

LMC Comprehensive Program Review

Student Services Units

Fall 2017

Program: Financial Aid & Scholarships

1 EVALUATION/ANALYSIS (FOR ALL PROGRAMS)

1.1 ANNUAL REVIEW UPDATE ANALYSIS

The Office of Financial Aid & Scholarship Office developed the following objectives for the past three years (2014-2015, 2015-2016 and 2016-2017):

1. Increase awareness of the financial aid application process in efforts to promote completion of the application.
2. Increase awareness on responsible borrowing for the Direct Loan Program
3. Improve utilization of the Federal Work-Study Program by promoting the program to students, faculty, and staff on campus.
4. Streamline the scholarship application and review process (developed 2016-2017).

Objective #1: Increase awareness of the financial aid application process in efforts to promote completion of the application.

One of the financial aid department's objectives is to increase awareness of the financial aid application process in efforts to promote completion of the application. Navigating through the financial aid application process is a common challenge for students and their families. Most students start by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), but fail to follow-up with the rest of the application process after. Often times after the completion of the FAFSA, there are still forms and/or other follow-up items the student and/or parent needs to complete before a financial aid administrator can determine the student's eligibility for aid. In the 2014-2015 academic year, the college received a total of 7825 FAFSAs. A total of 3223 students were awarded a Pell Grant. This means 41% of students that filed a FAFSA received a Pell Grant. To meet this objective, the activity was to educate students about the process that follows after they complete the FAFSA online by offering more Financial Aid Workshops, and using various marketing tools (i.e. FA website, email blasts, InSite Portal).

During the spring 2015 semester, we offered a series of financial aid workshops, where a financial aid staff member conducted a power point presentation to students. At the end of the presentations, students were given the option to stay behind and receive one-on-one assistance with completing the FAFSA. At the workshop, students were educated on what happens next after they complete and submit a FAFSA online. There are steps that students must complete, such as submitting important forms and documents, so it was very important for students to be aware of them to ensure

they complete the entire process. We were unable to assess the effectiveness of the workshops due to lack of student participation. As a result, we did not offer the same workshop series after the spring 2015 semester.

Additionally, to meet this objective, we developed a Steps to Apply Flow Chart that was posted on our website homepage and began using the monthly Student Services E-newsletter to educate students on how to check their “Missing Information Checklist” on InSite Portal/Web Advisor. In the fall 2016 semester, we created social media accounts (Instagram and Twitter) as another strategy to engage with our students and inform them of the application process.

In 2015-2016, the college received a total of 7841 FAFSAs, and awarded a total of 3310 students a Pell Grant (42% of students who submitted a FAFSA were packaged a Pell Grant award). In 2016-2017, the college received a total of 7303 FAFAs, and awarded a total of 4551 students a Pell Grant (62% of students who submitted a FAFSA were packaged a Pell Grant award). Based on the number of Pell Grants awarded between 2015-2016 and 2016-2017, the Pell Grant Award rate increased from 42% to 62%. After reviewing our Pell Grant award rates (see Table A), we determined that the various marketing strategies we used were effective in meeting our objective. Although there was an increase, 62% Pell Grant award rate is still a relatively low number. We recognize that our numbers for 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 may be skewed since we do not have direct access to determine out of the number of FAFSAs received, how many of these students actually were enrolled. The results indicate we need to continue to allocate resources toward helping students complete all required steps to receive a Pell Grant. One thing to consider is that some students, who completed the application process, could have been determined by Department of Education (DOE) as not Pell Grant-eligible. We will need to think of a method to disaggregate the data so that we can determine the percentage of students that did follow through the entire application process, but was denied a Pell Grant due to ineligibility.

Additionally, we took a look at the FAFSA filing rates to determine the filing trend within the past three academic years. In 2014-2015, we received 7825 FAFSAs out of a total of 12,384 enrolled students (63% filing rate). In 2015-2016, we received 7841 FAFSA out of a total of 12,608 enrolled students (62% filing rate). It is important to note that our numbers for these two years may be skewed, as we do not have direct access to determine out of the number of FAFSAs received, how many of these students actually were enrolled. Often times, students submit a FAFSA for LMC early in the year, with the intention of attending, but never do. For 2016-2017, we were able to pull more specific data. Out of a total of 7303 FAFSAs we received, 6169 of those FAFSAs received were enrolled students. This gives us a FAFSA filing rate of 48%. The FAFSA filing rate for the past three years has been relatively low, which could indicate a need for financial aid staff to provide additional intervention to help students file an application. Effective beginning in the 2018-2019 academic year, our new objective will be to increase the FAFSA filing and application completion rate for currently enrolled students. In order to meet this objective, we plan to perform the following activities:

- a. Offer weekly financial aid lab hours to help students complete the FAFSA.
- b. Offer weekly drop-in hours to students who would like to meet with a financial aid advisor one-on-one to check their status and complete their student file.
- c. Offer a financial aid awareness event each semester to promote the completion of the FAFSA.

Table A: FAFSA filing and Pell Grant Rates

Year	Student Enrollment Head Count	# of FAFSAs Received for LMC	# of FAFSAs Received (enrolled students only)	FAFSA Filing Rate	Pell Grant Awards	Pell Grant Award Rate
2014-2015	12,384	7825	N/A	63%	3223	41%
2015-2016	12,608	7841	N/A	62%	3310	42%
2016-2017	12,626	7303	6169	48%	4551	74%

Objective #2: Increase awareness on responsible borrowing for the Direct Loan Program.

In spring of 2015, the Office of Financial Aid started offering in-person loan counseling workshops to increase awareness on responsible borrowing for the Direct Loan Program. The intent of the workshops is to educate students on the loan application process and options, and to serve as a preventative measure in addressing the institution's future cohort default rate (CDR). We wanted to offer workshops to address the counseling aspect of the Direct Loan Program, and give students an opportunity to engage with the loan coordinator throughout the loan request process. It is imperative for financial aid administrators to provide students with information on the different loan options, repayment plans, and deferment and forbearance options designed to meet the needs of borrowers in different financial circumstances. Additionally, students need to learn the consequences of not repaying their student loan to Department of Education (DOE) in a timely manner.

When comparing data between academic years 2014-2015 and 2015-2016, there was a 90% increase in the number of student loan recipients (see Table B). In 2015-2016, there was a 5% increase when compared to 2015-2016. The increase in loan recipients indicate we were successful at increasing student awareness and making the application process more transparent. In previous years, many students were confused on the loan amounts they were eligible to request. To make the process more transparent, we revised the Direct Loan Request Form back in 2016-2017 to include the annual loan limits students can apply for. Based on the numbers, we determined that by providing students with the loan amount information and hands on assistance with completing the federal online components in a workshop format, students were able to navigate the request process successfully. As a result, students were able to receive additional financial assistance to help pay for educational expenses to help offset the cost of attending college. Additionally, we recognize the importance of educating students on how to determine whether or not they really have a financial need for a student loan and to learn how to be a responsible borrower. We found some students who opted out of taking a loan once they understood the full ramifications of borrowing and student loan debt. We recognize the importance of educating students on what it means to be a responsible borrower because we would not want the student to graduate college with a large amount of debt they cannot manage to repay and/or be placed in an unsatisfactory loan default status, which adversely affects their credit history. A college could also potentially lose eligibility to participate in the Direct Loan program if DOE determines the college has a high CDR. Research indicates that increasing the pool of loan students, particularly for students that have a high program completion rate, i.e. students in the nursing program, may help decrease an

institution's future CDR. We are hoping the 90% increase of loan recipients in 2016-2017 will help decrease our future CDR.

Despite the increase in loan recipients within the past three years, the loan coordinator identified room for improvement in our assessment methods. In addition to reviewing the loan award data, we determined that administering a pre and post student survey would provide more accurate results as to whether we were successful at increasing a student's knowledge level on responsible borrowing. In efforts to provide a more accurate assessment, we need to determine the benchmarks when assessing student knowledge level. In other words, we need to define what it means to DOE to be a responsible borrower. Since we would like all students who attend a loan workshop to demonstrate an understanding of responsible borrowing, we decided to turn this objective in to a student learning outcome for the department.

Table B: Direct Loan Award Amounts

2014-2015	Total Amount Awarded	Total Students Awarded
Subsidized Direct Loan	\$398,256.00	131
Unsubsidized Direct Loan	\$154,919.00	47
Total	\$553,175.00	178

2015-2016	Total Amount Awarded	Total Students Awarded
Subsidized Direct Loan	\$572,200.00	186
Unsubsidized Direct Loan	\$628,020.00	153
Total	\$1,200,220.00	339

2016-2017	Total Amount Awarded	Total Students Awarded
Subsidized Direct Loan	\$547,690.00	185
Unsubsidized Direct Loan	\$738,248.00	171
Total	\$1,285,938.00	356

Objective #3: Improve utilization of the Federal Work-Study Program by promoting the program to students, faculty, and staff on campus.

One objective was to increase utilization of the Federal Work-Study (FWS) Program by promoting the program to students, faculty, and staff on campus. In previous years, FWS funds were underspent due to a lack of department participation in the program. The college operated under a restricted allocation model, where only a limited number of departments on-campus were able to hire student assistants using FWS funds. Part of the challenge was that departments who were given an allocation failed to use the funds in a timely manner, while departments that wanted to use the funds couldn't because they were not on the college's approval list. This resulted with unspent FWS funds by the end of the academic year, which was returned to the Department of Education.

In 2014, the financial aid office collaborated with the Business Services Director to propose to the college President Cabinet to get rid of the FWS restricted list allocation model, and allow all departments to participate in the program. President Cabinet approved the request and effective with the 2014-2015 academic year, the FWS program was open to all departments interested in participating.

Although the restricted list was no longer active, many departments were still under the impression they couldn't hire student assistants using FWS funds. In fall of 2014, the financial aid department began sending campus wide emails to market the FWS program's new process, and to encourage departments to use FWS funds. Since spring of 2016, we partnered up with the student employment office to offer a flex workshop each semester to educate staff and faculty on the steps to hire a FWS student and to clear up misconceptions. As a result of our marketing efforts, we were able to spend our entire allocation in 2014-2015. The federal work-study coordinator received an increase in requests from various departments on campus wanting to use FWS funds to hire student assistants. In 2015-2016, our FWS allocation was \$155,074 and year-end expenditures were \$169,154. Due to the increase in departmental participation, we overspent by \$14,080. The financial aid department was able to request from DOE to take funds from the 2016-2017 allocation and apply it to the 2015-2016 allocation to cover the balance. In 2016-2017, we received a 70% increase in our FWS allocation from DOE (see Table C). Despite the increase in departmental participation, we were unable to spend the entire allocation, which left us with a remaining balance of \$21,958. DOE allowed the college to carryover the remaining balance to be used in the 2017-2018 academic year.

Based on our expenditure data, we determined we were successful at improving utilization of the Federal Work-Study program. The campus-wide email communications and Flex Workshops were effective strategies for promoting the program to staff and faculty. Although the campus community is well aware of FWS funds, the federal work-study coordinator will continue to implement these practices to ensure any new staff or faculty member has an opportunity to get information about the program.

Table C: Federal Work-Study Expenditures

Academic Year	Allocation	Total Expenditures
2014-2015	\$135,760	\$135,760
2015-2016	\$155,074	\$169,154
2016-2017	\$265,757	\$243,799

Objective #4: Streamline the scholarship application and review process for students and staff.

In 2016-2017, we developed a new objective to streamline the scholarship application and review process for students and staff by implementing a scholarship management system called AcademicWorks. The LMC scholarship application cycle opens each year from early November through February. In 2016-2017 and prior years, students would go to the college's scholarship webpage to access the paper scholarship application. Students had to read through the entire list of LMC Foundation scholarships and determine if they met the eligibility criteria to apply. Once they identified the scholarships they were eligible to apply for, they had to print out the paper application, fill it out by hand, and submit to the financial aid office. Once the application cycle closed, the scholarship program coordinator reviewed all paper applications to ensure that all sections were complete, and to verify the student met the scholarship eligibility criteria. It was labor intensive for the scholarship program coordinator to review all paper applications. In 2016-2017, the coordinator reviewed a total of 143 applications. The completed applications were forwarded to various scholarship review committees for review and selection of award recipients. Once committee members selected their scholarship recipients, the information was forwarded back to the coordinator so that students can be notified of their award.

The financial aid department purchased the AcademicWorks software in January of 2016, and

began working with the company's IT staff to implement the software in summer of 2016. We completed the implementation phase and launched the new software in fall of 2016 for the 2017-2018 scholarship application cycle. Students were able to use the online system to search and apply for various scholarship opportunities for the 2017-2018 academic year. We believe the software simplified the application process for students by matching and applying them to all relevant scholarship opportunities. Students no longer had to navigate through scholarship descriptions to determine which scholarships they were eligible to apply for. When we compared 2016-2017 with 2017-2018 in terms of the number of applications submitted, we determined a 35% increase in applications (see Table D). The results indicate the online software helped streamline the application process for students, allowing more students to complete an application. The online system helped to enhance student learning and success by improving their experience with applying for scholarships. Students with a positive experience using the online system would be more likely to complete and submit an application. However, we recognize that relying solely on the percentage increase is not sufficient evidence to draw this conclusion. We plan to administer a student satisfaction survey at the end of the 2018-2019 application cycle to gather feedback on their experience with the online system before we can conclude that students had a positive experience.

Based on feedback from the scholarship coordinator, the software helped reduce workload by automating review assignments for review committee members. The scholarship coordinator was able to easily sort or filter the applicant pool to evaluate applicants against the requirements of the scholarship opportunity prior to assigning the applications to a reviewer. Each reviewer's access account was configured uniquely with their own application review form, scoring rubrics, and list of applicants. As a result, they were able to access and review the scholarship application materials more quickly instead of waiting to receive paper applications from the scholarship coordinator like years past.

Table D: Scholarship Applications Submitted

Academic Year	LMC Foundation Scholarship Applications submitted	LMC Scholarships Awarded
2014-2015	155	145
2015-2016	176	127
2016-2017	143	113
2017-2018	193	91

In addition to the meeting the aforementioned objectives, we were successful at making the following major changes in the department that had a positive impact on students.

New Financial Aid Funding Options

In collaboration with the district finance department, we were able to offer financial aid students three options to receive their financial aid awards as of Fall 2016. The funding options are:

- **ACH Transfer (Direct Deposit).** Funds can be transferred directly to your existing bank account. Funds will be available within 3-5 business days from the date funds are scheduled for disbursement.
- **Money Network Enabled CollegeCash Card.** Funds are available the same day school disburses the funding.
- **Paper Check.** A paper check will be mailed to the address on file with the Admissions and Records Office. Funds are generally available within 7-10 business days from the date funds are scheduled for disbursement.

Students are now able to access their financial aid funds a lot quicker to purchase books and supplies they need for a successful start of the semester. In previous years, financial aid funds were disbursed to students in a form of a paper check, which could take several days for delivery. We found that most students no longer use USPS services to take care of personal business since most companies offer services online. As a result, most students fail to update their mailing address on their student record with the Admissions & Records Office. Prior to offering ACH Transfer and the collegecash card, students' financial aid checks were misplaced or delivered to the wrong address.

Implementation of Colleague Financial Aid Self-Service

In collaboration with the financial aid offices within our district, Contra Costa College and Diablo Valley College, and district IT department leadership, we implemented Colleague Financial Aid Self-Service, a new student portal platform, in fall of 2017. Any updates we make to a student's record in the Colleague system is reflected on a student's InSite Portal account immediately. Students are now able to receive the latest information on the status of their financial aid application, such as missing items, satisfactory academic progress standing, and financial aid award package.

Objectives for 2018-2019

The Office of Financial Aid & Scholarship have developed the following objectives and activities for 2018-2019:

- 1) Increase the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) filing and application completion rate for currently enrolled students.

Activities:

- a. Offer weekly drop-in hours to students who would like to meet with a financial aid advisor one-on-one to complete their application and student file.
- b. Offer weekly financial aid lab hours to help students complete the FAFSA.
- c. Offer a financial aid awareness event each semester to promote the completion of the FAFSA.

- 2) Increase the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) filing and application completion rate for currently enrolled ESL and foster youth students.

Activities:

- a. Offer a series of financial aid workshops to help students complete a FAFSA.
- b. Follow up with students after they submit a FAFSA to assist with completing required documents.

- 3) Provide financial literacy activities for currently enrolled students to support student retention and success.

Activities:

- a. Incorporate a financial literacy component in the Loan Counseling Workshop.

- b. Collaborate with the Business Department to offer a series of financial literacy workshops to currently enrolled students.
- 4) Provide staff development training to learn new solutions and strategies offered by Colleague system to streamline the management of student financial aid accounts.

Activities:

- a. Schedule in-house trainings on Colleague financial aid screens.
- b. Look in to the feasibility of hiring a trainer/consultant from Ellucian to provide in-house training on Colleague.

1.2 ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

The Office of Financial Aid & Scholarship had the following Student learning Outcomes (SLO):

1. Students who attend the FAFSA Workshops will understand how to interpret their Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR).

The program assessed was the FAFSA Workshop that included a focus on the Student Aid Report (SAR), which is also known as the Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR). Students completed a pre-test and a post-test before and after the workshops to assess their levels of understanding in regards to the SAR/ISIR. The results were quantified and scored based on the *SAR Workshop Evaluation SLO Rubric*. The rubric indicates levels of below proficiency, proficient and above proficiency as key indicators for assessment. Of the seven total students who attended a spring 2015 workshop and completed the pre- and post-test, 43% were below proficiency, 29% were proficient and 29% had high levels of proficiency. Looking at improvement levels between pre- and post-tests, 57% of students had better scores after the presentation than before. 86% of students queried stated they felt they had a better understanding of the SAR after attending the workshop.

In review of this SLO, we determined it is an outdated learning outcome. There was a distinct lack of students attending these workshops. We had offered two workshop formats; one with a presentation followed by hands-on assistance in completing a FAFSA, and one without a presentation. Most students opted for the non-presentation workshops and so were not given a presentation or questionnaire. Some students who did attend the presentation did not complete the questionnaires at the end, and some left during the presentation. When this SLO was originally created, students were often mailed a paper copy of the SAR for review, and being able to understand it was of much higher importance than today. At this time, the FAFSA and SAR are both completed and accessible online, with no SAR being mailed to a student unless the student requests it. The low level of proficiency achieved by students indicates they no longer receive and review a paper SAR. The Office of Financial Aid will review the ISIR and contact students if we feel there are corrections to be made, which makes this SLO obsolete. As a result of this assessment and Department of Education's transition to make SAR electronically available, we will be abandoning this SLO and spend our resources on an SLO regarding teaching students how to complete the FAFSA.

2. Students who access the mandatory online video will demonstrate understanding of the Satisfactory Academic Policy (SAP).

The program assessed was the SAP online workshop and quiz. Students with a financial aid academic suspension status are required to complete the two online components. Students are placed on academic suspension due to their cumulative or semester grade point average being below 2.0, or semester completion rate of less than 67% for more than one consecutive term. The online SAP workshop consists of fifteen informational slides followed by a ten-question quiz prior to submitting an appeal for reinstatement of financial aid. The quiz was made available through Google forms, and students were required to enter in their first and last name, student ID number, email address, and select a “Yes” or “No” answer to each question. The results were quantified and scored based on the attached SAP Quiz SLO Rubric. The rubric indicates levels of below proficiency, proficient and above proficiency as key indicators for assessment.

Based on the assessment results, the workshop and quiz proved successful in the goal to educate students in regards to the SAP policy. 69% of the students who took the SAP online workshop and quiz were scored at proficient. However, we determined the Google form platform had limitations and lacked the ability to grade the quizzes and generate students’ scores. For all 170 students who took the SAP quiz, a financial aid staff member reviewed and graded each quiz by hand. We determined the process was outdated and too time consuming. In Fall 2016, we transitioned to Comevo, an online orientation software purchased by the college. Through Comevo, we created an SAP Online Module that consists of ten sections. The quiz results are tracked using a report system, which gives us the ability to download the quiz results, eliminating the manual scoring and assessment process of the current SAP workshop and quiz. Additionally, we discussed rephrasing some of the questions and having students answer a combination of multiple choice and true/false questions. Currently, the SAP quiz consists of all true/false questions, which gives students a 50% chance of getting the correct answer. However, requiring students to answer multiple-choice questions will provide a more accurate assessment of students’ comprehension level. We will keep this SLO so we can assess the effectiveness of the new assessment tool and the new question format.

3. Students who attend the scholarship workshop will demonstrate understanding of the scholarship application process.

The program assessed was the Scholarship application workshop series that was offered to students in the spring 2016 semester. Students interested in applying for an LMC Foundation Scholarship were encouraged to attend a workshop to learn about the eligibility requirements and application process. At the end of the 2016-2017 LMC Scholarship application cycle, we sent a Survey Monkey, which consisted of nine multiple-choice questions and one unrated, open-ended question. Students were not asked to provide any personally identifiable information, and participation was voluntary. Another assessment method we used was collecting data on the number of students that participated in the scholarship workshop, compared to the number of students who was awarded a scholarship award as a result of attending a workshop. After we reviewed the survey results, we determined that 59.62% of students answered 6 out of 9 questions correctly. Over half of the students who took the survey were determined to be proficient. This is an indication that overall students did benefit from attending a scholarship workshop, since they were able to demonstrate an understanding of the application requirements and process. Since we did not ask survey completers to provide personal identifying information, there was no way for us to verify that all the survey respondents actually attended a scholarship workshop, which can skew our results. Out of the 33 students that attended a scholarship workshop, only 48% of students submitted an application ($16/33 = 48\%$). 51% of students did not submit an application ($17/33 = 51\%$). These results may indicate a need for us to

reevaluate the content and format of the workshop, since over 50% of the students that attended failed to submit an application. Additionally, there may be a need for the scholarship coordinator to follow up with the students after the workshop to do a check in. With this data, we do not feel confident drawing a conclusion that 51% did not benefit from the workshop, since these students may not have submitted an application as a result of learning from the workshop that they did not meet the eligibility requirements to apply. For our next assessment, we plan to ask students who attended the workshop why they failed to submit an application. We recognize that students who respond to the survey might not be representative of our target population as a whole. We discussed improving the assessment method for next time by only sending the survey to students that actually attended a workshop instead of to all currently enrolled students.

4. Students that attend the Federal Work Study Orientation will have an understanding of eligibility criteria and application procedures for the Federal Work Study (FWS) Program.

In fall of 2014, the Student Employment Specialist offered a series of Federal Work-Study (FWS) orientations to educate students on program eligibility and job placement requirements. In years past, the college had a difficult time spending FWS funds. We thought that by offering student orientations, it would be an opportunity to recruit students for the program. The Student Employment Specialist made it mandatory for students to attend an orientation so that students understood the steps they needed to follow in order to successfully be placed in a work-site on campus. However, due to a lack of student participation in the orientations, we were unable to assess this SLO. Most students were connecting with their prospective employers in the various departments on campus first before making contact with the financial aid office. Students found out about the program from their prospective employers, which demonstrated to be an effective way of recruiting students. Students were not responsive to the orientation invitations we sent out via email. Students were more engaged with learning about the eligibility criteria and application procedures for FWS after they have been offered a position on-campus.

In addition, we learned that lack of student participation in the orientations was not a contributing factor to the college's under-usage of FWS funds. It was the college's restricted list that prohibited certain departments from being able to use the funds. Ever since the college eliminated the list and gave all departments on campus access to request funds, under-usage of funds was no longer an issue. Since there is no interest or need for students to attend an orientation, we have decided to abandon this SLO.

1.3 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In order to remain in compliance at the institution level, it is imperative for staff to receive training due to the ever-changing regulations. To keep abreast of current state and federal financial aid regulations, the financial aid staff attends a number of annual conferences and trainings offered by various state and federal financial aid associations. Below is a list of trainings and conferences the financial aid staff attended within the past three academic years.

Staff Member	Academic Year	Training
Deborah Baskin	2014-2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jim Briggs Workshop
	2015-2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WASFAA training on loan limits Joblinks
	2016-2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial Wellness Forum
	Comments	I do think the workshops I have attended have been very beneficial to my understanding of how to best assist students. I hope to attend more in the future as my personal schedule allows.
Tamara Carreon	2015-2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jim Briggs Tax Training Job Links FSA Conference
	Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Jim Briggs Tax Training</i> – This is a good training source to gain understanding of the tax requirements of students who are receiving financial aid and their parents. <i>Job Links</i> – This is good for networking with our colleagues <i>FSA Conference</i> – This conference was a good way to get information about regulations straight from the DOE trainers. I would definitely like to attend this conference again. I would like to see more house training. Possibly bi-monthly meetings to go over new regulations from IFAP Dear Colleague letters, news from PET meetings, etc.
Chunni Leung	2014-2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CCCSFAAA Annual Conference Joblinks
	2015-2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FSA Conference Department of Education Return of Title IV Training
	2016-2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FSA Conference CCCSFAAA Conference
Jennifer Ma	2014-2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CASFAA Conference CCCCO New Financial Aid Director Training CCCSFAAA Conference
	2015-2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA) Conference CASFAA Conference FSA Conference All Financial Aid Director Training
	2016-2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NASFAA Conference IEP Training
Phyllis Molina	2015-2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CCCSFAAA Conference
	2016-2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CASFAA Conference New Professionals Webinar: An Overview of the FASFA Process Having Fun With Taxes Workshop CCCSFAAA Conference
	2017-2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SmartSessions Webinar: Department or Independent Status : Clarifying the Confusion

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SmartSessions Webinar: Professional Judgement: Unraveling the Mystery • FSA Conference
	Comments	I feel that all of the trainings that I have attended have been beneficial and have helped me become more knowledgeable about financial aid and all of the processes that come with it. Topics ranged from financial aid compliance and best practices, to professional development and personal improvement. It is helpful to network and get advice from colleagues who have dealt with similar issues or circumstances. The webinars are informative, but because I do not have the latest software program on my computer, it is not interactive as it could be. I think for future trainings, it would be beneficial as an office to have more in house trainings so that we are all on the same page as far as processing procedures.
Eva Monteverde	2014-2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Links – Awesome job shadowing and info • Financial Literacy for Foster Youth & Care Providers – very informational for the youth as well as their Care Providers • CASFAA Conference – All sessions were very informative and many had updates and new changes. • Jim Briggs Workshop – attended the Tax Transcript – great information
	2015-2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WASEA Conference – Western Association of Student Employment Administrators - I learned a lot from this conference about the Federal Work-Study program. • Region III/IV – good training on Gainful employment & identifying DACA students • CASFAA Conference – All sessions were very informative and many had updates and new changes. • Foster Youth Ed Summit – Great event for Foster Youth
	2016-2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JohLinks – great topics and good networking • CASFAA Conference – Valuable updates and change information • Latina Leadership Conference – this conference is an exceptional conference for me • Financial Literacy Workshop – WOW! Good and valuable information but how do we get Management on board? And where will the funding come from? • Foster Youth Ed Summit – Great event for Foster Youth
Tammy Oranje	2014-2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FERPA Training • California Community College Financial Aid Administrator Association (CCCSFAAA) Annual Conference • Jim Briggs Tax Workshop • WASFAA Summer Institute
	2015-2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • California Community College User's Group (4CUG) (formerly 3CDUG) Conference
	2016-2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • California Association of Student Financial Aid Administrations Annual Conference
	Comments	Overall, I would agree that the conferences I have attended have been sufficient in meeting my needs. The Jim Briggs Tax Workshop, in particular, has been helpful since the discussions often relates to verification and items on the tax transcript that the FAO's need to verify. CASFAA has been resourceful since information provided relates to many of the state regulations for grants, such as Cal Grants and loss of BOG regulations.
Faidra Rodriguez	2015-2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • California Association of Student Financial Aid Administrations Annual Conference

1.4 COLLABORATION

Describe any current collaboration efforts that are occurring between your unit/program and other units and programs both inside and outside of Student Services, and impact (directly or indirectly) on student success.

The Office of Financial Aid, Counseling Department, and the Office of Student Success and Retention Services work closely together to discuss best practices and establish internal procedures regarding the financial aid appeal process. Students on a financial aid suspension due to exceeding maximum time frame for financial aid are required to meet with a general academic counselor or a student retention counselor to develop a comprehensive educational plan and complete the counseling section of the appeal form completed. One of college's challenges has been being able to offer adequate counseling appointments to meet the student demand. Key financial aid staff meets with the chairs of the counseling department and the student success and retention office staff to discuss ways to streamline the process for students. We also provide financial aid training to full-time and adjunct counselors at least once a semester to provide updates on various federal and state financial aid programs and requirements. As a result of our collaboration, we have been able to make revisions to our appeal form to reduce the number of questions for the counselors to complete, which helped reduce the length of the counseling appointment, which in return allowed the counseling department to open more appointment slots. By receiving ongoing financial aid training, counselors are also more informed about the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy and appeal process, and are better equipped at completing the appeal form for students. These changes have demonstrated a positive impact on students, as there are fewer students that are being sent back and forth between our offices to clarify the appeal requirements and process. Due to our strong collaboration, both departments have a common understanding of what function they are responsible for within the process, which eliminates the need for students to explain to counselors what they need in order to complete the financial aid appeal requirements. By providing a uniform message to students from both departments, it eliminates student confusion regarding the process and supports student success.

In 2015-2016 and 2016-2017, we collaborated with the English as a Second Language (ESL) Department to provide targeted financial aid workshops to ESL students. Based on the analysis of data provided by the Contra Costa Community College District Office of Research and Planning in LMC's 2014-2019 Student Equity Plan (SEP), ESL students were identified as an underserved (target) population facing disproportionate impact. The SEP Advisory Committee determined the college has historically been unsuccessful in fully serving ESL students and the need to design specific programs and activities to ensure the success of ESL students. She worked with the ESL faculty to coordinate dates and times for a financial aid staff to conduct in-class presentations on financial aid and scholarships. Prior to offering financial aid workshops, the chair of the ESL department requested all ESL faculty members to collect specific financial aid questions from the targeted student population. In efforts to provide additional support to ESL students, we used the questions to develop the content of the power point presentation. After we completed the in-class presentations, we had the district IT department provide a list of all students enrolled in ESL courses, and a financial aid staff member maintain a spreadsheet to track the status and progress of their financial aid application. We monitored the students' progress to determine where they were at within the application process and what type of state and federal grants they were awarded. If we saw a student who submitted a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or California Dream Act application, but had yet to receive any financial aid awards, we reviewed the

student's file to determine if the student is missing any outstanding documents. If a student has not submitted the outstanding documents, a financial aid staff member sent a follow-up email to remind the student of the requirements.

Since the 2013-2014 academic year, the Office of Financial Aid has been working with the leadership of the Fire Academy department to grant financial aid funding to students in their program. Through the Fire Academy, students can graduate with any of the following: Associate degree or Certificate of Achievement in Fire Technology, Certificate of Achievement in Fire Academy, or College Skills Certificate in Fire Technology. In order for a student to receive federal financial aid, they must be enrolled in an academic program that is approved to participate in Title IV programs by Department of Education (DOE). One of DOE's requirements is that the program must be a recognized program by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) and the state chancellor's office. The Fire Academy program was approved by ACCJC in November of 2013. However, the office of financial aid was unable to complete the application process with DOE due to management turnover within the financial aid department. In 2016-2017, we were able to gather the required accreditation and contract documents to complete DOE's application. As of Fall 2017, DOE approved the Fire Academy program for Title IV eligibility. Students in the program are now eligible to complete a FAFSA and be considered for federal and state financial aid to help support educational expenses.

The leadership of financial aid and Admissions and Records within the Contra Costa Community College district has standing meetings once a semester to discuss latest regulatory requirements that have an impact on students in both areas. We discuss the various procedures that are implemented at the campus level, unique challenges that arise, and identify possible solutions. One of the main objectives of the joint meetings is to adopt uniform policies and procedures throughout the district to provide continuity for our students that may be attending multiple colleges within the district. Below are some of our accomplishments as a result of our collaboration.

- Developed a process for transcript evaluation for students applying for financial aid.
- Streamlined process for updating student majors to meet Gainful Employment reporting requirements.
- Discussed various residency codes and the impact on students' eligibility for the Board of Governors Fee Waiver (BOGW).
- Developed a district Priority Registration and BOGW appeal form and implement a streamlined appeal review process at the colleges.

2 LONG TERM GOALS (HOW TO GET THERE)

2.1 LONG TERM (5 YEAR) GOALS TO MEET COLLEGE STRATEGIC PLAN

List 3 – 5 longer term (5 year) new goals for your program. For each goal, pick 1 – 2 College Strategic Directions and/or 1 – 2 Integrated Planning Goals to which your new goal aligns.

Goals	Aligned College Strategic Direction(s)	Aligned Integrated Planning Goal(s)
Increase the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) filing and application completion rate for currently enrolled students.	Increase equitable student engagement, learning, and success.	ACCESS: increase access through enrollment of students currently underserved in our community.
Increase the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) filing rate for currently enrolled ESL and foster youth students.	Increase equitable student engagement, learning, and success.	ACCESS: increase access through enrollment of students currently underserved in our community.
Provide financial literacy activities for currently enrolled students to support student retention and success.	Increase equitable student engagement, learning, and success.	PERSISTENCE & COMPLETION: Increase successful course completions, and term to term persistence.
Provide staff development training to learn new solutions and strategies offered by Colleague system to streamline the management of student financial aid accounts.	Promote innovation, expand organizational capacity, and enhance institutional effectiveness. Invest in technology, fortify infrastructure, and enhance fiscal resources.	N/A

To consider: If applicable, describe how these goals are designed to increase student engagement in 3SP and equitable student outcomes.

2.2 STAFFING REQUEST (OPTIONAL)

Faculty/Staff Resource Request			
Department/Unit Goal - Reference #		Strategic Objective - Reference #	
Objective 1 and 2		Aligned with College Strategic Direction #1: Increase equitable student engagement, learning, and success.	
Department/Unit Name		Position Name/Classification	FTE
Financial Aid & Scholarship Department		Program Coordinator	
Position Type	Funding Duration	Funding Source	Est. Salary & Benefits
Classified	<input type="checkbox"/> On-going/Permanent	<input type="checkbox"/> Operations (Fund 11) <input type="checkbox"/> Other 50% College general funds and 50% Student Equity or 3SP funds <input type="text"/>	Salary Range 62
Justification:			
See below for justification.			

Justification:

The Office of Financial and Scholarship consist of the following staff:

- 1 Permanent Full-Time Financial Aid Supervisor
- 7 Permanent Full-time Classified Staff
 - 1 Financial Aid Specialist, Lead
 - 1 Financial Aid Specialist
 - 1 Financial Aid Scholarship Specialist
 - 3 Financial Aid Assistant II (Pittsburg main campus) and 1 Financial Aid Assistant II (Brentwood Campus):
- 1 Hourly Classified Staff
 - 1 Part-time Financial Aid Assistant I
- 2 Student Assistants

The Financial Aid Specialist, Lead is responsible for assisting the manager with the coordination of the day-to-day office activities, the coordination and participation of financial aid outreach activities for the department, oversees the transmittal process for financial aid disbursements, and the

reconciliation of various state grant programs. The Financial Aid Specialist is responsible for performing more specialized and complex technical duties within the department, such as the return of funds, overpayments, unofficial withdrawals and reconciliation of federal grant programs. The four Financial Aid Assistant II staff members are responsible for the processing of financial aid applications and forms/documents, meeting with students on an appointment or drop in basis to provide status updates and answer questions, determining student eligibility for various state and federal financial aid grant, and performing outreach activities. The Financial Aid Scholarship Specialist is primarily responsible for the administration of the Scholarship program. About 25% of her time is spent to support various financial aid functions, and 75% is spent overseeing the scholarship application cycle and disbursement process, reviewing student applications, and managing scholarship award records. Based on 2016-2017 data, 12,626 students were enrolled at LMC. A total of 7303 FAFSAs were submitted for LMC. Out of that number, only 6169 FAFSAs were submitted by students who were actually enrolled at LMC that year. This gives us a 48% FAFSA filing rate (see Table A on page 3).

With our current staffing structure of four Financial Aid Assistant II's processing student applications, and a total of 7303 FAFSAs to process, this gives us a student-staff ratio of 1,825:1 (1,825 FAFSAs to be processed for each Financial Aid Assistant II staff member). Due to the large student caseload assigned to each Financial Aid Assistant II staff member, the financial aid department has been unable to provide targeted outreach and follow up services to special populations. Based on recent findings from the college's student equity plan, ESL and foster youth students were identified as an underserved (target) population facing disproportionate impact. The SEP Advisory Committee determined the college has historically been unsuccessful in fully serving ESL and foster youth students and the need to design specific programs and activities to ensure the success of these students.

Due to recent state mandates, the financial aid office implemented the minimum academic and progress standards for the Board of Governors Fee Waiver (BOGW) program without additional funding support. The Financial Aid Specialist absorbed the responsibility of monitoring students' academic and progress standards and reviewing student appeals for the purpose of determining student eligibility for the BOGW. However, the Financial Aid Specialist has not been able to outreach to students who lost their BOGW eligibility due to other duties and responsibilities. Students who have lost their BOGW due to not maintaining a cumulative 2.0 GPA and/or 50% pace completion need some type of intervention. Students in this category need to be referred/connected to the appropriate services on campus that can assist the student in regaining satisfactory academic standing and support student retention.

In addition, the state mandated financial aid offices to administer two new grant programs, the College completion Grant (CCCG) program and the Dreamers Emergency Grant (DEG) program, without providing additional funds to support the administration of the programs. The intent of the CCCG program is to support student persistence, retention and success by providing students additional assistance that are attending at a 15 unit per term pace or 30 unit per year pace and/or complete their programs in scheduled full-time timeframes. Another intent of the initiative is to reinforce the need for students to have and adhere to a comprehensive education plan. The state encourages the financial aid office to coordinate with Student Success and Support (3SP) and Student Equity (SEP) programs to ensure students receive the necessary services and timely interventions and academic supports to result in success. A Financial Aid Assistant II staff member is currently reviewing student records to determine eligibility for the grant. However, it has been challenging to administer the program successfully because the program requires close monitoring of students' comprehensive educational plan and pace progress

toward program completion. Due to the fact that it's very common for community college students to change their program of study multiple times during their educational journey, we often come across students that are enrolled in courses that are not indicated on their comprehensive educational plan. We would like to perform close reviews of student educational plans, reach out to the students to connect them to an academic counselor to discuss their choice of major and confirm they are taking the appropriate courses required for their major. However, we don't have a dedicated staff member to support this.

The Dreamers Emergency Grant (DEG) program was implemented this past fall 2017 semester. The program provides emergency aid to Dreamer students with an identified need (AB540 and AB2000 students). The state expects financial aid offices to work closely with the college's Student Equity and 3SP departments to effectively identify and notify students regarding the availability of the funds and how to access the resources. Dreamers are another student population that we don't have a dedicated staff member to do focused, targeted outreach. Currently, our Financial Aid Scholarship Specialist is processing the California Dream Act applications and determining eligibility for undocumented students. However, due to 75% of her time being devoted to the administration of the Scholarship program, we have been struggling with finding support staff to do targeted outreach. Now, with the addition of this new grant funding program, there's a bigger need for us to designate a staff member to focus on targeted outreach to help these students get access to these funds.

In recent years, the state also launched a new initiative regarding Financial Literacy. The state encouraged community colleges to implement a financial literacy program to educate students on how to manage their money and reduce expenses to make college more affordable. Money is a critical determining factor when it comes to a new student deciding whether to attend college. It also has an impact on our student retention and persistence rates. If students don't budget their money wisely and exhaust all their funds, they may drop out mid semester or not return the next semester. However, without additional funds/staff to support this initiative, we have not been able to offer activities to our students.

With that being said, we would like to request for the creation of a full-time Program Coordinator position, possibly 50% funded by the college's general fund, and 50% funded by either 3SP or Student Equity. The Program Coordinator position would focus primarily on the following:

- Provide case management/follow up/referral services for students that have lost BOGW eligibility due to unsatisfactory academic and progress standing.
- Provide targeted outreach for disproportionate student populations, such as ESL and Foster Youth students:
 - Design and implement ongoing activities throughout the year to assist students in applying for financial aid.
 - Monitor students' progress throughout the application process, and provide follow-up services to ensure students successfully complete all application requirements and receive financial aid funds.
- Provide case management services and monitor student academic/pace progress toward program completion to help students maintain financial aid eligibility.
- Administer the new College Completion Grant:

- Collaborate with the Student Success & Retention team/Counseling Department to ensure student has a comprehensive education plan and stays on track to maintain eligibility for this grant.
- Administer the new Dreamers Emergency fund program:
 - Collaborate with Student Equity office and other campus advocacy groups to effectively identify and notify students of the grant program.
- Develop and implement a Financial Literacy program on campus:
 - Provide activities to teach students on how to be smart with their money (budget skills) to increase student retention and success.

The aforementioned responsibilities/activities are aligned with the following college strategic directions and integrated planning goals:

Aligned College Strategic Direction(s)

- Increase equitable student engagement, learning, and success.
- Strengthen community engagement and partnerships.

Aligned Integrated Planning Goal(s)

- ACCESS: increase access through enrollment of students currently underserved in our community.
- IDENTIFYING PATHWAYS: Increase the number of students that define a goal and pathway by the end of their first year.
- PERSISTENCE & COMPLETION: Increase successful course completions, and term to term persistence.
- EQUITABLE SUCCESS: Improve the number of LMC students who earn associates degrees, certificates of achievement, transfer, or obtain career employment.