

Student Financial Services (SFS) Office

Mission

The Student Financial Services Office provides students, families and members of the community with expert financial aid information, outstanding customer service, and assistance in obtaining the financial resources needed to pursue and attain their educational goals.

Vision

To accomplish this the Student Financial Services Office (SFS) will:

- Increase productivity and demonstrate the value we place on our human resources through adequate staffing and providing opportunities for professional development.
- Increase student success through early identification of at risk students; by offering a variety of interventions that meet students' needs; improving student satisfaction; and providing quality customer service.
- Increase service efficiency by improving, streamlining, and institutionalizing processes and services; increasing efficiency through cross training; and utilizing available technology for dissemination of information to students.
- Increase student learning by increasing collaboration with the academic divisions; providing holistic learning opportunities for students; and providing staff with a clear understanding of their role in the learning process.
- Enhance community relations by increasing the collaboration and coordination of recruitment and community building activities with other entities across campus; increasing and promoting special events within other units.
- Upgrade facilities & equipment to better meet student needs and expectations including the design of our one-stop Welcome Center.

Core Values

Excellence – We seek excellence in all our endeavors, and we are committed to continuous improvement.

Intellectual Freedom – We believe in ethical and scholarly questioning in an environment that respects the rights of all to freely pursue knowledge.

Integrity – We are committed to the principles of truth and honesty, and we will be equitable, ethical, and professional.

Service – We believe that serving others is a noble and worthy endeavor.

Diversity – We respect others and value diversity of opinion, freedom of expression, and other ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Stewardship of Resources – We are dedicated to the efficient and effective use of resources. We accept the responsibility of the public's trust and are accountable for our actions.

Goals, Critical Success Factors, Objectives, and Strategies

Goal 1. Utilize the latest technology to develop a “paper-less” financial aid process.

Critical Success Factors:

- Decrease by 50% the number of paper documents contained in each student’s financial aid file
- Decrease by 50% the number of back-up documents that need to be retained

Objectives:

Objective 1.1: Develop a plan to initiate an imaging process.

Strategies:

- SFS Staff will meet monthly to brainstorm and develop a plan to establish an imaging process for the unit.
- SFS Staff will identify two other universities of similar status to study as “best practices” institutions for imaging within the financial aid office.

Objective 1.2 Develop an implementation plan with accompanying timeline.

Strategies:

- SFS Staff will meet monthly to develop a timeline for the implementation of the unit’s imaging system.

Objective 1.3: Perform a cost analysis.

Strategies:

- SFS Staff will perform a cost analysis and incorporate it into the plan for an imaging process.

Objective 1.4: Implementation of an imaging process to reduce paper documents retained within SFS.

Strategies:

- SFS will purchase and install an imaging system for the processing of all Federal Title IV financial aid.

Objective 1.5: Update the computer equipment and software in the SFS Office.

Strategies:

- Obtain the most current hardware and technologically advanced software to enable a “state of the art” financial aid imaging and processing system.

Goal 2. Decrease the number of contacts needed by students in order to process their financial aid, scholarship, or sponsorship.

Critical Success Factors:

- Decrease by 50% the number of contacts a student must make with SFS in order to complete the financial aid or sponsorship process

Objectives:

Objective 2.1: Evaluate the financial aid awarding process, and the process by which students receive a sponsorship form an outside agency, to identify how it can be streamlines.

Strategies:

- Student Financial Services Staff will conduct a survey to identify the average number of student contacts necessary for a student to complete his/her financial aid process.

Objective 2.2: Identify duplicated processes and paperwork.

Strategies:

- As a result of student feedback and input for SFS staff duplicated process will be identified.

Objective 2.3: Provide more correspondence to students, which is also clearer.

Strategies:

- Redo financial aid and sponsorship forms .to provide greater readability, better flow and clearer instructions.

Goal 3. Create a comprehensive student financial resource guide.

Critical Success Factor:

- Develop of a comprehensive awarding and criteria notebook for all scholarships and tuition waivers awarded on this campus

Objectives:

Objective 3.1: Develop a comprehensive notebook containing all information about every student financial resource, excluding Federal resources.

Strategies:

- Each semester, SFS staff will focus on specific program, documenting in detail its criteria and awarding process.
- The program criteria and awarding process information will be compiled into a comprehensive student financial resources notebook.
- Duplicate the comprehensive awarding notebook and discriminate it to each academic department across campus.

Goal 4. Develop a fully cross-trained staff.

Critical Success Factor:

- All SFS staff will attend at least one outside training opportunity each year.

Objectives:

Objective 4.1: Initiate a rotation/program to facilitate sending each staff member to at least one external training opportunity.

Strategies:

- Facilitate each employee within Student Financial Service attending at least 1 outside professional development training opportunity each academic year.

Objective 4.2: Initiate a program to provide the opportunity for each staff member to learn the functions of other staff members

Strategies:

- Within an academic year, have each SFS staff member perform the functions of one other co-worker for a week.

Goal 5. Increase community support through the enhanced development of external financial resources for students.

Critical Success Factors:

- One external contacts made each month
- One external funding source developed each year

Objectives:

Objective 5.1: Support the Development Office in establishing contacts and building partnerships with external entities.

Strategies:

- Develop a list of possible organizations to contact.
- Make one outside contact per month with possible partners or resources.

Objective 5.2: Assist in the development of external funding for students.

Strategies:

- Assist the Development Office in establishing one external scholarship per academic year.

Goal 6. Develop a “One-Stop” Student Financial Services Office, where students can have all their financial needs serviced.

Critical Success Factor:

- Increase by 10% the number of student financial services located in one physical area.

Objectives:

Objective 6.1: Develop a new floor plan to accommodate the offices of all staff involved in providing financial resources for students.

Strategies:

- Work Collaboratively with the other student affairs offices and the administration to design a student friendly area where all student financial services can be located.
- Design a floor plan that matches the processing flow of financial aid packaging.

Objective 6.2: Initiate a plan to place SFS staff on every committee that is responsible for awarding money to students.

Strategies:

- Work with the administration to bring all offices that financially assist students into one building in one area.

Objective 6.3: Revise the financial aid awarding process to permit only SFS staff the to enter awards onto SCT.

Strategies:

- Work with computer services to centralize the posting of each of the various financial aid awards or sponsorships.
- Establish greater internal controls for the awarding and posting of financial resources for students.

Goal 7. Increase the number and dollar amount of financial resources available to students.

Critical Success Factors:

- Increase overall financial aid funding by \$10,000 per academic year
- Add at least 2 new scholarship opportunity each academic year
- Have 1 new scholarship each academic year targeted at an under-represented population

Objectives:

Objective 7.1: Develop a process to identify those populations that are under-represented.

Strategies:

- Meet with each of the academic divisions to discuss, brainstorm and identify groups of students that are not adequately served by the current financial programs.

Objective 7.2: Develop a prioritized plan to create/locate new financial resources.

Strategies:

- In cooperation with the Development Office and the academic divisions establish a prioritized plan to identify and secure resources for various student populations whose financial needs are currently underserved.