Assessment Report

Yuba Community College District

YC - Financial Aid Program Recommendations

Year of Review: 2013-2014

Type of Review: Self-Study (4-year review)

Executive Summary (Include a list of team members): Under the direction of the Dean of Financial Aid, EOPS-CARE, TRiO and Student Services, the Yuba College Financial Aid Office (FAO) administers financial aid in accordance with federal and state regulations. The FAO provides outreach to local high schools and the community for potential students to have the opportunity to attend college, as well as in-reach activities to current Yuba College students to help promote financial aid services to those who might not be aware of the accessibility and/or eligibility process to receive financial aid.

The objective of the Financial Aid Office is to assist and support eligible students with their financial need to reach their educational goals. The students' need is determined by the total resources available to them as reported on their Free Application for Financial Aid (FAFSA), which they file with the U.S. Department of Education (DOE). After student eligibility is determined by the FAO through a DOE selected verification process, Federal and State financial aid funds are awarded to eligible students in the form of fee waivers (BOGW), grants (Pell, FSEOG, Cal-Grant, EOPS, CARE, Chafee), work study (FWS) and scholarships. Through a collaborative relationship with the YC Business Office, funds are disbursed to students who have documented financial need.

In addition, a major responsibility of the FAO includes accountability and strict compliance with Federal and State regulations, verified through audits and report filing.

Yuba College provides services to students and the community through its Marysville main campus, Clear Lake Campus, Beale Air Force Base, and the new Sutter County Educational Center.

Following are two organizational charts to present a clear picture as to the difference in staffing patterns in 2010 and present. The first chart shows the time when Yuba College was one educational institution with three separate centers, Woodland, Clearlake and Beale. The second chart shows present after Woodland became a separate college and the Sutter Center was added as part of Yuba College.

In 2010, while Woodland was still part of Yuba College, five full-time and one .64% positions were funded with college funds; two full-time positions, three .59%, and one .34% positions were funded with Board Financial Assistance Program (BFAP) categorical funds. All these positions provided financial aid services to Marysville, Clearlake and Woodland students. Unfortunately, In 2010, a Marysville Financial Aid Technician position was laid-off.

Currently, three full-time and one .64% positions are funded with college funds, two full-time, one .59% and one .34% positions are funded with BFAP funds to provide financial aid services to Marysville, Clearlake and Sutter students. Even though Yuba College does not provide financial aid services to Woodland students, Sutter has replaced Woodland and in the end, Yuba College lost two full-time college funded positions while still expected to provide services to students at three sites.

BFAP allocations include three separate components. (1) BFAP Funds (BFAP-SFAA), which must be used solely for financial aid professional, technical, clerical or temporary help who report in a direct line to the Financial Aid Director, computers, software, training, and/or outreach materials. (2) 2% allocation, which is disbursed directly to the YCCD and which may be spent in any manner by the district and does not necessarily have to be spent in the administration of the Financial Aid Office. Lastly, (3) every college is required to meet a Maintenance of Effort (MOE) contribution in support of the Financial Aid Office in the form of staffing, and or operational expenses.

Colleges are fortunate to receive State BFAP funds. However, since 2010 when one of the Financial Aid Technician positions at the Marysville site was laid-off, Yuba College has had difficulty in meeting its required MOE.

In academic year 2012-2013 Yuba College's BFAP allocation was $348,106. Required MOE from Yuba College was $405,989. Actual MOE was $331,303, which resulted in a shortage of $74,686.

BFAP regulations stipulate that colleges that do not meet its required MOE are penalized by subtracting that amount from the 2% funds which are allocated to the District, which could otherwise be spent in any manner by the District and did not necessarily had to be spent in the administration of the Financial Aid Office. This penalty will continue to be applied to Yuba College until such time that the MOE is fulfilled in its entirety. This is not the first time that the District loses out part of its MOE.

Based on the future expected penalty from the State, it is recommended that the Financial Aid Technician position be restored and assigned to the Sutter Educational Center. It does not make any sense that the YCCD loses $74,686 to the State rather than using those funds to restore the FA Technician position thus, solving the Financial Aid staffing shortage at the Sutter Educational Center.

The Financial Aid program is of utmost importance to YC students. In theory, based on the low-income nature of the communities that YC serves, the lack of financial aid would result in a drastic decrease in students. Without financial aid, many students would most likely choose not to attend college. For those students who choose to attend, it would be more difficult to concentrate on their education because of financial constraints. Also, students would be forced to work more hours and attend college on a part time basis. High unemployment rates have forced people to seek retraining and/ or to return to college in search of additional education. As a result, Financial Aid has seen an increase in the number of applicants for financial aid.

Program Description : The FAO is at the forefront of technology by using a paperless approach, making forms and processes available to students on the financial aid website. A few years ago, through data imaging, financial aid converted all of its student paper files into an electronic format. This academic year, FAO introduced an electronic process which will allow students to submit all of their verification forms and appeal requests electronically. Also, FAO produces a financial aid newsletter which covers all updates and processes and it can be viewed through the financial aid website or downloaded electronically.

Staff in the Financial Aid Office work together and in collaboration with the Business Office, faculty, local high schools and the community in delivering services to students, including the disbursement of funds. The following chart shows the amount of money disbursed to students throughout the Clearlake, Sutter and Marysville sites. These funds support the educational needs of the students and have a very positive effect on the communities where student spend those funds. The slight decrease between 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 is due WCC processing its own financial aid disbursement. Nevertheless, in 2012-2013, this amount was up again.

In addition to financial services, other services include:

• Through financial resources, such as Pell and FSEOG grants, the Financial Aid Office provides open access to low and middle-income students. Financial Aid supports retention and transfer and makes it easier for students to reach their educational goals. In addition, financial aid reaches populations that historically have been under represented.

• Through its Federal Work Study component, the Financial Aid Office determines eligibility for a regular flow of student workers. This component serves a dual purpose. It allows students to attain certain career specific competencies through an on-the-job training approach. It also serves the needs of many departments on campus throughout the different communities served by Yuba College by making available a student workforce. In addition, through the Federal Work-Study program, the FAO provides funding for eligible tutors who will assist academically challenged students through the Yuba College Student Success Center.

• Through scholarships, the Financial Aid Office assists those students who might not be eligible for federal and state assistance, thus promoting access, retention and educational goal completion for a higher-income student population.

• Through the state funded BOG Fee Waiver and Cal Grant program, the FAO serves both a low-income and a middle-income student population, enhancing the students' potential for academic success.

• The Chafee Grant program serves our Foster Youth student population enhancing the students' potential for academic success as well as financial stability.

• Through its support of other programs such as EOPS, CARE, and Upward Bound, the Financial Aid Office facilitates additional financial resources to program participants.

• Through the provisions of the California DREAM Act, a previously non-eligible, non-served student population is now be eligible to apply for services through state-funded programs, such as BOG Fee Waiver, entitlement Cal Grant, EOPS-CARE and CalWORKs. This population consists of California high school graduates who are exempt from paying non-resident tuition under the terms of the California Educational Code Section 68130.5, who were previously ineligible for these Financial Aid programs.

The Financial Aid staff strives to provide the highest level of services to students at each site. Students may access services in person, online through Web Advisor or student portal, or through and email services. Following is a list of staff and services to ensure that students receive the level of services they need, broken down by site.

• On an annual basis, Cost of Attendance budgets are set for the subsequent year’s student Financial Aid award process. Since Colleague is an integrated system, Yuba College takes the lead to set the cost of attendance for the YCCD.

• On an annual basis as well, Colleague is set up to begin awarding students as early as possible for the new academic year. This process is coordinated in collaboration with Woodland Community College and Information Technology through a series of testing to ensure the system operates as designed for the Yuba Community College District, in compliance with Federal and State regulations.

• Students are able to apply for a fee waiver on line through CC Apply or through the processes that are in place to determine eligibility for the fee waiver through the FAFSA application.

• Students are able to pose questions in person at the Financial Aid Office for immediate answers, or by phone or via email and can expect to receive a response in a timely manner.

• A Financial Aid student computer lab was set-up for students to apply on line and/or make corrections to their Financial Aid applications.

• FA Technicians and Federal Work Study students provide computer support to students.

• Students have access to financial aid information through Web Advisor and the Portal.

• Students are notified on a weekly basis when they have been awarded through an email process alert to check Web Advisor.

• Cal Grant awards are made as soon as funds become available from the State.

• Pell Grant awards are made as soon as students have a complete file.

• The Financial Aid Office requests supporting financial aid documentation from those students who are selected for verification directly by the Federal Government or when knowledge of conflicting information requires additional documentation to substantiate the student's eligibility.

• Scholarship awards are made as soon as students are identified and funds become available.

• The Scholarship Handbook is published at the beginning of the spring semester and posted on line to reach a wide audience. Thereafter, new scholarships or changes in existing scholarships are posted on line.

• Satisfactory Academic Progress process is run every term immediately after all grades are posted to make sure students are notified if they are on Financial Aid Probation or Termination status and if they need to file an appeal.

• Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeals are processed within ten days.

• Students are notified of the status of their petitions within one day after being reviewed.

• Student Loans are processed following the timeline established by the Department of Education and institutional policy.

• Student Aid Reports are downloaded from the federal system and onto the Colleague system on a daily basis.

• Working closely with the Business Office, Financial Aid checks are sent out on a weekly basis. Beginning in the spring of 2013, the Business Office will implement a system that will make electronic direct deposit available to students through Higher One.

• Staff is available in the evening, as scheduled.

• The EOPS and CARE book grants are paid prior to the start of the semester to provide above and beyond services to students as required by program regulations. Prior to the end of the semester Financial Aid processes EOPS and CARE Incentive Grants.

• Bilingual staff is available to communicate with Spanish and Punjabi speaking students.

• The Financial Aid Guide is updated yearly and it is available at the Financial Aid Office and on line to inform students of processes and regulations.

• Periodically during the academic year a Financial Aid Newsletter is provided online to highlight any new regulations, policy or process changes or to remind students of upcoming deadlines.

• Students are served in a friendly, professional manner and in accordance with FERPA regulations, steps are taken when necessary to ensure the privacy of sensitive conversations with students.

• The Dean has an open-door policy and is available to meet with students, either in person or over the phone.

• Strong collaboration between staff members and with other departments ensures that students are apprised of available programs and services.

• Financial Aid staff attend new student orientations, EOPS Orientations, outreach presentations, community and campus events, and provide workshops to answer questions and provide Financial Aid information.

If services are available, how do they demonstrate an increase in student success?

FAO assumes that availability of financial aid resources increase the potential for student success. Based on the low-income nature of the Yuba-Sutter communities, it is assumed that if financial aid funds were not available, the majority of the students currently attending Yuba College would not be able to continue attending. Of course, receiving financial aid does not guarantee successful completion and/or attainment of academic and vocational goals; however, financial support makes it easier for students to attend Yuba College and concentrate on their educational objectives. In the past, when Yuba College had a Researcher position, a comparison of student success between students receiving financial aid versus those who did not receive financial aid showed that financial aid recipients were more successful than non-financial aid recipients.

How is current and previous program review data used to refine and improve program or department practices?

To assess student satisfaction, the FAO conducted a student survey. Results follow:

Demographics:
• 25.47 male
• 74.53 female

Age:
• 1.02% under 18 years old.
• 46.63% 18-24 years old.
• 29.04% 25-39 years old.
• 17.38% years old.
• 5.93% over 54 years old.

Ethnicity:
• 5.33% Black
• 5.12% Asian Indian
• .20% Samoan
• .20% Chinese
• 1.23% Pacific Islander
• .20 Japanese
• 61.07 White
• .41% Korean
• 1.43% Laotian
• .61 Vietnamese
• 1.02% Filipino
• 4.92% Asian
• 30.74% Other

Location:
• 72.59% Marysville
• 14.35% Clearlake

• 11.78% Sutter
• 1.28% Beale

Received Financial Aid in last two years:
• 80.79% Yes
• 19.21% No

Satisfaction with Yuba College:
• 24.24% extremely satisfied.
• 40.73 quite satisfied.
• 22.20 satisfied.
• 5.30% neither satisfied, nor dissatisfied.
• 4.07% somewhat dissatisfied.
• 1.22% extremely dissatisfied.

Satisfaction with the FA Services received from FA staff:
• 30.17% extremely satisfied.
• 32.44 quite satisfied.
• 15.50% satisfied.
• 11.36% neither satisfied, nor dissatisfied.
• 4.96% somewhat dissatisfied.
• 2.07% quite dissatisfied
• 3.51% extremely dissatisfied.

Based on the results of the survey, 78.11% of the respondents are satisfied with Financial Aid staff and the services provided.

Curriculum & SLO Assessment Summary :

What has your program or department done to improve completion of degrees, certificates, or transfers? What are your future plans?

The FAO ensures that financial aid payment is processed in a timely basis for as many eligible students as possible to enable them to cover the cost of their education. The FAO is considering making three financial aid disbursements per semester rather than two to better serve the needs of the students by narrowing down the time they have to wait to get a payment.

Do you have any courses, certificates, or degrees that should be in-activated or expanded? If yes, please identify and justify your recommendations with data.
Not Applicable

Do all of your courses have current CORs? If not, what steps are you taking to ensure compliance?
Not Applicable

If applicable, how are teaching methodologies in your program or department assessed?
Not Applicable

If applicable, how are the results of the assessment used to support, improve, and/or expand your current teaching methodologies?
Not Applicable

If your program or department uses a DE modality to support instruction, how are you evaluating the effectiveness of that instruction?
Not Applicable

If your department offers DE courses, what support services does it provide for DE students? What can be done to improve support services for these students?
Not Applicable

How is your program or department applying sound principles of learning and teaching theory to its curriculum?
Not Applicable

Which CSLOs (course student learning outcomes) and PLOs (Program learning outcomes) were assessed within the last year?
Not Applicable

For each of the above, how did the assessment data influence program, department and/or course improvement?
Not Applicable

YCCD Board of Trustees Vision
How does the program support the YCCD District Vision Statement? Specifically, how does the program meets the needs of our students and communities?

The YC FAO supports the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Strategic Plan's Goal A of Promoting College Awareness and Access. Financial Aid supports the Strategic Directions of the District in two specific areas: (5) Student Access and Response to Changing Needs and (1) Student Retention and Success. Specifically, Financial Aid:

• Supports open access through the availability of the fee waiver program (BOGW) for those students who, without Financial Aid, would not be able to pursue a college education.
• Develops strong student focused High School and community partnerships to explain and to provide a better understanding of the financial aid process.
• Facilitates retention through the availability of Federal and State grants, work-study, and scholarships.
• Enhances program completion, graduation and transfer through strict monitoring of satisfactory academic progress and eligibility determination for continuous Financial Aid support.

Industry Trends and Program Data Analysis :

How do program or department goals align with the education, diversity, demographic, and workforce needs of local communities?
Department goals include serving the needs of all financial aid eligible students. Based on the diverse population within the communities served by Yuba College FAO serves both low-income and middle income eligible students and a wide student range of different age, ethnicity and gender as well as socio-economic status. The FAO reaches out to the surrounding communities to ensure that all potential students who may benefit from an education are aware of the availability of financial aid to support their educational needs. When reaching out to the communities, staff who speak languages other than English participate in outreach services. Languages spoke, include Spanish, Punjabi, Hmong, Vietnamese and other.

How is your program or department direction driven by empirical data?

In the spring of 2013, the Financial Aid Office used student loan default data to assess the risk of participating in the program. As a result, a Student Default Task Force was formed. This Task Force included the YCCD Chancellor, three Board Members, and the Dean of Financial Aid. Through data assessment associated with student borrower patterns, programs, success rate of borrowers and patterns of students defaulting, the Task Force recommended not participating in the Direct Federal Loan program for academic year 2012-2013 and 2013-2014.

FEDERAL STUDENT LOANS
DEFAULT RATE
2005 8.6%
2006 12.3%
2007 7.9%
2008 9.1%
2009 13.5%
2010 30.1%

Student data is also used to monitor and assess student progress to be in compliance with Federal and State regulations.

Future Goals and Program Direction:

How do program or department goals align with stated Yuba College goals?

Yuba College Goals:
1. Foster a culture of evidence-informed decision making, including SLO development/assessment and other measures of student success.
2. Prioritize and allocate resources based on existing and emerging community and student needs over those of individual projects or programs.
3. Steward our institutional resources with increasing effectiveness and efficiency.
4. Research and utilize effective modes of delivery for our courses and services.
5. Design our programs in such a way as to allow students to complete their educational goals in a timely manner.
6. Evaluate our programs, services and processes to ensure continuous quality improvement.
7. Improve the quality of the student experience at all our campuses and centers.
8. Develop partnerships to enhance educational resources and student opportunities.
9. Exemplify educational excellence, fiscal responsibility, cultural awareness, and civic engagement for our communities and region.

The Financial Aid Office
1. uses student surveys to assess student satisfaction with the processes and the services provided to them. Student data will be used to assess the Financial Aid SLO: The level of student satisfaction with financial aid processes and services will increase as service and process automation increases.

2. is innovative in its approaches, specifically in blending of financial resources to expand services to students. Specifically, there is a proposal to blend financial resources to fund a FA Technician – EOPS Specialist to provide services for both programs at the Sutter Educational Center.

3. researches and recommends the utilization of electronic approaches, such as the (a) Transform process which will allow students to process verification and appeal forms electronically; (b) Academic Works software, which will allow students to complete a scholarship application and through this process, students will be electronically matched to the different scholarships for which they might be eligible.

4. The FAO partners with local high schools to ensure that potential students apply for financial aid, including scholarships.

5. Through the monitoring of financial aid awards and required educational plans, the FAO enhances the potential of educational goal completion.

How did these activities contribute to student success? (include supportive data)

Financial aid is a highly regulated program with constant changing processes. As staff participates in training workshops and conferences, they are able to accurately advise students on how to file their financial aid and what to expect when the Department of Education selects their file for verification. In addition, they become aware on how to maintain compliance with state and Federal regulations.

How does professional development in your program or department support basic skills students and foster inclusive classroom environments that value diversity?

A large percentage of students who receive financial aid begin their education in basic skills. This is student population is also diverse. As staff participates in professional development, they are better equipped to serve the needs of the basic skills student population and foster a positive, student first environment in the FAO where all students are treated with the respect they deserve.

What Staff Development activities would you suggest be offered in the next year that would enhance your program?

The Staff Development Committee is already working with the FAO to schedule faculty and staff workshops that will provide a better understanding of the students on financial aid and what faculty and staff can do to support the needs of this student population, such as, turning in grades in a timely manner.

Future Goals and Program Direction
Based on Program Review, what are your plans for future department/program improvements?

The FAO plans on continuing to automate student services processes.

Are you ready to submit your final program review?: No

Feedback (Validation Team Use ONLY) : ....

Goal	Recommendations	Plan of Action & Budgetary Impact / Tasks	Status	Feedback & Follow-Up
YC Goal 1 - 1. uses student surveys to assess student satisfaction with the processes and the services provided to them. Student data will be used to assess the Financial Aid SLO: The level of student satisfaction with financial aid processes and services will increase as service and process automation increases.				

Goal	Recommendations	Plan of Action & Budgetary Impact / Tasks	Status	Feedback & Follow-Up
YC Goal 2 - 2. is innovative in its approaches, specifically in blending of financial resources to expand services to students. Specifically, there is a proposal to blend financial resources to fund a FA Technician – EOPS Specialist to provide services for both programs at the Sutter Educational Center.				

Goal	Recommendations	Plan of Action & Budgetary Impact / Tasks	Status	Feedback & Follow-Up
YC Goal 3 - 3. researches and recommends the utilization of electronic approaches, such as the (a) Transform process which will allow students to process verification and appeal forms electronically; (b) Academic Works software, which will allow students to complete a scholarship application and through this process, students will be electronically matched to the different scholarships for which they might be eligible.				

Goal	Recommendations	Plan of Action & Budgetary Impact / Tasks	Status	Feedback & Follow-Up
YC Goal 4 - 4. The FAO partners with local high schools to ensure that potential students apply for financial aid, including scholarships.				

Goal	Recommendations	Plan of Action & Budgetary Impact / Tasks	Status	Feedback & Follow-Up
YC Goal 5 - 5. Through the monitoring of financial aid awards and required educational plans, the FAO enhances the potential of educational goal completion.				

Goal	Recommendations	Plan of Action & Budgetary Impact / Tasks	Status	Feedback & Follow-Up
Have Information Technology automate the Satisfactory Academic Progress through Web Advisor to allow students to check their status on line and proceed to file a Financial Aid Appeal to expedite this process.				