

Financial Aid Department

AUP for Academic Year 2021-2022

November 2020

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 CerroCoso 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 and families to afford college.

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

Federal Financial Aid is largely awarded based on family financial need. Low income students face higher challenges in persistence and graduation than other students according to the Association of Community College Trustees 2017 Report on College Access and Success. It can be demonstrated that financial aid assists these students but at a graduated rate. Students receiving limited amounts of aid (\$1001-\$2500) graduated or transferred at 17% compared with zero EFC student receiving more than \$7500 who graduated or transferred at 49% (ACCT, 2017). The financial aid office is considering extraordinary need when awarding discretionary aid. Students who have an EFC greater than zero but are still grant eligible receive reduced amounts of Pell grants but the family dynamics are similar to true zero EFC families. We have looked at helping to support these students with other forms of aid such as SEOG grants. In addition, we are revising our Academic Progress appeal process to consider the student's ability to be successful rather than a prescriptive approve/deny policy. If the student has a solid academic plan, is meeting with advisors and can demonstrate a clear path to graduation, we are using our professional judgment in such a manner to allow the student to persist and be successful. This is resulting in more approvals, fewer denials. Hispanic population receiving financial aid has increased from 37% in 14/15 to 44% in 2016-2017. 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 coordinates with the Latino club to solicit suggestions on assisting the Latino community through the college process. We have developed an AB540 and undocumented student financial aid night to help this unique population navigate the path of state aid. The Hispanic population was not considered an equity gap since their success and retention rate is within 2% of the general population however the awareness of cultural barriers such as language will continually be addressed by the Financial Aid Office through staff development and office practices. We are currently have our two high usage financial aid forms translated into Spanish.

We are now looking at utilizing unmet need as a financial aid qualifier for SEOG funds rather than EFC. We currently award students with zero EFC SEOG funds. This would be financially our most needy students. However in addition to the SEOG funds, they will be receiving a full pell grant, over \$6k /yr. Our new allocations from the Department of Education should allow us to look at the students in the \$3000-\$6000 range of EFC. While their family income may be greater than the zero EFC students, we maintain that these are paycheck to paycheck families every bit as much as the zero EFC. Currently they receive a reduced pell grant or none at all and NO SEOG monies.

Student Equity: Gaps to be Addressed

Socioeconomic Status: Economically Disadvantaged

Gap Identified:

Students that receive financial aid is 43% of the college wide student population. While the count of financial aid students has increased over the last 3 years from 37% in the prior three years, the percentage compared to the college wide count is still significant. 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 KCCCD 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. We are anticipating an increase in persistence and graduation based on developing Financial Aid information nights, Financial Awareness programs and revised consideration on Satisfactory Academic Progress appeals using professional judgement.

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 California Promise Fee 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. We are seeing to maximize the California State Chaffee grant to assist in this process.

Outcomes Assessment: Actions Taken

Actions taken in the prior academic year

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. Fall 2020.
- 3.) Banner set to automatically put new requirements on students in warning status to attend the workshop.

Anticipated Semester for Implementing Planned Improvements: Spring 2021.

Anticipated Semester of Next Assessment:

Fall 2021

Outcomes Assessment: Gaps to be Addressed

Program Review: Actions Taken

Financial Aid

Year of Last Program Review:

2015

Actions Taken in the Prior Year to Address Strategies:

Year of Last Program Review:2015Actions Taken in the Prior Year to Address Strategies:

- Revise the Financial Aid appeal process to utilize a professional judgement model rather than a prescriptive method.
- Policy and procedure manual is written.
- Financial aid is only paying for courses that apply to the degree plan.

Strategies Still to be Addressed:

Policy and procedure manual needs to be updated.

Increase the number of scholarship applications.

Strategies Still to be Addressed:

Annual Planning: Actions Taken

No prior year initiatives to report on.

Review of Current Year Initiatives

Reminder of Initiatives for the Current Year

Increase persistence and graduation rates for financial aid students.

Policy and procedure manual

Plan Initiatives for Next Year

Initiatives for Next Academic Year

Policy and procedure manual

Is this part of a multiyear initiative?

Yes

Specific Action Steps to be Taken:

Continue to develop structured policy and procedure manual consisting of tiered -

- 1) Policy
- 2) Procedure
- 3) Work Instruction
- 4) Record Retention

Lead Measure of Success:

Functional index with revision dates.

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:

Person Responsible:

Director of Financial Aid

It addresses a program review strategy

Which strategic goal does this initiative address?

Goal 1: Maximize Student Success, Goal 5: Strengthen Organizational Effectiveness

Increase persistence and graduation rates for financial aid students.

Is this part of a multiyear initiative?

Yes

Specific Action Steps to be Taken:

Implement additional assistance for students on "Warning" status

Lead Measure of Success:

Identify students who completed warning counseling

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:

Person Responsible:

Director of Financial Aid

It addresses a gap in outcomes assessment

Which strategic goal does this initiative address?

Goal 1: Maximize Student Success, Goal 2: Advance Student Equity Measures

Increase financial aid participation with AB 540 and undocumented students.

Is this part of a multiyear initiative?

Yes

Specific Action Steps to be Taken:

Promote workshops specifically for undocumented and AB 540 Students

Lead Measure of Success:

Workshop participation.

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:

Person Responsible:

It addresses a gap in outcomes assessment

Which strategic goal does this initiative address?

Goal 1: Maximize Student Success, Goal 2: Advance Student Equity Measures, Goal 3: Ensure Student Access

Evaluate Resource Needs

Facilities

Need a workstation for a student employee.

Information Technology

Campus Logic

Marketing

Develop strategy for effective marketing materials.

Financial Awareness workshops.

No course cancellations. If we get a heads up that an instructor is to be absent, rather than cancel the course, one of our professional staff could conduct a session on financial aid, scholarship strategies, etc.

Professional Development

- Present at local conferences.
- Participate at state and national conferences with peer institutions.

Research and Data

Work on creating cognos reports as required.

Staffing Requests

1000 Category - Certificated Positions

2000 Category - Classified Staff