

# Financial Aid Department

## Annual Unit Plan for Academic Year 2018-2019

October 2017

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### Describe Department/Unit

#### Connection to College Mission

The Financial Aid and Scholarship (FA) 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 increasing student access to college. The FA office is devoted to providing quality customer service, efficiency in application processing, and timely delivery of financial aid funds to students. The FA Office aligns with Cerro Coso Community College's (CCCC) commitment to student success by being a vital part of the college's comprehensive student support services. The FA Office supports eligible students by increasing their ability to afford college and complete their educational goals. The FA Office programs are essential for economically disadvantaged students to afford college.

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### Report on Improvements Made and Gaps Identified in the Prior Year

#### Student Equity: Actions Taken

##### **Students on Financial Aid have lower retention and success rates than the general population of students**

The Financial Aid Office implemented the FA T.V. "Get Sap" program. The Get Sap provides information on how to meet Satisfactory Academic Progress for Federal financial aid and the Board of Governor's waiver. The video tutorials are customized to the Cerro Coso policies and processes. Workshops with completion certificates are included. The FA T.V. "Get Sap" workshop is a requirement for students with financial aid appeal approvals. In addition to the workshop requirement, the students now sign a Student Success Contract that gives specific requirements for the student to continue on an approved appeal instead of the requirement to appeal every semester.

The Board of Governor's Waiver eligibility requirements were implemented beginning Fall 2016. This has increased our communication to students who are not making satisfactory progress. The academic standing modification in Banner created issues with current standing and identifying students on suspension or warning.

##### **Hispanic population receiving financial aid has increased from 20% in 10/11 to 37% in 14/15. The gap identified is the assistance to the growing Hispanic population.**

The Financial Aid Office has increased forms and information in Spanish to meet the need of the growing Hispanic population. In Fall 2016 the FA T.V. "Get Answers" was updated to include Spanish. Students now have the ability to select Spanish subtitles in the various informational videos. The Financial Aid Director is scheduled to meet with the Latino club to solicit suggestions on assisting the Latino community through the college process. The Hispanic population is not considered an equity gap since their success and retention rate is within 2% of the general population. Awareness of cultural barriers such as language will continually be addressed by the Financial Aid Office through staff development and office practices.

#### Student Equity: Gaps to be Addressed

##### **Socioeconomic Status: Economically Disadvantaged**

###### **Gap Identified:**

Students that receive financial aid is 32% of the college wide student population. While the count of financial aid students has slightly increased over the last 3 years, the percentage compared to the college wide count has decreased. This indicates a gap in students receiving financial aid and further exploration of why the financial aid population is low compared to other colleges in the KCCD District with over 70% students receiving financial aid is needed.

The gap in completion rate between these two groups has decreased by 3% with the completion rate of financial aid student now at 69% or 4% lower than the college wide student completion rate. This gap is larger when compared to only non financial aid students.

## **Socioeconomic Status: Economically Disadvantaged**

### **Gap Identified:**

Foster Youth is a high risk subgroup of the Socioeconomic Disadvantaged student population. Foster youth qualify for the maximum federal and state grants along with grants specifically for foster youth and are exempt from losing the Board of Governors waiver. This population usually has limited support after the age of 18. The college does not have a consistent strategy for identifying and reaching out to foster youth. The Financial Aid Department will work closely with the Counseling Department and community partners to identify potential foster youth students and provide outreach materials. The Financial Aid Technician that serves as the foster youth liaison will be the point person for this initiative.

## **Outcomes Assessment: Actions Taken**

### **Actions taken in the prior academic year**

**1.) Reduce the Institutional Debt to Department of Education by reducing over-payments to students-** The Financial Aid Departments as a District implemented strategies to decrease the institutional liability from over payments to students. In 1415, Cerro Coso Community College alone had \$41,275.00 Title IV school funds returned to the Department of Education. These charges are put on student's accounts but many students do not pay the charges. The strategy to reduce institutional liability implemented in 1516 was to pay students in three Pell disbursement instead of two Pell disbursements therefore reducing the amount given to students before they attend classes. This process has significantly lowered the institutional debt.

**2.) Decrease the number of students on warning and suspended from financial aid-** As part of the appeal process for students on suspension, the FA T.V. "Get SAP" workshops have been added as an requirement. These workshops explain how to make SAP and regain eligibility. The second strategy was the addition of the student success contract. This contract clarifies what is expected of the student to remain on continued probation with their appeal approval. This eliminated confusion on semester requirements and the need for students to appeal every semester. Students can now remain on continued probation until they meet SAP as long as they follow the contract.

### **Assessments completed in the prior academic year**

1.) The Financial Aid Technician responsible for the Return to Title IV process keeps the audit sheet for the institutional charges reported each year. The Institutional charges have decreased significantly over the last two academic years and are as follows:

1415- \$41,275.00- Base line year for assessment

1516- \$26,188.00- First year 3 payments implemented

1617- \$8452.00- Second year of 3 payments implemented

2.) The number of students on warning and suspension will be the assessment used for this AUO. It is too early to assess and additional strategies will be added to the 1819 unit plan. The students on warning and suspension in 1617 will be used for as a base line for assessments beginning 1718.

## **Outcomes Assessment: Gaps to be Addressed**

### **Decrease The Number of Students on Warning and Suspension from Financial Aid**

**Type:**

AUO

**Target Missed/Gap Detected:**

Measures were taken in 1617 and Fall 17 semester to help advance this AUO. It is too early to assess and additional strategies will be added to the 1819 unit plan. The students on warning and suspension in 1617 will be used for as a base line for assessments.

**Type of Gap:**

Other (explain in Analysis).

**Analysis and Plan for Improvement:**

The strategies for this AUO will be implemented over a two year period. The student contract and workshops were created in Spring 2016 and implemented in Fall 17. The following are additional plans?

- 1.) Implementation of the workshop requirement for students on warning.
- 2.) Coordination with all Financial Aid Departments in the District if this is going to be a policy district wide.
- 3.) Banner set to automatically put new requirements on students in warning status. This will require coordination with District IT.

**Anticipated Semester for Implementing Planned Improvements:**

Fall 2018

**Anticipated Semester of Next Assessment:**

Fall 2019

## Program Review: Actions Taken

### Financial Aid/Scholarship

**Year of Last Program Review:**

2015

**Actions Taken in the Prior Year to Address Strategies:**

The following advances have been made on the program review strategies to date:

- 1.) Decrease the number of students on financial aid warning and /or suspension- FA T.V. "Get Sap" was fully implemented in Fall 2016. Students on FA Suspension are required to complete the appropriate workshop and sign a student success contract. Board of Governor's Waiver SAP eligibility fully implemented in Spring 2018.
- 2.) Increase assistance to Hispanic student population- FA T.V. "Get Answers" with Spanish subtitles was implemented in Fall 2018. Forms in Spanish are provided in the FA Office.
- 3.) Increase the number of students applying for scholarships- The scholarship application process through Academic Works was provided in all financial aid workshop and as a stand alone workshop. Marketing for scholarships was on the web site and in social media. The Director of FA and a FA Technician attended an all day Academic Works training in Fall 2017.
- 4.) Written Policies and Procedures- Initial draft of policies and procedures was completed in Spring 2017.

## **Strategies Still to be Addressed:**

- 1.) Decrease the number of students on FA warning and /or suspension- The implementation of requiring students to attend a "Get Sap" workshop on warning will be essential in providing intervention for students before they get to suspension. This policy will be researched further to ensure it meets regulations and can be completed as a stand alone college or agreed upon district wide.
- 2.) Increase the number of students applying for scholarships- Increasing the utilization of Academic Works will decrease the manual procedures we continue to do. This will depend on time annually updating applications and scholarships to improve accuracy. The challenge with creating a time line is coordination throughout the district since we have individual college time lines.
- 3.) Written Policies and Procedures- The Policy and Procedure manual should be completed by Spring 2018. In addition, there needs to be an annual review of all policies and updates as appropriate.

## **Annual Planning: Actions Taken**

### **Decrease the number of Students on financial aid warning and suspension**

FA T.V. Get SAP was implemented in Spring 2017. Students appealing for financial aid in beginning Fall 2017 are required to complete the Get SAP workshop. There are several workshops that are customized to Cerro Coso Community College policies and procedures. In addition to the workshop, students meet with a counselor to complete a long term educational plan. If the appeal is approved, students sign a student success contract that explains the requirements each semester for the student to remain on appeal approval status.

The Board of Governor's Waiver (BOGW) satisfactory academic progress (SAP) requirements were implemented in Fall 2016 but a more accurate implementation started in Spring 2017. Implementation required an update to our Banner academic standing procedures. Students that request appeals to reinstate their BOGW are asked to meet with a counselor for an educational plan.

The implementation of requiring students on warning to complete a Get SAP workshop will be an action plan for Fall 2018. This will take a coordination between all financial aid offices throughout the district.

The measure of students on warning and suspension will not be accurate until after the Fall 2018 semester implementation of workshops completed by students on warning. The students on suspension in 1718 can be compared to 1617 to see if there was a decrease. The decrease would be students on suspension that are now on continued probation. Continued probation includes monitoring of student progress on their educational pathway each semester. This should also increase degrees and certificates over time.

### **Increase assistance to the hispanic student population**

In house forms provided by state and federal in Spanish are provided in the FA Department. FA T.V. with Spanish subtitles was implemented in Fall 2016 to assist Spanish speaking students and their parents. Input from the Latino student club is scheduled for Fall 2017. The percentage of the Hispanic student population receiving financial aid is higher than the college wide population average. Awareness of all cultural barriers such as language will continually be addressed by the Admissions and Records office through staff development and office practices.

### **Increase the number of students applying for scholarships**

Financial aid workshop on campuses and in high schools included the scholarship application process. The scholarship program was updated with changes in specific scholarship sorting to increase efficiency. Scholarships were advertised on the college web site and reminders pushed out in social media. The FA Director and FA Technician attended an all day workshop conducted by Academic Works in Fall 2017.

Measure of Success: Scholarship recipients increased from 71 in 1516 to 101 in 1617. The goal of 200 applications was not met but remains a goal for Fall 2017.

The scholarship process using Academic Works is cumbersome and dependent on coordination throughout the KCCD District. The 1718 cycle of applications is in progress and scholarship updates will be addressed in Fall 2017. As the college implements more of the Academic Work features, decreasing manual processes, the scholarship process will be more efficient.

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# Review of Current Year Initiatives

## Reminder of Initiatives for the Current Year

### Policy and Procedure Manual

#### Identify classes in students program in BANNER for compliance in payment.

There continues to be the need to explore ways to identify students classes with programs. With the new implementation of Navigate 2.0, there may be a way to identify financial aid students in classes not in their program using a Cognos report. Assistance from IR would be necessary to explore reports and how to best achieve this initiative.

#### Decrease number of students on FA warning and suspension

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## Plan Initiatives for Next Year

### Initiatives for Next Academic Year

#### Increase Percentage of Cerro Coso Community College Students Receiving Financial Aid

Is this part of a multiyear initiative?

Yes

#### Specific Action Steps to be Taken:

Students receiving financial aid at Cerro Coso Community College is a considerably lower percentage of the college wide student population compared to other colleges in the KCCCD. The following initial steps will be taken to explore the reason our percentages are low.

- 1.) The Financial Aid Department will work with the Institutional Research Department on identifying students that have not applied or received financial aid including scholarships. This will separate out the students that applied and were not qualified to give us the percentage of students that did not apply for financial aid.
- 2.) Design a method to inquire why students have not applied for financial aid. One possibility is through a survey to the specific population of students. The challenge would be getting a significant number of responses to the survey.
- 3.) Identify and address any barriers found through student inquiries to increase financial aid applications.

#### Lead Measure of Success:

- 1.) Barriers identified from survey results by Spring 2018
- 2.) Action plan to remove barriers

Are any of the lead measures identified above lacking assessment instruments?

Yes

Does the department request help to develop these instruments?

Yes

**Lag Measure of Success:**

1.) The percentage of students that apply for financial aid in the 1819 academic year will increase by at least 10%

**Person Responsible:**

Director Financial Aid

**It addresses a gap in student equity**

**Which strategic goal does this initiative address?**

Goal 1: Maximize Student Success

**Increase Financial Aid Services to Foster Youth**

**Is this part of a multiyear initiative?**

Yes

**Specific Action Steps to be Taken:**

- 1.) Coordinate with the Counseling Department and outside agencies to create a consistent strategy for identifying and reaching out to foster youth
- 2.) Create outreach materials on resources provided to foster youth
- 3.) FA Technician that is the foster youth liaison will begin attending state trainings and regional meetings to keep up to date on foster youth state initiatives

**Lead Measure of Success:**

- 1.) Reports created in Cognos to identify all students that claimed foster youth on their college application or financial aid application
- 2.) Outside organizations identified in 1718 with meetings and workshops as needed set up for 1819.

**Are any of the lead measures identified above lacking assessment instruments?**

Yes

**Does the department request help to develop these instruments?**

Yes

**Lag Measure of Success:**

1.) Foster youth receiving financial aid including the Chaffee grant will increase and an outreach plan to foster youth will be in place that addresses their specific needs.

**Person Responsible:**

Director of Financial Aid in coordination with the Director of Counseling

**Which strategic goal does this initiative address?**

Goal 1: Maximize Student Success

**Decrease Students on Financial Aid Suspension**

**Is this part of a multiyear initiative?**

Yes

**Specific Action Steps to be Taken:**

- 1.) Implement a policy requiring students on warning to attend a "SAP" workshop.
- 2.) Conduct training to counselors on utilizing FA T.V. video tutorials and workshops
- 3.) Increase FA T.V. videos embedded throughout the college web site

**Lead Measure of Success:**

- 1.) Meeting with Counselors on schedule
- 2.) Person responsible for overseeing identifying videos to embed in financial aid identified.

**Are any of the lead measures identified above lacking assessment instruments?**

No

**Does the department request help to develop these instruments?**

No

**Lag Measure of Success:**

- 1.) FA T.V. reports will show an increase in usage especially in embedded videos.
- 2.) Students on warning going to suspension will decrease
- 3.) Students on warning will have increased communication with the Financial Aid Office and Counseling Office for assistance.

**Person Responsible:**

Financial Aid Director

**It addresses a program review strategy**

**Which strategic goal does this initiative address?**

Goal 1: Maximize Student Success

**Increase Financial Literacy**

**Is this part of a multiyear initiative?**

No

**Specific Action Steps to be Taken:**

- 1.) Increase the knowledge and use of "CASH COURSE."
- 2.) Coordinate with the Counseling Department to integrate "Cash Course" and other financial literacy into counseling 101 classes.
- 3.) Link "Cash Course" to Navigate
- 4.) Increase information on "Cal Fresh."

**Lead Measure of Success:**

- 1.) Training on "Cash Course" conducted with Financial Aid Department and Counseling Department
- 2.) Navigate implementation of Cash Course planned
- 3.) Training on "Cal Fresh" to Financial Aid Department

**Are any of the lead measures identified above lacking assessment instruments?**

No

**Does the department request help to develop these instruments?**

No

**Lag Measure of Success:**

Increase in use of financial literacy materials to include forms in Cash Course and students using Cal Fresh.

**Person Responsible:**

Director of Financial Aid in Coordination with the Counseling Department

**It addresses a gap in student equity**

Economically Disadvantaged

**Which strategic goal does this initiative address?**

Goal 2: Advance Student Equity Measures

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## Evaluate Resource Needs

### Facilities

### Information Technology

### Marketing

### Professional Development

The following professional development is needed in the Financial Aid Office:



- 1.) Recognizing cultural differences beyond ethnicity
  - 2.) How to respect cultures- practical ways to not only identify differences, but how to adjust to respect those differences
  - 3.) Identifying policies that have cultural bias- Do you have policies that show cultural bias?
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## **Staffing Requests**

### **1000 Category - Certificated Positions**

### **2000 Category - Classified Staff**