Skyline College
Financial Aid
Program Review
Executive Summary

Short Summary of Findings

As a unit within the Student Services division, the Financial Aid office is an active player in helping Skyline reach its mission and goals. Its purpose is to provide access to funding and resources to students who need financial assistance to meet the basic costs of pursuing their educational goals. The office is well connected to the institution, at large, and it interacts and impacts a range of offices and programs. A trend covering the last three years shows an increase in the number of students served by all types of aid offered, federal, state, and institutional (scholarships), and the offering of counseling services and the Campus Ambassador program have lent to the office's success. The increase in the number of students served, however, is taxing the staff. A need to have support provided to the evening technician is evident, along with the need to have the counselor become full-time to meet student demand. In addition, there is a need for an additional technician to allow for faster processing of student files and to provide additional support during scholarship season.

## Three Strengths of the Program

- The Financial Aid office embodies the "student first" philosophy, and assists any and all students seeking financial assistance to help pay their educational expenses. Individual personalized assistance is available to students Monday through Thursday, 8 am – 7 pm, and Fridays 8 am – 4 pm.

- The number of students receiving federal, state and institutional financial aid continues to increase each year. The number of students receiving federal aid has increased by 200+ over the last three years, and 26 additional students received scholarships compared to the year before.

- The Financial Aid office is continuously promoting its services both on campus and off campus through the Campus Ambassadors, by participating in in- and out-reach events. The Campus Ambassador program also provides support to the Student Services Division and the college, as a whole, by staffing the One Stop Info Center.

Three Suggestions for Improvement

- To meet the demanding increase for services, there is the need to increase staff by one full-time technician, one full-time financial aid assistant, and to convert the .60 FTE counselor to 1.0 FTE.

- Institute an electronic scholarship application process and review to facilitate the manner in which students complete the scholarship application and the committee reviewing the scholarships applications for awards; and expand scholarship resources through Foundation development efforts.

- Utilize the Campus Ambassadors more effectively by having them have a continuous presence in the community, such as the local libraries, community based organizations, adult school and local high schools.

- Institute the scanning and imaging of student files to increase storage space and work towards becoming a paperless environment.
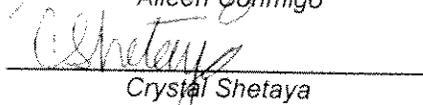
Full-Time Staff Signatures

Maria D. Escobar, D.Ed.
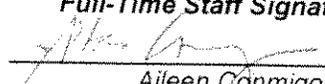
Aileen Conmigo

Patricia Mendoza
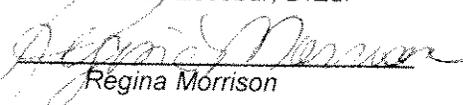
Regina Morrison

Crystal Shetaya

Submitted on: March 26, 2009

SKYLINE COLLEGE
PROGRAM REVIEW SELF STUDY

PART A: Overview of Program

1. State the goals/focus of this program and how the program contributes to the mission and priorities of the College and District.

The goal and focus of the Financial Aid office is to provide access to funding and resources to those students who need financial assistance to meet the basic costs of pursuing their educational goals. This goal and focal point are in keeping with the College's and District's mission and of providing "a range of student services to assist students in attaining their educational and career goals." It is also in keeping with the College's mission of offering responsive student services to support students, and with the College's Values Statement of "...providing every student with an avenue to success" and "...providing students with open access to programs and services that enable them to advance steadily towards their goals." Over the last six years, the number of students receiving financial aid has increased, most notably in the number of Pell grant recipients from a low of 900 to over 1150. The number of scholarship recipients has increased in the last three years from a low of 90 to 102.

2. Discuss how this program coordinates, impacts, and/or interacts with other programs in the College.

The Financial Aid office (FAO) interfaces on a regular basis with the different departments within and out of the Student Services division to assure that students needing financial assistance can apply for and receive the aid for which they are eligible. The FAO works with the Outreach Committee when events have been scheduled and assistance is provided if financial aid information is necessary. The Outreach Committee is also informed of events the FAO has scheduled to avoid a duplication of services. Through the Campus Ambassador (CA) program, a human face is created for Skyline College, especially to new and potential students. Funded 100% by financial aid, this group of students provide support to Admissions and Records, and Counseling through the personalized assistance the CAs provide to students when completing the college application, enrolling for classes, and making counseling appointments. They also represent the College, at large, when they conduct class presentations and outreach in the community. The FAO staff also makes presentations to classes and programs as requested, such as to Counseling 100, Puente, Kababayan, ECE, and Cosmetology. Through the federal work study program the FAO interacts with a range of campus departments when federal work study students are hired to work in the different departments. Interaction is especially evident when the students' employment paperwork is being completed, and when supervisors are provided with work study balances throughout the semester.

The Financial Aid office also coordinates with programs such as EOP/CARE, CalWORKs, TRIO, and Gateway. Each of these programs provides students with additional financial aid to help offset student costs, and ease the burden of expenses while they are pursuing their educational goals.

It is important, however, to ensure that students are not over awarded to avoid causing distress for a student and risk a FAO audit finding. To avoid this, the programs work with the FAO to ensure that any student receiving additional financial aid is eligible to receive the aid and that the students receive it in a timely manner. Students in EOPS/CARE and CalWORKs are provided with over and above services by having their files processed almost immediately so that students can receive services from these programs early in the semester.

In addition to processing and awarding student financial aid applications, the FAO is responsible for the scholarship program at Skyline. This entails ensuring that Skyline's student community has the opportunity of applying for and receiving scholarships for which they are eligible. The FAO is in charge of requesting scholarship payments for students via the Cashier's or District Foundation office; working with the District's Foundation office so that the Scholarship Committee will know how many scholarships will be awarded each year and in what amounts; and interacting with the Student Activities office during the planning, coordination and production of the Student Recognition Awards Ceremony.

3. If the program utilizes advisory boards and/or professional organizations, describe their roles.

Memberships to professional associations by financial aid staff help keep staff abreast of changes in the financial aid field, and assure that the program's policies and procedures are current. Memberships include the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA), the California Community Colleges Student Financial Aid Administrators Association (CCCSFAAA), and the California Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (CASFAA).

4. Explain how this program meets the needs of our diverse community.

The Financial Aid office serves any and all students seeking to receive assistance while attending Skyline. Financial aid is offered to all students and is awarded to students with all levels of household income, and with varying needs. Different types of aid, such as grants, loans, scholarships, and work study, are available to students depending on their need and eligibility,. Through the assistance given to students, access to their education is facilitated. The FAO meets the needs of our community by having extended Monday through Thursday 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Materials are available in Spanish, as well as a bilingual staff in Spanish, Tagalog and Arabic.

5. If the program has completed a previous self-study, evaluate the progress made toward previous goals.

Not applicable.

PART B: Curriculum

1. *Describe how the courses offered in the program meet the needs of the discipline(s) and the students. (This may be answered through descriptive narrative evaluation or quantitative research).*

Not applicable.

2. *State how the program has remained current in the discipline(s).*

Staff participates in training and webinars on financial aid, especially when new types of financial aid become available and/or regulations are changed or new regulations are created. They also attend annual conferences and seminars to keep current in the field.

3. If the student population has changed, state how the program is addressing these changes.

To reflect Skyline's efforts to serve a diverse population, several learning communities have been developed. The FAO serves these communities by providing targeted outreach to students in these groups, along with striving towards having a bilingual staff.

4. All courses in this program should be reviewed and, if appropriate, modified every six years. If this has not occurred, please list the courses and explain.

Not applicable.

5. If external accreditation or certification is required, please state the certifying agency and status of the program.

Certification of the Financial Aid office is required from the Department of Education in order to process and award any Title IV or Federal Financial Aid. Reauthorization and certification from the Department has been received and it is valid through September 30, 2011. In addition to the U.S. Department of Education certification, an approved Participation Agreement has to be on file with the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) in order to able to award any state financial aid such as Cal Grants. The Participation Agreement is on file with CSAC and it is valid through June 30, 2012.

6. Discuss plans for future review and program modification.

With the institutionalization of student learning outcomes, the FAO will need to develop methods of assessing what students learn from the office while receiving financial aid. It is anticipated that workshops addressing how students can maintain satisfactory academic progress, debt management, budgeting, etc. will be offered to students and measurements will be developed to assess what students learn from these interactions. The FAO also is participating in the early alert program by actively working with instructors and students when academic difficulties begin to appear, and students are encouraged to see the FAO counselor to discuss their status' and to develop strategies for student success.

PART C: Faculty and Staff

1. List major development activities completed by faculty and staff in this program in the last six years and state what development is needed or proposed by faculty in this program.

All Financial Aid staff members, excluding the director have been in their Financial Aid positions for less than two years. Over this time period, staff members have been charged with educating themselves about financial aid, and learning the different aspects of their positions. Each staff member has had a different learning curve, and all are well underway or have fully mastered their position. Over the next couple of years, the major development needs of the program are to have all staff members in the same classification learn the different duties and tasks performed by others to allow for a greater sharing of duties and responsibilities.

2. Describe the orientation process for new faculty and staff (include student workers such as tutors and aides).

As new staff come into the Financial Aid office, members are introduced to the other staff in the department as well as staff within the Student services division. New staff members are expected to meet individually with each FA staff member to learn what their assignments are, and to read the Financial Aid Handbook to become familiar with policies and procedures. They are given assignments to read the Federal handbook to become familiar with regulations and meet with the program supervisor to discuss any questions they may have. New staff members are strongly encouraged to attend workshops, webinars and conferences to educate themselves on regulation and policy changes, and new laws that may affect program compliance. Staff meetings are held regularly to make sure challenges and concerns are being met.

1. If recruitment of new and/or diverse faculty is needed, suggest recruitment techniques.

All recruitment is coordinated through Human Resources. Announcements may also be posted on the CCCSFAAA website.

PART D: Facilities, Equipment, Materials and Maintenance

1. Discuss the effectiveness of the facilities, equipment, equipment maintenance, and materials for the program to meet its goals and focus. Include if they impact success and if they are accessible to all students.

Being located at the entrance to the One Stop Center of Building 2, the Financial Aid office is located in an excellent spot and well within the purview of anyone that enters the One Stop area. The counter allows for direct interaction with students needing assistance, and at present the equipment in the office is adequate for processing and awarding student files. The equipment includes computers, printers, a large copier, and a scanner. Additionally, at least two computers are available for students to use when filing out their FAFSAs on line, completing the on-line loan counseling requirement, and preparing Skyline-related scholarship applications.

2. List projected needs.

It is anticipated that additional space will be needed with time to accommodate a growing staff and program needs. However, at the moment there is need for a private office for one of the technicians. Presently, this staff member works from a cubicle that does not provide privacy or the ability to have a quiet space to work on detail work, unlike the other Financial Aid Technician. Additionally, it is difficult to meet with students regarding their financial aid statuses, and/or scholarships in an area that is quite open and public. To address this need, it is recommended that office 2-2242 be assigned to Financial Aid so that the FAO counselor can use this office. This will free up the office he is currently using, 2234-B so that the Technician can move into that office.

Along with the need for an office, the FA office has a need for storage space. Over the course of the year, especially in the spring, the office has to store materials that pertain to two different academic years. These materials include, FAFSA worksheets, Funding Your Future and Tax Benefits for Higher Education Booklets; pamphlets on the California Chafee Grant Program, Selective Service, credit card, the Cal Grant Program, Fund Your Future, and FAFSA Pin Cards; and information on loans and debt

management. There is also a need store financial aid promotional materials, and to keep student files for at least three years and at times longer, especially if a student applied for and received a loan from Skyline. These files are kept as long as the loan is outstanding. When the FAO is fully stocked, the lack of storage space is evident since materials are stored in staff offices, along the walls of the office, and in stacks precarious stacks in the file room. To address this need, it is recommended that the FAO along with the Counseling department and EOPS move toward scanning and imaging their files. At the moment, the Counseling department is using half of the FAO file room to store student counseling files, and EOPS is using a quarter. By having all offices scan and index their files, storage space will become available to house the other materials utilized by Financial Aid.

The computers being used by staff are approximately four years old, and will need to be replaced soon. With technological changes related to processing financial aid applications, and the need to keep abreast with the demands from the Department of Education, the computers need to be updated and replaced at least every four years. With the increase in request to conduct presentations at different events there is a need to have a laptop with Banner access, along with a LCD projector. Also, to facilitate in access to the College, there is a need to have information available to students in languages other than English. At present, the only other language in which a few pieces of information are available is Spanish. Having materials available in Burmese, Cantonese, Arabic, and Russian would be beneficial to students.

To facilitate the scholarship application process, an on-line application is needed. Presently, the process is cumbersome. It would be streamlined if the application was on-line.

3. Describe the use of technology in the program and discuss if technology is current and comparable to other colleges and business or industry.

Technology is used on a daily basis by the FAO to determine a student's eligibility, process their files, and to download and upload information to the Department of Education and the California Student Aid Commission. All possible Financial Aid forms that may be required from students are available on line, as well as the electronic application for the Board of Governors Fee Waiver. Compared to other college's Skyline is on par with its use of technology and may be ahead of some since students have the option of having their financial aid checks deposited directly into their bank accounts. An IT programmer has been assigned to financial aid, and her work is essential to ensure that the Financial Aid office is current with programming requirements from the Department of Education and the California Student Aid Commission.

4. If appropriate, describe the support the program receives from industry. If the support is not adequate, what is necessary to improve that support?

Not applicable.

PART E: Budget Request

1. What resources (staff, facilities, equipment and/or supplies) will be needed in the next six years?

Staff:
- One full-time Financial Aid Technician
  - Over the course of the last six years, the number of Pell Grant recipients has increased from a low of 900 to over 1150 in the current year. This translates to an average of 383

student files to be processed by two technicians and the program supervisor. With the mandate that more students be served in order to continue receiving BFAP funds, and the current economic situation, it is safe to assume that the numbers will continue to increase. At the moment, student files are processed within one to two weeks. A continued increase in the number of students applying for financial aid without an increase in staff will lead to an increase in processing time and possible student attrition. Also, during "scholarship season," the months of January through April, the FAO in essence is down one technician. This is because the scholarship process consumes all of her time, resulting in one technician and the program supervisor picking up her other duties and responsibilities, such as the normal processing of student financial aid applications and the Cal Grant program.

- One full-time Financial Aid Counselor
  - At the moment, a .60 FTE counselor, paid 100% by financial aid, is assigned to the FAO. Charged with seeing students that exceed (90+ units) or do not meet financial aid eligibility criteria (GPA <2.0 and/or completion rate <67%), demand for appointments is high. In addition, students who have attempted 45 units are expected to see the counselor to assess students' progress towards their goals. At the moment, students need to wait an average of two weeks to see the counselor. An increase in the number of students receiving financial aid will augment the amount of time they will have to wait to see the counselor.
- One full-time Financial Aid Assistant
  - With the continued provision of evening hours four nights a week, the need to provide support to the evening Financial Aid technician is needed. As the only permanent member of the staff that works until 7 pm, 40% of the time is spent on duties that could be assigned to a staff member in a lower classification. This new position would not only provide support to the technician, but would also serve as the lead person for the scanning of financial aid files and documents, as the office moves towards a paperless system.

Facilities:
- A private office for one of the current Financial Aid technicians.
- Storage space for financial aid booklets, pamphlets and promotional materials.

Equipment
- Replace all staff computers.
- A laptop with Banner access and an LCD projector.
- A heavy duty multi-page letter folder.

2. If appropriate, discuss methods the program could share resources with other programs in the College and District.

At the moment resources are shared with the Counseling Division by having the Campus Ambassadors be responsible for scheduling counseling appointments when they are assigned to work at the Info Center. In addition, the demand for counseling appointments is diminished by having a counselor assigned to Financial Aid. As a full-time counselor position is filled, resources from Counseling could be used to fund the remaining .40 FTE part of the position. Lastly, assistance to the Outreach Committee is provided by having Campus Ambassadors take the lead when campus tours are needed or through the presentations make by staff on financial aid.

District wide, the sharing of an electronic scholarship application may be something to consider so that the costs could be shared.

PART F: Access

1. Discuss how and to what extent has this program contributed to expanding access to students.

Financial aid is a service that is available to all eligible students at Skyline. Through continued classroom presentations, reminder letters to faculty about financial aid, financial aid night presentations, staffing tables at college fairs, and events during Financial Aid Awareness Week in the fall and spring semesters, the Financial Aid office has contributed to expanding access to students. This is verified by the increase in the number of students served over the last three years. In addition, individual appointments are available to students needing help with completing the financial aid application; counseling services assist the students in monitoring their progress towards their educational goals; and evening hours four days a week provide access to Skyline's evening student population. The scholarship program awards over 100 scholarships on an annual basis, and the federal work study program provides students with the opportunity to work on campus while going to school, and not have to seek employment elsewhere. All of these aspects contribute towards expanding student access.

PART G: Student Satisfaction Survey

1. *Summarize the findings of the student satisfaction survey for programs in Student Services.*
    a. One hundred and two satisfaction surveys were collected for the financial aid office, along with 82 surveys for the One Stop. Data from the One Stop were collected since, in general, the Campus Ambassadors staff the One Stop, and they are funded by the Financial Aid office. The survey results indicate great satisfaction on behalf of the students served by both the Financial Aid office and the Campus Ambassadors.

2. *Indicate areas of improvement for the program.*
    a.

3. *Outline a plan for responding to student needs.*
    a. The FAO will be open and responsive to all requests received from students for services. As resources allow the need for additional services will be addressed.

Skyline College Program Review
Worksheet for Program Services and Performance

Weekly Student Contact Hours – WSCH [ ]

Report the 3 previous **Fall** semesters with the most recent on the right.

Year	20	20	20
WSCH			

Please comment on program enrollment and expected tends.
(Counseling classes only)

FTE and WSCH/FTE (LOAD)

Report the previous 3 Fall semesters with the most recent on the right

	20	20	20
FTE			
WSCH/FTE			

Please comment on the comparison of this program to College trends.
(Counseling classes only)

Total Program Contact Hours

Report data on program retention and success rate with the most recent on the right.

	20	20	20
Total Contact Hours			

Student/Staff Ratios

Report data on program retention and success rate with the most recent on the right.

	20	20	20
Ratios			
Total Student			
Headcount			

Retention and Success

Report data on program retention and success rate with the most recent on the right. Have these rates broken down by student types (i.e. age, ethnicity, gender)

	20	20	20
Retention			
Success			

Please comment on the programs success and retention rate. Include factors that affect the rates and how college services are used to provide multiple avenues for student success.

Program Review - Resource Needs Summary Table

Program ____ FINANCIAL AID ____

Personnel	Needs	Notes
	1. One additional full time Financial Aid Technician	1. With the mandate that more students be served in order to continue receiving BFAP funds, and the current economic situation, it is safe to assume that the numbers will continue to increase. At the moment, student files are processed within one to two weeks. A continued increase in the number of students applying for financial aid without an increase in staff will lead to an increase in processing time and possible student attrition. Also, during "scholarship season," the months of January through April, the financial aid office in essence is down one technician. This is because the scholarship process consumes all of her time, resulting in one technician and the program supervisor picking up her other duties and responsibilities, such as the normal processing of student financial aid applications and the Cal Grant program.
	2. Increase .60 FTE counselor to 1.0 FTE	2. Charged with seeing students that exceed (90+ units) or do not meet financial aid eligibility criteria (GPA <2.0 and/or completion rate <67%), demand for appointments is high. In addition, students that have attempted 45 units are expected to see the counselor, as well, to assess students' progress towards their goals. At the moment, students need to wait an average of two weeks to see the counselor. An increase in the number of students receiving financial aid will raise the amount of time they will have to wait to see the counselor.
	3. Hire one full-time Financial Aid Assistant	3. With the continued provision of evening hour four nights a week, the need to provide support to the lone Financial Aid technician that works evenings is needed. As the only permanent member of the staff that works through 7 pm,

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Program Review - Resource Needs Summary Table

**Program   FINANCIAL AID   **

		Needs	Notes
			40% of the time is spent on duties that could be assigned to a staff member in a lower classification. This new position would not only provide support to the technician, but would also serve as the lead person for the scanning of financial aid files and documents, as the office moves towards a paperless system.
Equipment		1. Replace all staff computers.	1. The computers being used by staff are approximately four years old, and will need to be replaced soon. With technological changes related to processing financial aid applications, and the need to keep abreast with the demands from the Department of Education, the computers need to be updated and replace at most every four years.
		2. A laptop with Banner access and an LCD projector.	2. With the increase in request to conduct presentation at different events there is a need to have a laptop with Banner access, along with a LCD projector.
Facilities		1. Private offices for all Financial Aid Technicians.	1. It is anticipated that additional space will be needed with time to accommodate a growing staff and program needs. However, at the moment there is need for a private office for one of the technicians. Presently, this staff member works from a cubicle that does not provide privacy or the ability to have a quiet space to work on detail work, unlike the other Financial Aid Technician. Additionally, it is difficult to meet with students regarding their financial aid statuses, and/or scholarships in an area that is quite open and public. To address this need, it is recommended that office 2-2242 be

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Program Review - Resource Needs Summary Table

Program ____FINANCIAL AID____

	Needs	Notes
		assigned to Financial Aid so that the FAO counselor can use this office. This will free up the office he is currently using, 2234-B so that the Technician can move into that office.
	2. Storage space for financial aid booklets, pamphlets and promotional materials.	2. Over the course of the year, especially in the spring, the office has to store materials that pertain to two different academic years. To address this need, it is recommended that the FAO along with the Counseling department and EOPS move toward scanning and imaging their files. At the moment, the Counseling department is using half of the FAO file room to store student counseling files, and EOPS is using a quarter. By having all offices scan and index their files, storage space will become available to house the other materials utilized by Financial Aid.

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