

STUDENT SERVICES PROGRAM REVIEW 2009-2010

DEPARTMENT OR PROGRAM: Financial Aid & Scholarships

NAME AND TITLE OF PREPARER(S): Cindy Castillo, Dir of Fin Aid & Schol

In providing responses in the following areas, **please provide quantitative and qualitative data to support your responses.** For the purposes of the Program Review, both departments and programs will be referred to as "program."

I. Description and mission of the program. Provide a brief description of the program including any services provided and the program's mission.

The Financial Aid & Scholarship program provides federal, state and institutional aid to qualified students to help them access higher education and help them stay in college until completing their degree/certificate. Our mission is two-fold. To maintain a high level of integrity in processing and compliance with governmental regulations while maintaining the highest level of service to students by processing applications as quickly and efficiently as possible such that money is in the hands of students in a timely manner for access and retention. In addition, we also house the student personnel function for hundreds of students employed at the campus.

II. Retention and growth.

A. How has the program responded to the institutional goal of increased access, growth and retention?

We have recently completed a desk audit of all staff to look for ways that we can increase efficiency. The outcome of those desk audits have resulted in many cost and time cutting measures designed to give staff additional time to spend on processing applications and also, this year, to begin training on the new Banner system.

B. How has the program responded to the institutional goal of increased access, growth and retention specifically for the identified targeted populations of African Ancestry, Latino/a, and Filipino/a students?

Our efforts are to spend most of our time on the neediest students who are represented in larger percentages by the targeted populations. In addition, we work in close partnership, both with staff and funds, with our campus outreach office, whose activities center on targeted populations.

III. Student equity. In what ways has the program worked towards decreasing the student equity gap? Has the program made progress towards or achieved these equity goals? What challenges exist in the program in reaching such goals?

Demographic information is attached to this report. Research indicates that in the last academic year, 32% of the Black student population, 20% of the Filipino/a student population, and 22% of the Latino/a student population are receiving financial aid. In addition, in those three groups, the percentage of students receiving aid equals or exceeds the percentage they represent in the overall student population. Black students represent 4% of the overall population but are 8% of the financial aid recipients; Latino/a students represent 15% of the overall population but are

17% of the financial aid recipients; and Filipino / a students represent 5% of the overall student population and 5% of the financial aid recipients.

One challenge we have is that the population of students who are not US citizens or Permanent Residents is increasing through outreach efforts, but no federal or state aid programs are available to them. In addition, scholarships in a public institution cannot use selection criteria related to race, ethnicity, gender, citizenship or national origin. However, many of our students who are not US citizens or Permanent Residents compete quite well in our overall scholarship offering as they have compelling stories to tell, participate actively in community service, have strong academic records, and transfer to four-year institutions, all of which ARE selection criteria for scholarships. In fact, at our last graduation, both students recognized on stage were not US Citizens or Permanent Residents. Additionally, our foreign students also compete well for scholarships and they are not eligible for federal or state aid.

IV. Strategic Planning initiatives (Community Collaborations, Cultural Competency, Outreach, and Individualized Attention for Retention). Other than what was mentioned in III and IV above, what other Strategic Planning Initiatives has the program addressed and in what ways?

About half of the financial aid staff have “outreach” in their title targeted specifically to potential financial aid recipients. We are the #1 partner of campus outreach in addition to generating our own annual contacts. We have tried to maintain a visible presence on campus while leaving two positions vacant due to budget issues and moving six times in five years! Some of our staff also participate in offerings provided by the Diversity Office on campus as well as cultural events targeted at raising funds for scholarships.

V. Budget limitations. (Please be specific in your responses.)

A. Identify any limitations placed on the program based on limited funding. What increases in resources are critical to the program and what are the consequences if the program does not receive these resources?

Our BFAP funding for financial aid outreach fluctuates each year based on our overall percentage of BOG Fee Waivers statewide. No COLA has ever been applied to that funding stream since 2003. Therefore, we have had to leave two positions vacant this year. In addition, we receive very little B budget (\$3000) so we use only BFAP and administrative allowances from federal aid programs to pay for operating expenses.

B. Describe the consequence to students and the college in general if the program were eliminated. Please be specific.

If eliminated, about \$14M of aid would not be paid to our students and we would predict a drop in enrollment. Also, the district would have to assume the personnel office function for student employees, decide what to do with donated funds targeted for scholarships, and perform collection activities for the Perkins Loan portfolio.

VI. Assessment of program. What evaluation and/or assessment practices are in place to support the program’s accomplishments and findings? (provide quantitative and/or qualitative data).

We have some research data provided annually to look at our program from a quantitative view (provided below). We occasionally conduct surveys about different aspects of financial aid and scholarships. However, our biggest indicator is the immediate feedback we receive from students at both locations and through email. We conduct weekly staff meetings that often include consideration of complaints received from students in an effort to find solutions.

VII. **Additional comments.** What additional information is important to consider when reviewing the budget of your program for possible reductions? You may include any or all of the following, or other information.

- **Relationships with other programs.** Describe any partnerships or collaborations that the program is actively engaged in, which reduce costs and/or improve service delivery.

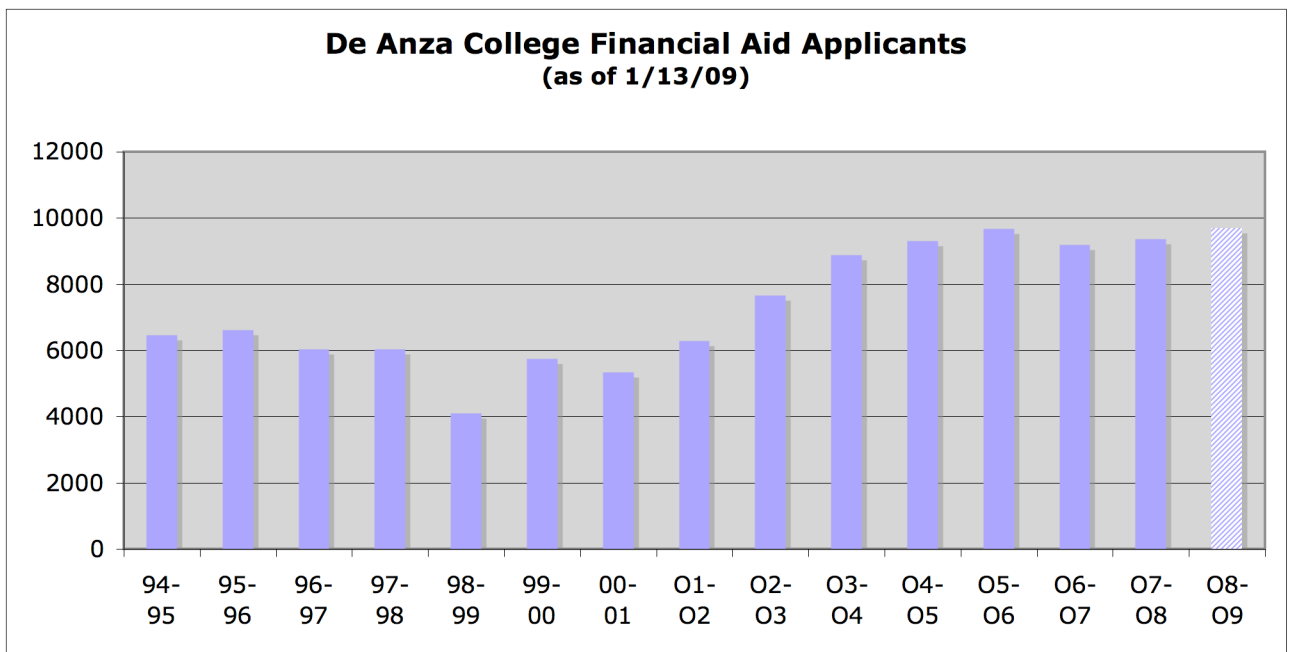
We work closely with EOPS, SSRC, CalWorks, CARE, DSS, Counseling, Cashiering, Admission/ Records, Outreach, Instructional Division Offices, Foothill Financial Aid, District Foundation, and others to support their goals. In addition, we work very closely with ETS as most of our processes are electronic.

- **State and Federal mandates.** What State or Federal mandates impact the work you do?

We are highly driven by state and federal mandates to determine eligibility, disburse funds, reconcile accounts, perform due diligence on loans, and report to government agencies.

- **Trends.** Describe any positive and/or negative trends in the program.

With the economy getting worse this year and in the next couple years to come, demand for financial assistance is increasing.



- **Comparable programs at other institutions.** Provide any information that you have that would allow for a comparison of the program to similar programs at other institutions in the State.

The latest news suggests that demand for financial aid is increasing at almost every college and will continue to do so for the next couple years. As state and federal governments wrestle with

bad budgets, we will need to adjust to any regulatory or funding changes that come as a result of budget cutting measures.

VIII. Program strengths/areas for improvement.

A. Provide a summary of the program's main strengths.

We are dedicated to getting money into the hands of students as quickly as possible. We will be working under enormous pressure the next couple years to maintain that while learning the new Banner system, which we hope will further improve our ability to assist students. We hope to continue earning the respect and trust of our campus and district community.

B. Provide a summary of the program's main areas for improvement.

Any reduction in governmental regulations that provide more flexibility at the campus level can be appreciated. We also struggle to provide the right kind of information to all faculty and staff who might come into contact with students who could be candidates for financial aid. There is always misinformation about aid programs, and who qualifies, and it is a constant battle to provide correct information without it being overwhelming. We try lots of ways to get our message across.

IX. Suggestions for campus-wide change.

A. What organizational change would you recommend to increase program effectiveness, include consolidations, collaborations, or mergers that you think the college should investigate?

At this time, I do not have any suggestions to make. I think it is incredibly important for this program to report directly to the Vice President of Student Services.

B. Are there cost savings or recommended reductions to any areas of the college that you think should be investigated?

At this time, I do not have any suggestions to make.