gap between FA students and non financial aid students on obtaining a degree, certificate or transfer will decrease as students are educated on the expectations of financial aid and student success.

Expected Completion:

Implemented Fall 2015

Person Responsible:

Director of Financial Aid , Financial Aid Technicians

Designed:

It is designed to increase student success

Student Experience:

2nd Year/Program Completion, First Year

Increased assistance with potential and 1st year students

Strategic Plan Goals Addressed:

1

Action Plan:

Increase assistance with potential and first year students with increased focus on hispanic population
1.) Provide materials in spanish- internal forms need to be translated into spanish for our growing hispanic population. This will assist students and parents of students understand financial aid processes and applications.
2.) Implementation of EAB in Fall 2015 will provide the student a guide and flow of financial aid process.
3.) Live Chat implemented Fall 2014 providing providing general answers that would target potential student
4.) Financial Aid T.V. implemented

Measure of Success:

Increase students receiving financial aid will be indicated on annual reports.
Decrease in corrections being submitted to FAFSA reported on students having FAFSAs with more than one transaction

Expected Completion:

Fall 2015

Person Responsible:

Director Financial Aid

Designed:

It is designed to increase student success

Student Experience:

First Year, Intake

Resource Needs

Facilities

Information Technology

Two technicians need headsets for their phones.

Marketing

Increased marketing in materials including the cost of translating forms into spanish.

Professional Development

Staffing

Resource Requests

1000 Category - Certificated Positions

Location:

Priority:

Strategic Plan Goals Addressed:

Estimated Amount of Funding Requested:

, from .

Detailed Rationale:

2000 Category - Classified Staff

Location:

Priority:

Strategic Plan Goals Addressed:

Salary Grade:

Number of Months:

Number of Hours per Week:

Salary Amount:

, from .

Detailed Rationale:

4000 Category - Supplies and Equipment

Head phones

Location:

Ridgecrest/IWV

Priority:

High

Strategic Plan Goals Addressed:

1

Estimated Amount of Funding Requested:

750.00, One-time from General Fund.

Detailed Rationale:

Three FA Technicians do not have head phones. Their daily task involves a high volumn of phone calls. The headsets will provide comfort and use of hands to research while talking to student. Estimated amount is $250.00 each.

5000 Category - Service, Utilities, and Operating Expenses

Financial Aid T.V.

Location:

College-wide

Priority:

High

Strategic Plan Goals Addressed:

1

Estimated Amount of Funding Requested:

, Ongoing from General Fund.

Detailed Rationale:

Financial Aid T.V. will provide video information with detailed instruction in all areas of financial aid. It is also available in spanish. The cost would involve set up and ongoing contract.

6000 Category - Capital Outlay

Location:

Priority:

Strategic Plan Goals Addressed:

Estimated Amount of Funding Requested:

, from .

Detailed Rationale: