

**Santiago Canyon College**  
**Student Services**  
**Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Report**  
**2008-2009**

**Department Name** – Financial Aid Office

**Department Mission Statement** – Our office will provide understandable financial aid information to current and prospective students. As a department, while ensuring timely delivery of financial aid, we will strive to promote a professional, respectful, peaceful environment, and accountability to our students.

**Student Learning Outcome** - In our present student population we typically have three types of technical skill sets: beginner, intermediate, and advanced. Currently, the Free Application for Student Aid (FAFSA) and Board of Governor Fee Waivers (BOGW) can be completed either online or via paper. While paper applications can take up to six weeks to process, the online application has a turnaround time of 48 hours. Generally, when a student transfers to a four-year institution they are expected to possess the necessary skills to complete the FAFSA online.

The SCC financial aid office promotes the online process as the primary method of application processing. We believe that a financial aid office which makes no effort to inform applicants on how to use the online application process is performing a disservice to their students in preparing them for the future. For this reason, the financial aid office created the following student learning outcome for **2007-2008** and we have decided to keep the same SLO for the next three years (2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11):

AS A RESULT OF UTILIZING THE ONLINE RESOURCES TO APPLY  
FOR FINANCIAL AID, STUDENTS WILL DEVELOP SKILLS TO  
COMMUNICATE AND PROCESS WEB RELATED APPLICATIONS.

**Methods** - The financial aid office utilized the following tracking mechanisms to monitor student usage of online services:

- Financial Aid Management System (FAMS)
- Department of Education Electronic reports
- CCC Apply website for the California Community Colleges
- Open Net-Sallie Mae reports for electronic loan processing.

Those students who completed the online FAFSA were assessed for the learning outcome.

**Implementation of Assessment Process** - In order to accomplish our SLO, we conducted a staff meeting and established the following methods, tools and resources needed to implement our SLO:

1. Set up computer workstations in the “E” building lobby as a place to apply for the students without a home online access. Another objective was if students had questions, they were able to access a financial aid staff immediately.
2. Designated a workstation for student use in the financial aid office. The purpose of the “in office” workstation is to provide one-on-one counseling for the low percentage of students whose online skill sets are considered to be at the beginner level and in need of the one-on-one encouragement/coaching.
3. Planned and conducted several in-reach and outreach activities which included:
  - a. Cash for College Workshops – students received hands-on instruction in a computer lab environment to aid them in completing their FAFSA.
  - b. Parent Nights – section by section format of the FAFSA to educate parents on the financial aid processes.
  - c. Financial Aid Awareness Days – provided students with general information about the FAFSA, online filing assistance, and answered questions.
  - d. Classroom Presentations – general overview of financial aid in a Q&A format.
4. Initiated online access via the financial aid website for students to complete the Board of Governor Fee Waiver (BOGW).
5. Created/Edited/Provided informative publications regarding financial aid programs and processes which included basic information guides on “How to Apply for Financial Aid Online”.

We decided that upon conducting the above activities we would evaluate our SLO via a student survey. In spring of 2009, in consultation with our Research & Development Department, we created a student survey. By conducting this survey we hoped to ascertain whether or not by steering students to the online financial aid process enhanced their skills for similar tasks in future.

1. Financial aid staff dispersed the survey to all students who completed or attempted to complete the FAFSA and BOGW online.
2. Submitted data to Research & Development for a calculated result report and proceeded to analyze the data.

**RESULTS** - Generally, respondents were satisfied with the online process:

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- Almost all respondents (95%) completed their FAFSA online.
- More than half of respondents report that completing the worksheet prior to processing the FAFSA online was very helpful.
- Slightly more than two-thirds of respondents access the Internet daily (68%) and most respondents have, to varying extents, used a similar online application process (89%).
- Most respondents (94%) believe that their experience with the FAFSA application increased their comfort and skill level with this type of online process.

Most respondents are likely to conduct similar business via the Internet in the future, including filing their FAFSA and/or BOGW online next year, most believe that they are likely to conduct similar business via the Internet in the future and that their experience with the FAFSA application increased their comfort and skill level with this type of online process

**Decisions and Future Recommendations** - This was the second go around for us to implement the financial aid SLO. As a department we have decided to keep the same SLO for at least four years to accurately understand, improve, and monitor the effects of the SLO.

We will remain steadfast in our approach to financial aid by demonstrating patience and understanding to our students. We realize that financial aid, like any other process at the collegiate level is a learning process. To that end, staff will integrate training techniques to adapt effective communication strategies to our current and prospective students for exceptional service and effectiveness.

We will utilize and expand technologies to prepare students for post-collegiate life by providing online filing, follow-up, and correspondence. We believe that our SLO is already preparing students for four-year institutions, e-commerce and other financial related processes requiring serious attention to detail, such as: loan applications, mortgage applications, tax filings, etc.

**Conclusion** - Our staff will offer levels of service designed to meet the specific needs of each individual student and strive to exceed the expectations of our students, staff, and community. Our staff will set the bar for excellent organization and administration of financial aid in California Community colleges by attending cutting-edge year-round training and seminars sponsored by regional, state, and national organizations.

It is the responsibility of the Associate Dean of Financial Aid and staff to review the results of this study and attempt to implement any recommendations that they deem desirable and manageable.

Attachments: SLO Survey & Results