

STUDENT SERVICES COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM PLANNING AND REVIEW (CPPR)

Only to be completed by those programs scheduled for the year according to the institutional comprehensive planning cycle (i.e. every two or five years).

Program: Financial Aid **Planning Year:** 2017-18 **Last Year CPPR Completed:** 2012-13

Unit: Financial Aid **Cluster:** Student Services

NARRATIVE: STUDENT SERVICES CPPR

Please use the following narrative outline:

I. GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

A. Program mission (optional)

The Financial Aid Office serves individuals and their families with financial need by promoting funding programs, awarding financial aid, and advocating on their behalf within the Cuesta community.

B. Brief history of the program

Financial aid has long been a central part of the student services offered at Cuesta College. When the college began operation, the Office of Student Services administered a handful of small merit scholarships in coordination with the Counseling Department. Grant and loan administration remained very limited until the Basic Grant program expanded in the 1970s. In 1974, the Financial Aid Office became a standalone unit and has progressed over the last forty years into a department with ten dedicated employees that administer over \$17 million in assistance to Cuesta students each year.

The Financial Aid Office collaborates with other departments on campus in order to administer a number of programs, including:

- Pell Grants
- Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants
- Federal Work Study
- Direct Loans (federal student loans)
- Cal Grants
- Full-time Student Success Grants
- Board of Governors fee waivers
- Chaffee Grants
- Cuesta College Scholarships
- Cuesta College Promise
- External scholarships

C. Include the broad history of the program and significant changes/improvements since

the last Program Review

Since the last comprehensive program review in 2012-13, there have been quite a few changes to the way that financial aid is administered at Cuesta College. These changes can be sorted into three general categories: regulations, technology, and staffing.

1. Regulations

During the last five years, there have been regulatory changes that have altered the landscape of financial aid administration. As a result, the Financial Aid Office has created or adjusted policies and procedures to accommodate the new rules and implement them through our student information system.

These regulatory changes are particularly noteworthy:

- a. Early FAFSA / Prior-prior year implementation;
- b. BOG fee waiver incorporating academic standing requirements;
- c. California Dream Act implementation and administration;
- d. New reporting/disclosure rules for gainful employment programs;
- e. Department of Education selecting multiple verification groups with different documentation requirements;
- f. Creation of Full-time Student Success Grants for Cal Grant recipients;
- g. Extra scrutiny for students with unusual enrollment history;
- h. Financial Aid shopping sheets;
- i. Implementation of 150% rule for subsidized loans;
- j. Implementation of Pell Lifetime Eligibility regulations;

2. Technology

Over the last five years, the Financial Aid Office has invested in technology that helps us streamline our internal processes while improving our compliance with state and federal regulations. Several of the more outstanding improvements are listed below.

CampusLogic StudentForms

Over the last two years, the Financial Aid Office has reduced incoming paperwork drastically by moving to an online document submission system. This web-based system performs validation on the items submitted, which results in fewer cases where we are mailing back applications for trivial mistakes. This change has been transformational; many of the procedures that technicians use to review files have been sped up. The result has been a tremendous increase in the capacity of the Financial Aid Office in terms of the amount of awarding and packaging that can be done in an academic year.

Banner

In our quest for greater efficiency, we adjusted the way that Banner works in the financial aid module. By automating many of the processes that were done by hand before, we significantly reduced the average amount of time that a student has to wait before receiving their aid. Students who the Department of Education has not selected for extra scrutiny are now automatically packaged, while those who have been selected can now submit their documents online.

AcademicWorks

This web-based scholarship management system is jointly operated by the Financial Aid Office and the Cuesta College Foundation. It allows students to easily apply for internal scholarships and makes the process of awarding scholarships quick and intuitive. Before the implementation of AcademicWorks, less than two hundred students would apply to be considered for local scholarships. Now over 1200 students apply each year to compete for funds offered by generous local donors.

Comevo

The Financial Aid Office converted mandatory in-person workshops--obstacles for distance education students, single parents, and other people with limited time on campus--into Comevo online orientations. This web-based solution is used three ways: Financial Aid general orientation, Direct Loan workshop, and a Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) training module that is attached to the SAP appeal process. The primary result has been a decrease in student complaints and wait times for Direct Loans.

SARS / Kiosks

Since the last CPPR, we have adopted SARS as a means of scheduling individual duties, particularly front counter and phone obligations. This system has made it easier to establish schedules and expectations within the department. SARS-compatible kiosks allow students to check-in for drop-in appointments or schedule sit-down appointments at a later date. This functionality has improved the workflow of the front counter.

Scanning/Paperless office efforts

In the process of moving towards a paperless office, we have removed tons of student files from our area by scanning them and disposing of them in accordance with Board policy. All files received in the 2012-13 year and beyond have been scanned and backed-up on a secure portable drive. Files from 2016-17 forward are scanned into the Banner Document Management System (aka "Xtender"), although the majority of students can now finish their files without providing any paper whatsoever.

3. Staffing

The Financial Aid Office has experienced a tremendous amount of turnover in the last five years. Of the eleven people working in the office at the beginning of 2012, only three remain. Five other staff members have come and gone during that period, and half of the current employees have less than a year of experience in financial aid.

This “brain drain” remains a threat to the performance of the office. While efficiency has been improved in the office, that improvement is no replacement for expert knowledge. This review—as well as previous ones—will document a pressing need to create a clear and rewarding path of advancement for talented staff members.

The Financial Aid Office has altered its staffing model over the last five years, experimenting with a number of configurations. Some positions were tried and abandoned (Financial Aid Coordinator, Financial Aid Counselor), while others were abandoned and then restored (Financial Aid Director). Overall, there is a trend to keep positions that present the fewest obstacles to student awarding. For example, Financial Aid Clerks—staff members only authorized to accept and process documents—have been phased out in favor of Financial Aid Technicians who are authorized to review/award student files. In a front counter situation, this reduces student delay and frustration.

D. Describe how the Program Review was conducted and who was involved

This program review is the result of conversations that occurred during the November 18, 2016 Financial Aid retreat, as well as verbal and written correspondence with Financial Aid staff members and Student Services leadership. Data was extracted from the Banner student information system through population selection and Argos reports, with additional data coming from other databases used in the administration of financial aid (e.g. AcademicWorks, CampusLogic StudentForms, etc.). The Director wrote the text of this review and conferred with staff members to ensure that it adequately expressed the sense of the department as a whole.

The following Financial Aid staff members were involved in the preparation of this document:

Patrick Scott, Financial Aid Director
Ali Roselli, Financial Aid Counselor (P/T)
Alejandra Aguirre, Financial Aid Specialist
Michelle Evans, Financial Aid Specialist
Martha Davis, Financial Aid Technician

Regina Dynes, Financial Aid Technician
Karen Garza, Financial Aid Technician
Sarah Henning, Financial Aid Technician
Matthew Lozano, Financial Aid Technician
Julie Salgado, Financial Aid Technician

Additionally, the Director would like to thank the following people for their assistance in reviewing material and providing data for inclusion in this review:

Catherine Riedstra, Dean of Student Services
Monica Mercer, Assistant to the Dean of Student Services
Aimee LaRue, Cuesta College Institutional Research Office

II. PROGRAM SUPPORT OF DISTRICT'S MISSION STATEMENT, INSTITUTIONAL GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND/OR INSTITUTIONAL LEARNING OUTCOMES

- A. Identify how your program addresses or helps to achieve the District's Mission Statement.

Cuesta's Mission

Cuesta College is an inclusive institution that inspires a diverse student population to achieve their educational goals.

We effectively support students in their efforts to improve foundational skills, earn certificates or associate degrees, transfer to four-year institutions, and advance in the workforce.

Through innovative and challenging learning opportunities, Cuesta College enhances lives by promoting cultural, intellectual, personal, and professional growth. We prepare students to become engaged citizens in our increasingly complex communities and world.

The Financial Aid Office helps achieve the District's Mission Statement through the following activities:

- Outreach to all segments of our community, particularly underrepresented groups.
- Providing financial aid to support students as they work towards their educational goals.
- Participation in—and coordination with--district-wide student success initiatives combined with advocacy for our low income student population.

- B. Identify how your program addresses or helps the District to achieve its Institutional Goals and Objectives, and/or operational planning initiatives.

Institutional Goal 1

San Luis Obispo County Community College District will enhance its programs and services to promote students' successful completion of transfer requirements, degrees, certificates, and courses

Financial Aid remains a critical component for student success. District data as well as nationwide studies show a correlation between the receipt of financial aid and a number of success-related metrics, including retention, persistence, credit accumulation, full-time enrollment, and graduation. For a brief discussion of such studies, see B. T. Long's 2010 issue brief *Financial Aid: A Key to Community College Success* (available at <http://www2.ed.gov/PDFDocs/college-completion/08-financial-aid.pdf>)

Institutional Goal 2

San Luis Obispo County Community College District will build a sustainable base of enrollment by effectively responding to the needs of its local service area.

A primary part of the Financial Aid mission involves providing outreach to all segments of our community. Outreach is important because lack of financial aid awareness remains one of the top reasons that students do not receive financial aid (Long 2010). Outreach efforts also serve to cultivate and recruit potential students, directly supporting Institutional Goal 2. Each year, staff members participate in dozens of outreach and in-reach events.

Outreach examples

- High School Counselor Workshop
- Cash for College Events
- Parent Nights
- Presentations at Local High Schools for Juniors and Seniors
- Promise Day
- Promise Assistance at Local High Schools
- FAFSA Labs at Local High Schools
- College Night
- Career Fair/Days
- Scholarship Night
- Campus Tours

In-reach examples

- Home Away From Home Event
- Veterans Workshop
- Loan Workshops
- Psych Tech Orientations
- Student Success Festival
- Transfer Day
- Classroom Presentations
- LVN Orientations
- Paramedic Orientations
- Welcome Back ASCC
- FAFSA Labs
- Annual Veterans Breakfast
- In-reach Tables
- Priority Registration @ EOPS

Institutional Goal 4

San Luis Obispo County Community College District will implement, assess, and improve its integrated planning processes.

Financial Aid supports this goal through the APPW/CPPR process. The staff evaluates the efficacy of local practices in terms of their ability to support student services outcomes and institutional goals.

Institutional Goal 5

San Luis Obispo County Community College District will strengthen its partnerships with local educational institutions, civic organizations, businesses, and industries.

The Financial Aid Office maintains and develops connections with community groups through a variety of means:

- Working closely with the Cuesta Foundation to cultivate relationships with outside donors;

- Maintaining close relationships with high school counselors, arranging outreach events that allow their students to connect with Cuesta; and
- Collaborating with Cal-SOAP, the California Student Aid Commission, and the Chancellor’s Office and other public agencies to help families complete the FAFSA application process;

C. Identify how your program helps students achieve Institutional Learning Outcomes, if applicable.

N/A

III. PROGRAM DATA ANALYSIS AND PROGRAM-SPECIFIC MEASUREMENTS

This should be an update on the data analysis from the last CPPR

Program data is available on the [SLOCCCD Institutional Research and Assessment website](#).

Starting with the 2015-16 APPW, departments in the Student Services cluster report a standard set of common data elements which they will track in order to gauge progress towards the goals listed in the Educational Master Plan. Targets for 20120/21 and 2025/26 have been set based on the 2014-15 measures. Some elements have comparative data from the 2012-13 aid year, while more recent developments like “Students Served (DREAM)” do not as they were implemented in a subsequent year.

Definitions for Financial Aid Data

- Students Served (FAFSA): All students who completed the FAFSA for the academic year and who were enrolled in at least one course at the Fall census date.
- Students Served (DREAM): All students who completed the CA Dream Act application and who were enrolled in at least one course at the Fall census date.
- 1st Year Persistence: First time students who were enrolled in at least one course at census, who received any financial aid, and who were enrolled in at least one course at census in the subsequent Fall.
- Units Completed /Units Attempted: The percentage of units attempted that were completed by students who received any financial aid in the academic year.

A. Students Served

The first collection of data (Figure 1) concerns the total amount of students served. Overall, we see that there has been a gradual decline in the number of enrolled students who fill out a FAFSA both district-wide and by location. This decrease may simply reflect changes in the demographics of our students; the local population is expected to have flat-lined or reduced numbers of traditional college age people. Attempts to counter that loss of enrollment through dual enrollment programs has been successful in maintaining higher FTES, but such students are not eligible for financial aid, so the FAFSA numbers may suffer as a result. Finally, we need to ramp up our in-reach efforts to ensure that the students who do come to Cuesta are aware of the financial aid that is available to them.

Notably, there is an increase in students who have applied through the California Dream Act application; we have already met our target numbers for 2025/26. This increase is attributable to a robust outreach program that spans several departments, including

Financial Aid, Student Equity, North County Student Services, and the ESL office. The success of this combined approach speaks to the need to collaborate with other departments in the design and implementation of other in-reach campaigns.

Figure 1. Total students served

Category	Location	Aid Year				
		2012/2013	2014/2015	2015/2016	2020/2021 Target	2025/2026 Target
Enrolled students who submitted a FAFSA	District-wide	6229	6012	5837	6319	6641
	SLO campus	4801	4609	4342	4844	4965
	North County Campus	1718	1534	1501	1612	1694
	South County Center	259	191	149	201	211
Enrolled students who submitted a Dream Act application	District-wide	N/A	95	123	102	110
	SLO campus	N/A	65	86	70	75
	North County Campus	N/A	37	52	40	43
	South County Center	N/A	1	2	1	1

Note: These data are unduplicated headcounts. FAFSA applicants and DREAM applicants belong to two non-overlapping sub-populations within the student body.

B. First-year Student Persistence

Figure 2 compares the persistence of first-year students receiving financial aid with the overall population of first-year students. It is immediately clear that students with financial aid in place are more likely to persist than the general student population. While the persistence of financial aid students seems to be declining between 2014-15 and 2015-16 academic years, this trend almost exactly mirrors changes in the overall student population, suggesting that there may be a factor common to both populations that is driving the decline. However, a larger sample size is required before this relationship can be explored fruitfully.

Figure 2. First-year Student Persistence

	Year	Financial aid students	All students	Difference
1st Year Student Persistence	2015-16	54.94%	36.43%	18.51%
	2014-15	57.56%	40.16%	17.40%

C. Completion Rate (Units Completed / Units Attempted)

Figure 3 shows that financial aid students have completion rates nearly identical to the general population. This measure underscores the importance of persistence; while low-income students may be just as prepared as other students in an academic sense, the availability of financial aid allows them greater opportunity to succeed over time. The data suggests that financial assistance may not be a productive way of increasing course completion rate and that solutions may need to be developed in other quarters.

Figure 3. Student Success (Completion Rate)

	Year	Financial aid students	All students	Difference
Student Success (Units Completed / Units Attempted)	2015-16	76.84%	76.58%	0.26%
	2014-15	75.33%	75.54%	-0.21%

D. Staffing ratios (Headcount / FTE)

Figure 4 presents two snapshots from the 2014-15 and 2015-16 academic years. This information needs to be understood in the context of a period of dramatic turnover, so more data will be necessary to gauge the actual workload that employees face. As it stands, our two data points stand astride the national average and show an upward trend. This number may be reduced as our office gains stability and fills its positions.

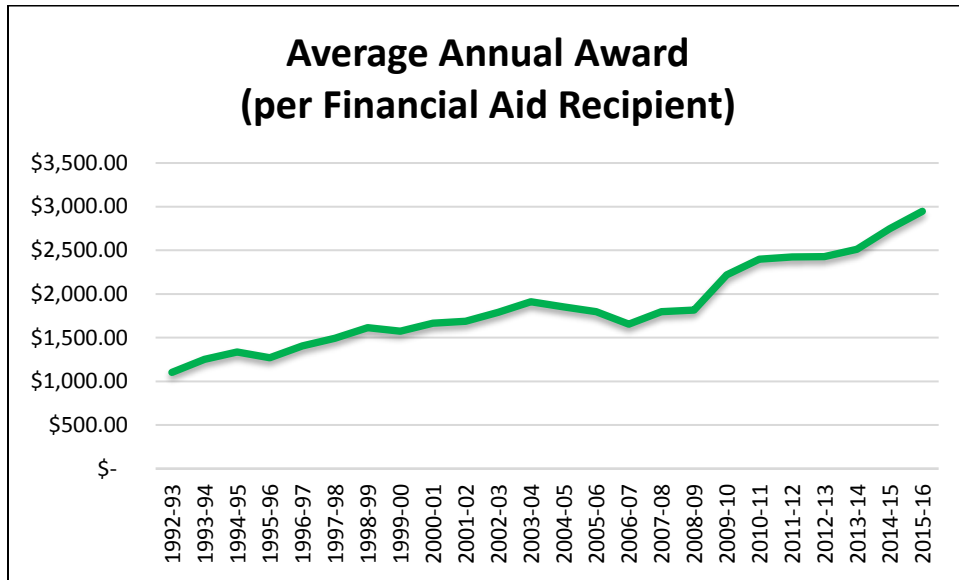
Figure 4. Staffing ratios (Headcount / FTE)

	(FAFSA)	(DREAM)
2015-16	694.9	14.6
2014-15	534.2	10.5
National average (2016)	625	n/a

E. Other Relevant Program Data

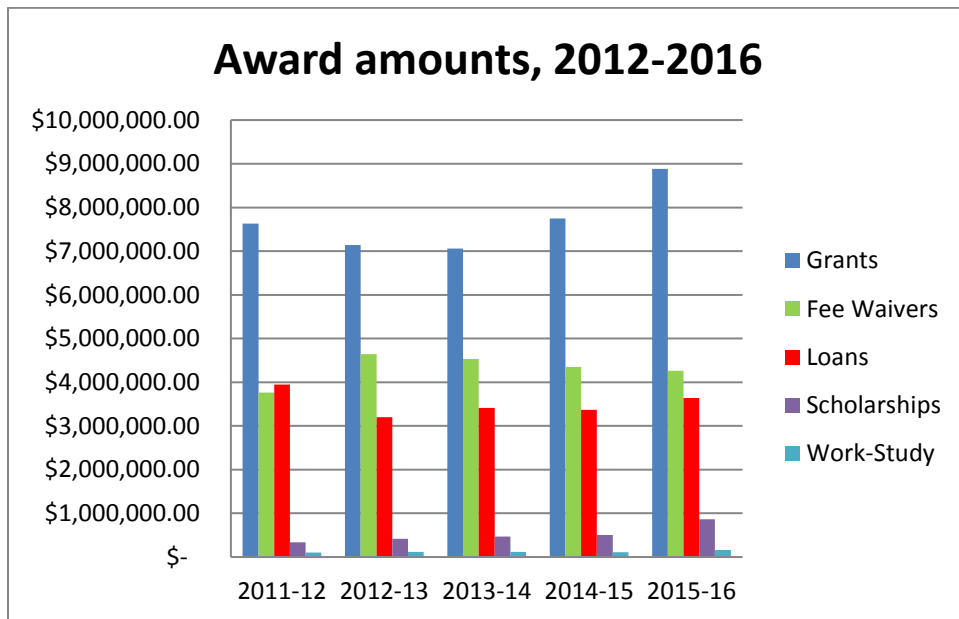
Since the last comprehensive program review, the Financial Aid office has increased the average amount of aid that a Cuesta student receives from \$1024/year to \$1144/year—an increase of 11.7%. When looking at financial aid recipients only, the average award has risen from \$2425/year to \$2947/year (Figure 5). This rise is attributable to increased efficiency as well as increased maximum award amounts of Pell Grants (Figure 6).

Figure 5. Average Annual Award, financial aid recipients



Data source: CCCCO Management Information Systems Datamart (Annual Aid Amount/Student Count)

Figure 6. Financial Aid award amounts by type



Data source: CCCCO Management Information Systems Datamart (Total Financial Aid/Annual Headcount)

IV. PROGRAM OUTCOMES, ASSESSMENT AND IMPROVEMENTS: NARRATIVE

Previous program outcomes were hamstrung by an attempt to make each objective a student learning outcome, rather than a student service outcome. As a result of the switch in philosophy from SLO to SSO, we revisited and updated the outcomes between review dates in order to accommodate the use of common data elements across the student services cluster. In deciding whether to keep, remove, or add outcomes, we examined each for relevance, usefulness, and measurability. The changes were finalized at the December 2015 planning retreat and it is our intent to use these outcomes going forward for the next five-year planning cycle.

A/B. The following section summarizes assessment results and improvement efforts for each Student Services Outcome.

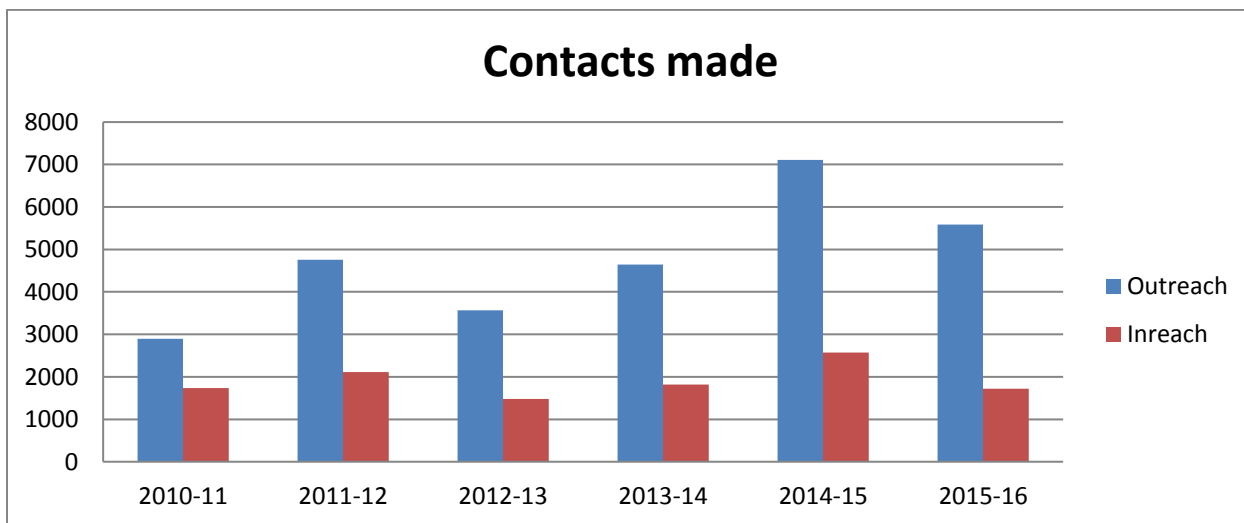
Student Services Outcome #1: The Financial Aid department will coordinate outreach efforts with local community agencies in order to increase the annual number of valid FAFSAs received by Cuesta from prospective and returning students.

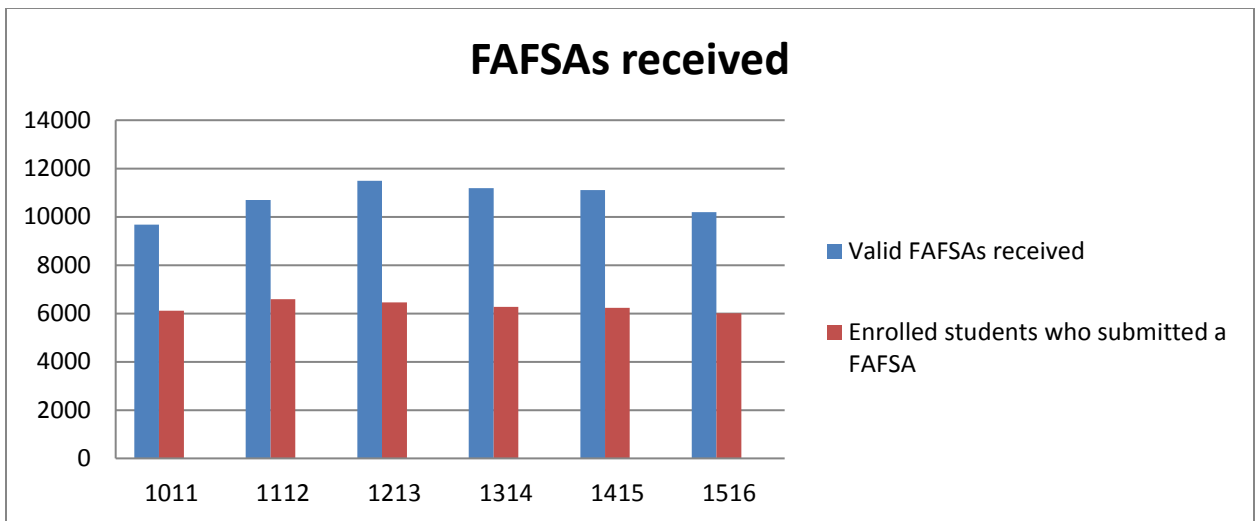
Assessment methods and criteria:

The Financial Aid office participates in a large number of events with the intent to inform the community about the programs that are available to Cuesta students. At each event, staff members keep track of the number of individuals in attendance so that the efforts can be quantified and the data used to inform decisions about staffing, future event planning, and intervention tactics.

Summary of assessment results:

For Student Services Outcome 1, this contact data is compared to the number of valid FAFSAs received by Cuesta College (FAFSAs rejected by the Department of Education do not count). The following charts below show this data over the last six years.





The overall trend of FAFSA submissions from enrolled students is relatively flat, but slightly declining over time. The relationship between this pattern and the number of contacts does not suggest a causal relationship at all.

Response plan:

Two responses have been prepared to address this issue: a re-evaluation of specific outreach events and the hiring of a person to function as an outreach coordinator. The re-evaluation efforts are detailed in the 2016-17 planning cycle APPW and have not yet been finished at the time of writing. The new department assistant hired in January 2017 is another attempt to coordinate our outreach efforts within and between departments in order to maximize the effect on FAFSA-filing behaviors.

Recommend changes and updates:

N/A

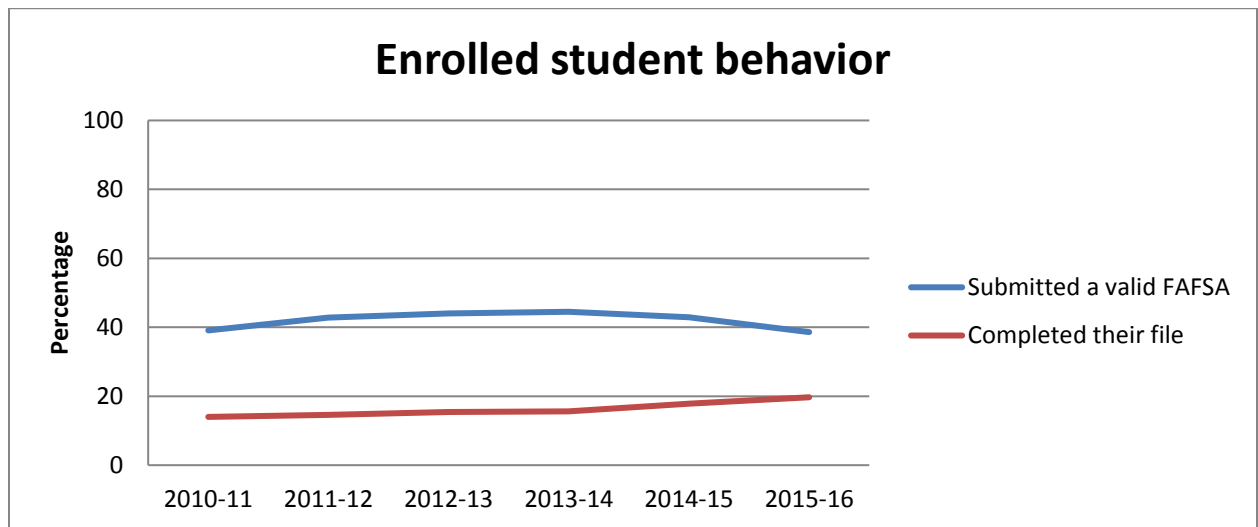
Student Services Outcome 2: The Financial Aid department will follow up with currently registered students in order to increase the percentage of enrolled students who have submitted a valid FAFSA.

Assessment methods and criteria:

We used headcount data to determine the number of enrolled students that Cuesta had in each aid year. CCCCO enrollment data was used in order to have a consistent source of data across all six years. In order to determine the percentage of students who submitted a valid FAFSA or completed their file, we used Argos reports to check for the presence of a FAFSA code on the RRRAREQ table or a packaging date on the RORSTAT table. Those numbers were then divided by the headcount to provide a percentage.

Summary of assessment results:

The chart below shows enrolled student behavior over the last five years. In order to assess the efficacy of in-reach efforts, this chart should be compared to the “contacts made” chart presented under SSO #1.



The results are very similar to the assessment of outreach efforts over the last six years. There is no clear connection between in-reach efforts and the inclination of enrolled students to submit a FAFSA. FAFSA submission data seem to strongly reflect the overall trends in enrollment at Cuesta; recent increases in headcount are attributable to dual enrollment students who would not be filling out a FAFSA. Despite variance in the intensity and variety of in-reach activities, a fairly standard percentage of students are inclined to submit a FAFSA.

Response plan:

As suggested in SSO #1, activities need to be re-evaluated for effectiveness in producing the desired outcomes. During the 2016-17 aid year, the outreach coordinator will carry out weekly inreach events intended to saturate the campus with the facts about financial aid and its availability here at Cuesta. Staff members will evaluate these new events, along with more traditional offerings, in order to gauge how critical they are for reaching our students.

Recommend changes and updates:

N/A

Student Services Outcome 3: Through follow-up efforts designed to reach Pell-eligible students, the Financial Aid department will increase the percentage of enrolled students who have completed their financial aid file.

Assessment methods and criteria:

Data collection and comparison was described in detail under SSO #2.

Summary of assessment results:

Over the last two years, there is a slight increase in terms of the percentage of enrolled students who completed their financial aid file. 19.7% of enrolled students completed their financial aid file in 2015-16, up 1.9% from the previous year. These results seem to be independent of the changes in contact numbers presented in SSO #1, suggesting that qualitative differences in how we perform in-reach may be more fruitful than simply maximizing the number of contacts we make on campus sites.

Additional factors that may play a part in this increase include the new online document submission process as well as more specific notifications to students about what they must do to complete their files.

Response plan:

Going forward, the office will continue to employ the following tactics to increase the percentage of students completing their files:

- Send regular reminders to students with outstanding requirements;
- Generate lists of enrolled students who have not filed a FAFSA or completed a file; AND
- Design email and phone campaigns to get information to those students about how to proceed and where to get help.

Recommend changes and updates:

N/A

Student Services Outcome 4: By coordinating outreach efforts with other departments and community agencies, the Financial Aid department will increase the number of students who receive the Cuesta Promise.

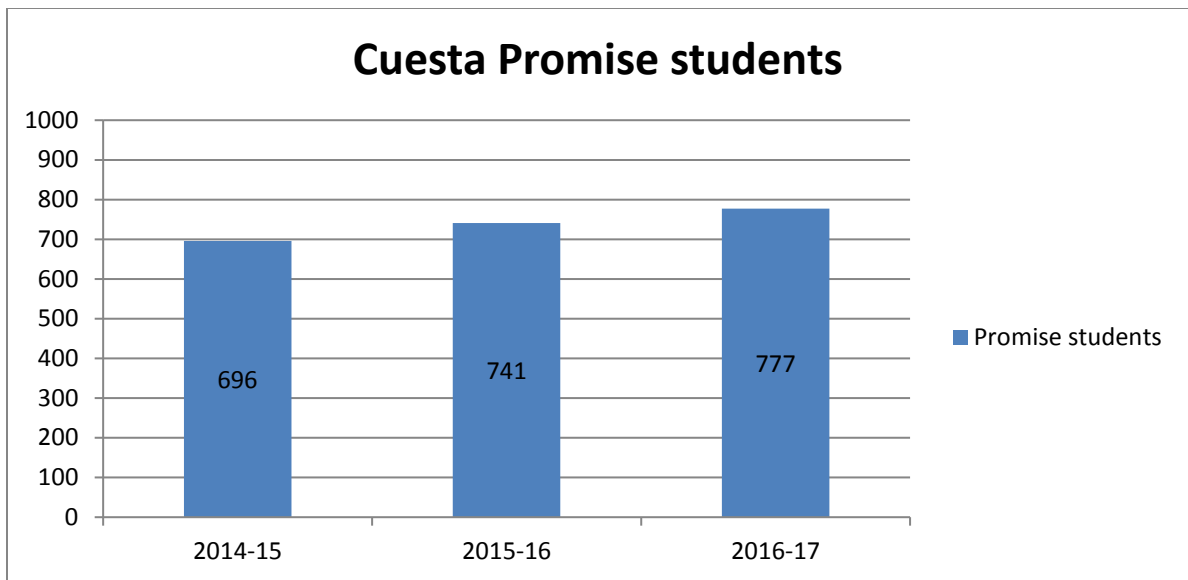
Assessment methods and criteria:

The number of students who are awarded the Cuesta Promise in the most recent year will be compared to the number awarded in previous years.

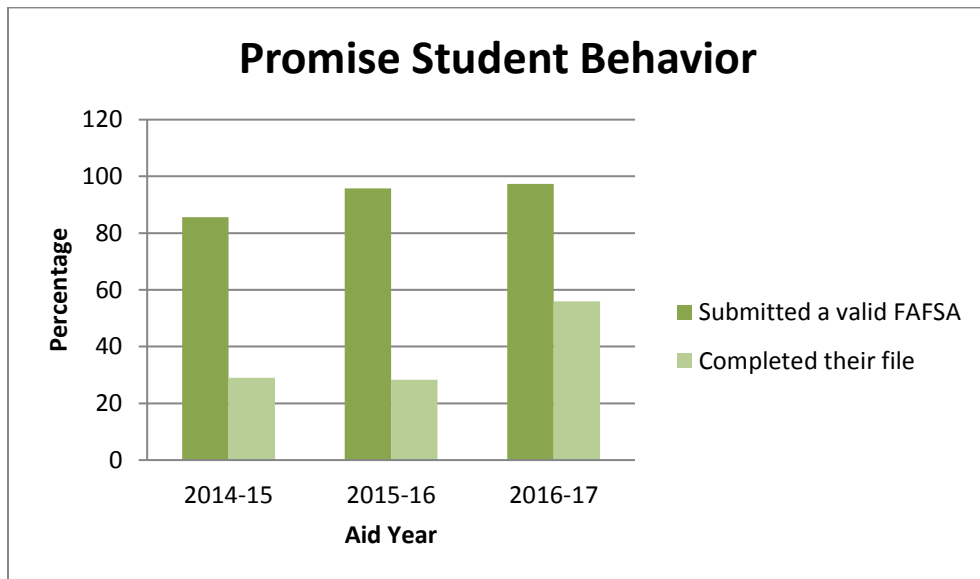
Summary of assessment results:

The Financial Aid Office has focused much of its outreach efforts on the promotion of the Cuesta Promise scholarship. These outreach efforts have been mirrored by similar efforts in other campus organizations, such as Counseling, Admissions, and the Cuesta Foundation. Website banners, radio announcements, and television commercials have blanketed the county, as well.

Not surprisingly, the number of Promise students continues to rise:



Additionally, the recent changes to automation and our follow-up activities have led to a substantial increase of the number of Promise students who completed the entire financial aid process (i.e. not just what is required to obtain the Promise). This increases the likelihood that these students will be considered for other types of financial aid and is expected to improve their persistence rates, as well.



Response plan:

Our outreach efforts are part of a campus-wide outreach effort, but we have some of the critical follow-up data and responsibilities. We will continue to produce lists for follow-up attempts and track data on Promise applicants for reporting to the Promise taskforce and other shared governance bodies. Student workers will, as in previous years, contact and

help students who still have outstanding requirements in order to maximize the reach of the program.

Recommend changes and updates:

N/A

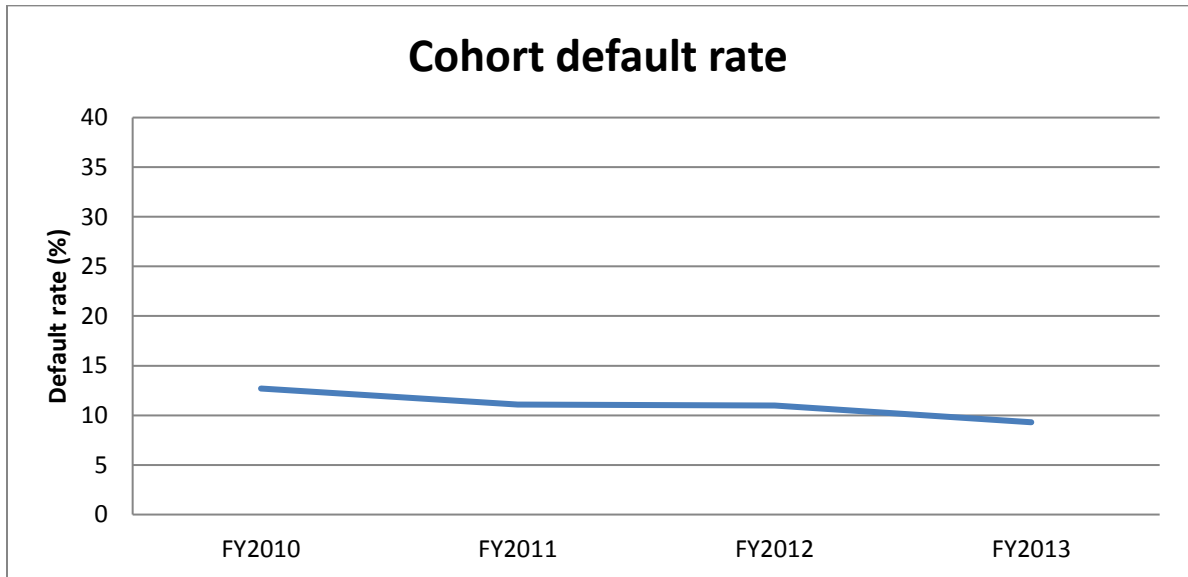
Student Services Outcome 5: The Financial Aid department will decrease Cuesta’s three-year cohort default rate by implementing a comprehensive default prevention program.

Assessment methods and criteria:

The Department of Education produces three-year cohort default data each year. A low default rate is a prerequisite for Title IV eligibility, as well as a number of disbursement and cash management options. A default rate that exceeds 40% (or exceeds 30% for three consecutive years) would result in sanctions and possibly jeopardize the ability of Cuesta College to provide Title IV financial aid.

Summary of assessment results:

Over the last four cohorts reported, the default rate has slightly decreased. During the same time, however, the amount of loan applicants has increased, creating some concern that the observed trend is not sustainable in the face of greater demand for student loans.



Response plan:

The pieces of a default prevention plan are in place, although a truly comprehensive plan will require campus-wide support. Such support is not likely to be prioritized at this point given our low default rates. In the meantime, the department has developed the following interventions to keep our cohort default rates low:

- Adoption of “Borrower Connect” software to help delinquent students avoid default;
- Enhanced entrance counseling;
- Creation of dedicated default prevention role for one of the financial aid specialists;
- CPF (Certification in Personal Finance) courses for professional development;
- Collaboration with local organizations such as America’s Job Center of California; and
- Creation of informal financial literacy workshops with CPF-certified presenters.

Recommend changes and updates:

N/A

Student Services Outcome 6: Each year, the Financial Aid department will improve the efficiency of its operations as measured through average packaging time, the total number of files packaged, and the number of students packaged by the first day of school in the fall semester.

Assessment methods and criteria:

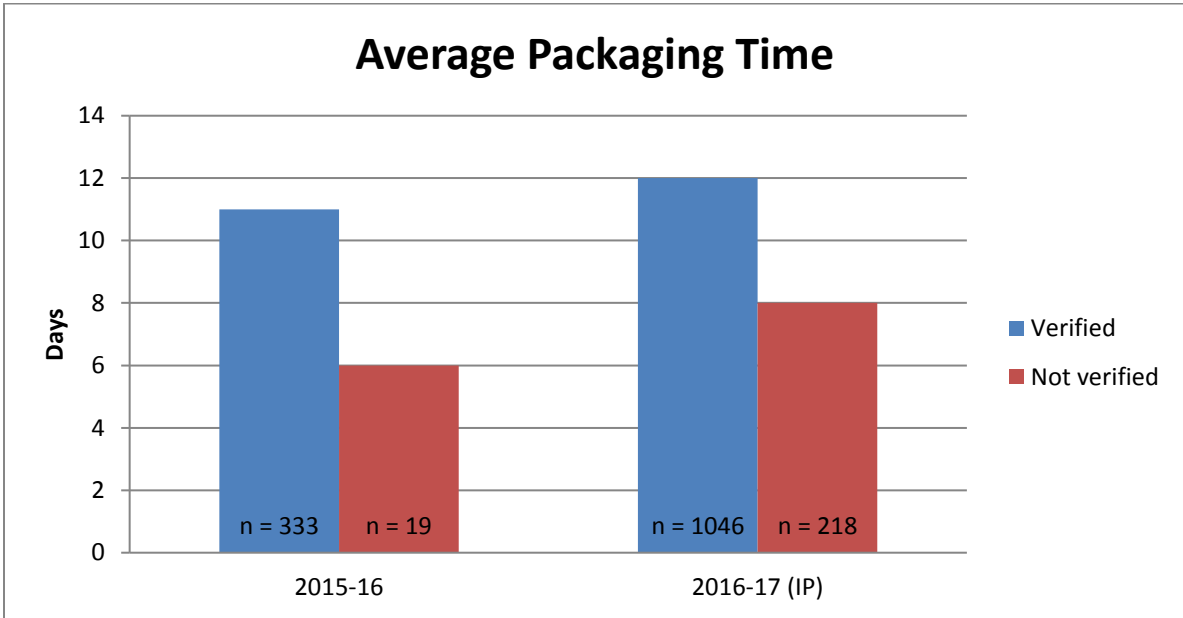
Each measure focuses on a separate aspect of the awarding process and has its own method of calculation:

- *Average packaging time* is the amount of time between a student’s submission of all requested documents and the date that the file was packaged by the financial aid department and scheduled for disbursement. In other words, it is a measure of the amount of time that students had to wait for the office to complete file review.
 - The packaging time for a student is computed by subtracting the “ready date” from the “completed date” in the CampusLogic system.
 - Previous years have incomparable data as dates in the Banner system are subject to being overwritten—no equivalent of a “first submission date” exists.
- *Total number of files packaged* includes all student records that have a packaging date.
- *Number of students packaged by the first day of school* is a measure of the Financial Aid office’s ability to prepare students for the fall semester. This measure is important to monitor as fall awards are used to determine eligibility for Title III and Title V grants, as well as the federal share waiver used in the campus-based programs.

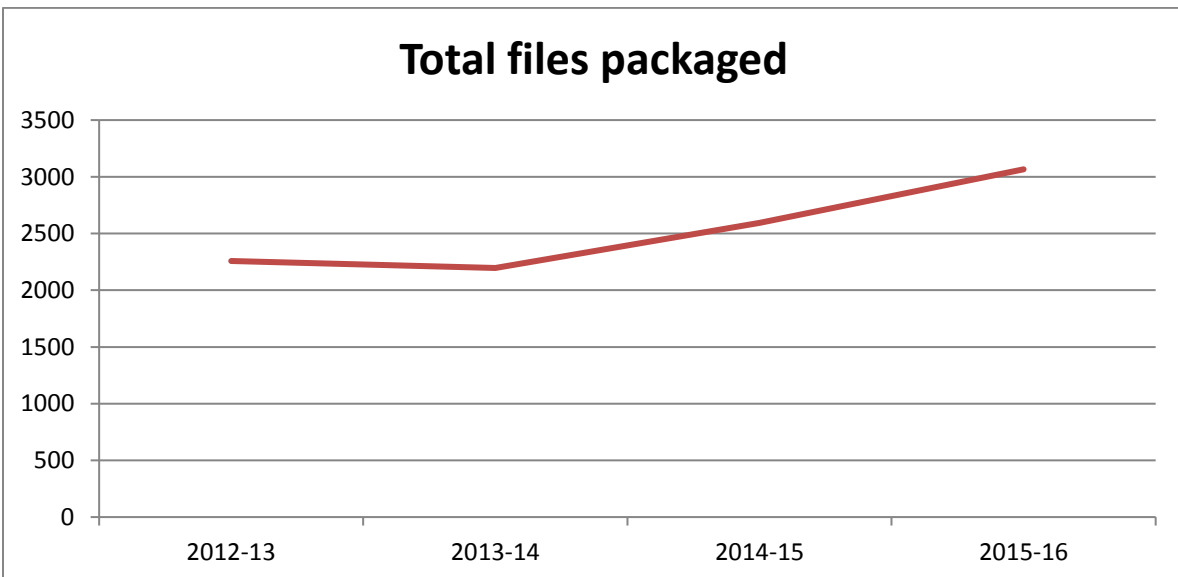
Summary of assessment results:

Since the last comprehensive program review, average packaging time has been identified as a concern and has been elevated to student services outcome status. Prior to the implementation of CampusLogic, the average packaging time for a file selected for verification was more than 70 days and a non-selected file took 60 days (see 2015-16 APPW).

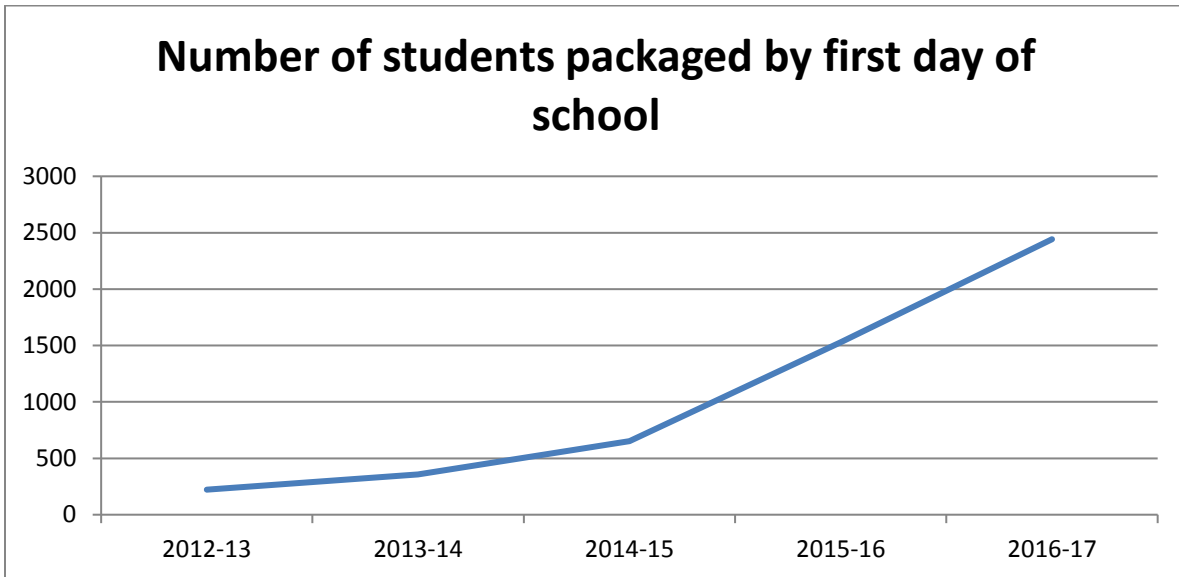
At the time of writing, the Financial Aid Office has yet to complete a full aid year under the CampusLogic system; the system was implemented late in the 2015-16 cycle and the 2016-17 cycle has not been completed yet. So the following partial year data must still be considered preliminary results, although there has clearly been a major change from the 60-80 day time frame that students faced in the days of mailed-in applications with mailed back requests for more information.



The total number of files reviewed and packaged has increased over the last few years, as seen in the chart below. The trend continues in the 2015-16 aid year, as well; at the time of writing, the total number of files packaged has surpassed those of previous years, despite the fact that summer term packaging has yet to take place.



As demonstrated below, Cuesta has made significant improvements in the delivery of financial aid to its students by the first day of the fall term. The number of students packaged on that date is not just a critical measure of office efficiency, but it is also a valuable indicator of the student experience with financial aid. On the first day of school in fall 2016, 2442 students had been packaged—eleven times the number of students that were packaged by the first day of Fall 2012.



Response plan:

In order to increase efficiency, the Financial Aid office will take the following steps:

- Evaluate all processes for automation and inclusion in CampusLogic system.
- Begin loading ISIR data in mid-October to give students maximum time before fall to respond and complete their file;
- Communicate often with students that have outstanding requirements by email (and text, if they opt-in); AND
- Maintain well-trained staff in order to complete reviews in a timely fashion.

Recommend changes and updates:

N/A

- C. Recommend additional improvements to the program based on assessment of outcomes and progress towards Institutional Goals and Objectives and/or Institutional Learning Outcomes.

Underpinning all of the measurable success that has been demonstrated in the assessment process—as well as the hopes of future gains in areas that are as yet unproductive (outreach)—is a stable staff well-versed in the regulations that must be

enforced as part of its duties. These two factors—regulatory compliance and staff retention—pose the biggest threat to the stability of the Financial Aid Office and its ability to serve Cuesta’s student body.

Regulatory compliance is a matter of training. Financial aid regulations are difficult to grasp in their entirety; numerous agencies exist to provide means of navigating the morass of vague and occasionally contradictory rules (e.g. searchable databases, wikis, etc.). Ultimately, each financial aid administrator must be well-trained in order to maintain program and institutional eligibility.

Compounding this issue is the problem of staff retention. The Financial Aid office has had an ongoing problem with staff retention over the last decade and any consideration of department operations must take it into account. As it takes a year to train a staff member to administer financial aid, it is critical to retain quality staff members and develop them as financial aid professionals. In job evaluation interviews and program planning retreats, staff members have repeatedly requested a clear path of advancement within the office (and, by extension, the field of financial aid administration).

Additionally, the lead positions (specialists) within the office are actively being courted by other colleges to leave Cuesta and take positions elsewhere. One of the selling points that they use is the clear path to advancement available in those offices, especially for a person with a bachelor’s degree in hand; 50% of the people currently working in our Financial Aid office have a BA/BS or higher degree.

Both regulatory compliance and staff retention would be served well by adding an assistant director of regulatory compliance. A position dedicated to ensuring that the office (and the college) was in compliance with regulations would be a natural stepping stone to a director position within the department or at another school. This possibility of upward mobility is critical to attracting staff members that see Financial Aid as a viable career choice and not just as a desk job one does while waiting for the dream job to appear.

- D. Recommend changes and updates to program funding based on assessment of program outcomes.
- For elements that require funding, complete Section D – [Resource Plan](#) Funding Requests.
 - For faculty hiring needs, see Section H – Faculty Prioritization Process.

At the November 2016 financial aid planning retreat, all staff members participated in a discussion of department priorities and resources. The team proposed a number of changes to the program that can be categorized into four groups:

1. Facilities that will improve the college;
2. Equipment that will improve the processing of financial aid;
3. Technology that will improve the staff-student interface; and
4. New positions that will improve the workflow of the office;

The proposed changes are listed in the Resource Plan, and line-item narratives for the “top ten” list are included in the next section.

- E. Identify and describe any budget requests that are related to student learning outcomes assessment results or institutional/programmatic objectives.

The following requests will be included in the Resource Plan and are presented here in descending order of priority as determined by staff member vote at the November 18, 2016 financial aid planning retreat. Funding in financial aid is generally limited to the District match and the categorical funding received from the state contingent upon that match. As a result, it is expected that the funding for these items will not likely come from outside of the Financial Aid budget unless the requests are paired with other programs such as the Student Success and Support Program (3SP) or Student Equity funding initiatives. These requests are made primarily to inform campus decision-making and, for easier to implement options, set priorities in the department’s budget.

Dream Resource Center

This center would assist our department to increase the number of students who complete the California Dream Act application—part of our “students served” common data element—by creating a space wherein undocumented students can have access to information about resources available to them.

Financial Aid Computer Laboratory

In previous divisions of space, the Financial Aid Office had a separate room with computers that could be used for FAFSA entries known as “FAFSA labs.” This request is an attempt to increase our inreach potential by having a location reserved for the purpose of doing financial aid workshops. As this laboratory would increase FAFSA completion and file completion for currently registered students, it would be a suitable intervention for SSOs #2 and #3.

Third monitors

An additional screen may speed up the awarding process by allowing a technician to have three pertinent databases (e.g. Banner, CampusLogic, AcademicWorks, COD/NSLDS) open in a full screen at the same time. This request is related to the efficiency efforts described in SSO #6.

Update the student interface at the front

One major bit of improvement that has occurred since the last CPPR is the installation of a kiosk system that allows students to check in via the SARS system. This request concerns the computer equipment that is used at the front counter; changing to wireless and “flip” style monitors would allow the student to see more easily what we are viewing in the system. This improvement is also related to SSO #6.

Assistant Director of Regulatory Compliance

As discussed elsewhere, this position would greatly aid staff morale and improve performance across the board. This request is a direct response to SSO #6.

Explore means of data transfer between Banner and CampusLogic

This request is already in the works as CampusLogic is developing its relationship with Ellucian. It remains to be seen what the price and labor involved with this sort of add-on will be. This request is a response to SSO #6.

Larger veterans center

In adherence to the department's mission, the staff submitted this request is on behalf of our veteran students in much the same vein as the Dream Resource Center. Veterans need a larger space in which their specific support services can function in order to attract more veterans to a place where they can learn critical information about the resources available to them. This request is a response to SSOs #2 and #3.

Nursing Mothers Room

This facilities request is made largely independent of the SSOs, but is submitted as a requirement urgently needed by both students and staff to maintain compliance with Cuesta's mission to be "an inclusive institution that inspires a diverse student population to achieve their educational goals."

Live Chat functionality

The ability to use chat as a means of discussing financial aid with our students would provide assistance towards improving all of the listed student service outcomes, as well as ensure that comparable services were offered to our off-site and distance education students.

Laptops

We have recently decommissioned our obsolete laptops and are in need of a solution for outreach events where desktop computing may be impossible or impractical.

V. ANTICIPATED SERVICE CHALLENGES/CHANGES

A. Regulations

With a new federal administration in place, there are likely to be sweeping changes to regulations pertaining to federal student aid. To date it has been difficult to ascertain the specific policies that the new administration will put into effect, and speculation runs from small changes to major modifications / discontinuations of student aid programs. Recent regulations from the previous administration—especially those concerning gainful employment disclosures—still require new solutions for implementation and may tax current resources. However, such regulations eventually may be reversed as part of the new "two-for-one" regulatory environment wherein agencies are asked to remove two regulations for every new rule written.

On the state level, the regulatory environment seems more stable, although funding levels may change if the current predictions of a recession are correct. It is clear that student aid of some sort will continue to be offered throughout this time, but staff and services may need to be restricted if the formula used for the district match is altered in a serious way.

Training and flexibility are our best tools to deal with these changes and all financial aid staff will be made aware of shifts in regulation as they occur.

B. Staffing

Over the next five years, the Financial Aid Office faces the possibility of a complete turnover of its current personnel as some members retire and others move on to new positions within the college or elsewhere. An ongoing challenge will be finding staffing models that attract talented staff members while simultaneously encouraging them to remain and complete a career in student services. Various interventions have been proposed elsewhere in this document, and future planning cycles will have to adjust for rapid changes.

VI. PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT FORECAST

New service coordination and collaboration – internal and external programs

The Financial Aid department is collaborating with Community Programs to expand offerings at the California Men’s Colony as part of the Second Chance Pell experimental site initiative. This initiative—aimed at reducing recidivism rates through expanded inmate access to education opportunities—began in Fall 2016, although Cuesta will likely be unable to begin awarding students until Fall 2017. If this initiative is allowed to continue under the new administration, it will likely last at least until 2019, and possibly beyond.

VII. OVERALL BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Will be reflected in district planning and budget process

Elements:

A. Personnel

Personnel costs—both salary and benefits—are expected to rise over the next five years as current employees gain longevity within their positions and salary schedules are updated through District negotiations. The Financial Aid budget is designed to be flexible; supply and training budgets will be modified to accommodate these annual changes.

If budget reductions (i.e. state-mandated reductions to our required District match or categorical funding levels) make downsizing necessary during the next five years, our approach will be to convert a vacant full-time position to a part-time position or, in the case of a more dramatic reduction, to leave the position vacant.

B. Equipment/furniture (other than technology)

Purchases of large equipment or furniture will be on hold until the new Campus Center building is built in 2022 (see Facilities Master Plan 2016-2026), except insofar as such purchases are critical to the operation of the department. No purchases are expected for the next five-year period.

C. Technology

Technology upgrades are expected to occur on a gradual basis in response to needs established in the annual planning process. Such purchases are likely to occur at the end of the year in order to ensure that the District has met its match without going over budget. When decisions are made about implementing new technologies, an emphasis will be placed on moving towards a green, paperless office environment.

D. Facilities

While Cuesta will be building a great deal as a result of the passage of Measure L and the adoption of the 2016-2026 Facilities Master Plan, these costs will not be paid out of the Financial Aid budget. No facilities costs are expected to be paid from our department's budget over the next five years save the usage fees associated with reserving parking facilities during special events. A standing request for a security-based redesign has been renewed in this year's resource plan.

SIGNATURE PAGE

Faculty, Director(s), Manager(s), and/or Staff Associated with the Program

Instructional Programs: All full-time faculty in the program must sign this form. If needed, provide an extra signature line for each additional full-time faculty member in the program. If there is no full-time faculty associated with the program, then the part-time faculty in the program should sign. If applicable, please indicate lead faculty member for program after printing his/her name.

Student Services and Administrative Services Programs: All full-time director(s), managers, faculty and/or classified staff in the program must sign this form.

Division Chair/Director Name	Signature	Date
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Name	Signature	Date
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DEAN'S/MANAGER'S ANALYSIS OF COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM PLANNING & REVIEW (CPPR)

Program: **Planning Year:** **Last Year CPPR Completed:**

Unit: **Cluster:**

A. CPPR Pre-Meeting

It is strongly recommended that the Vice President and/or Dean meet with Division Chair/Director/designee and the program faculty and/or staff involved in preparing the CPPR prior to the completion of the review documents. The discussion should include an overview of the CPPR document and expectations of what should be considered and focused on when developing the CPPR.

If a Pre-CPPR meeting occurred, please list those in attendance, when the meeting occurred and a summary of what was discussed.

B. Narrative Analysis of CPPR Sections

Please provide an analysis and comments of programmatic information for each of the CPPR sections below.

- **General Information and Program Outcomes (Required for Instruction/Student Services/Administrative Services):**

- **Program Support of Institutional Goals and Objectives, and/or Institutional Learning Outcomes (Required for Instruction/Student Services/Administrative Services):**

- **Program Data Analysis and Program-Specific Measurements (Required for Instruction/Student Services/Administrative Services):**

- **Curriculum Review (Required for Instruction and may be Applicable to Student Services):**

- **Program Support of Institutional Goals and Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes (Required for Instruction/Student Services/Administrative Services):**

- **Program Data Analysis, Assessment and Improvements (Required for Student Services/Administrative Services):**

- **Program Outcomes, Assessments and Improvements (Required for Instruction/Student Services/Administrative Services):**

- **Anticipated Service Challenges/Changes (Required for Student Services/Administrative Services):**

- **Program Development Forecast (Required for Instruction/Student Services/Administrative Services):**

- **Overall Budget Implications (Required for Student Services/Administrative Services):**

- **End Notes/Additional Comments (Required for Instruction/Student Services/Administrative Services):**

C. Commendations/Considerations:

Please provide a list of commendations and considerations based on the CPPR.

Commendations:

Comments in this area summarize how the program has demonstrated its effectiveness.

Considerations:

Comments in this area constitute advice to help the program meet or surpass expectations for effectiveness.

SURVEY

Please take 15 minutes to complete the IPPR Survey. Your assessment will serve to help us make the form and process better.

Thanks,

The IPPR Committee

Survey Link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/9JXNBQD>

SIGNATURE PAGE

Faculty, Director(s), Manager(s), and/or Staff Associated with the Program

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Student Services and Administrative Services Programs: All full-time director(s), managers, faculty and/or classified staff in the program must sign this form.

PATRICK SCOTT
Division Chair/Director Name Signature Date
3/8/17

Michelle Evans
Name Signature Date
3/8/17

Regina Dynes
Name Signature Date
3/8/17

Alexandra Aguirre
Name Signature Date
3/8/17

Sarah Henning
Name Signature Date
3/8/17

Darlene Azevedo
Name Signature Date
3/08/17

Julie Salgado
Name Signature Date
3/8/17

SIGNATURE PAGE

Faculty, Director(s), Manager(s), and/or Staff Associated with the Program

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Student Services and Administrative Services Programs: All full-time director(s), managers, faculty and/or classified staff in the program must sign this form.

Division Chair/Director Name	Signature	Date
<i>Martha M Davis</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>	<i>3/7/2017</i>
Name	Signature	Date
<i>Matthew Lozano</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>	<i>3/7/2017</i>
Name	Signature	Date

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