

2010-11 Annual Unit Plan/Program Review

Name of Unit: Fiscal Services
Name of Area: Administrative Services
Date Completed: 5/25/2010

Unit's Mission Statement

The mission of the El Camino Community College District Fiscal Services unit is to provide excellent customer service to all areas of the college community, while maintaining the fiscal integrity of the District through adherence to and compliance with sound business practices, district policies and regulatory agencies requirements in order to safeguard District resources and assure continuation and stability of the institution.

Unit's Characteristics, Performance and Trends

The Fiscal Services division is comprised of the Fiscal Services office and the Accounting department. The Fiscal Services office is responsible for the development of the district's budgets, forecasting, business management procedures, implementation of new financial systems and interfacing with public and private sector agencies. The Accounting department provides services in the areas of general accounting, grant accounting ancillary accounting, reporting, vendor payments, enrollment and cashiering services, banking and investing, human resources position control and payroll generation and disbursement, student financial aid accounting and disbursement and other related duties. Staff consists of trained accountants, accounting assistants, cashiers, temporary hourly staff and Federal Work Study program students.

The department strives to accomplish all of its workload timely. It strives to provide excellent service to students and staff and the community. Decreasing staff levels and increasing job functions make providing quality service and accurate, up to date financial records a challenge.

Surveys

Customer surveys were completed in 1998-99, March 2003, and May 2007. Customer satisfaction data showed management satisfaction improved by 2 % over the years to a high of 97%, faculty satisfaction held steady at 86-87% satisfied, and staff satisfaction greatly improved from 82% to 95%, a 13% increase in customer satisfaction.

Improvements to Service

Fiscal Services has focused since that time on improving service in general accounting and reporting, and in student cashiering services during peak registration times.

Financial Reporting has implemented a budget monitoring and alert system. Data showed that numerous department accounts were over running their budgets. A budget check feature was instituted at the requisition level in the Datatel system. This prevents overdraft of supply and other operating account budgets. Department budget reports are produced monthly, current and projected expenditure levels compared to the annual budget. Department managers are alerted to any accounts that are overdrawn. Departments are also alerted of any account that has exceeded a normal percentage level of expected expenditures and therefore may exceed budget before the end of the fiscal year. Departments are advised to process budget transfers and/or curtail expenditures. Accounting staff assure that budget transfers are completed before the next monthly reports are sent to the departments. This is keeping a tighter control on expenditure budgets. Last year expenditures came in well under budget.

Cashiering services monitored the average wait time in the cashiering line during the peak periods of enrollment, as well as the number of customers served via the web, on the phone and in person to see if staffing schedules were adequate to respond timely to customer needs. Collecting this data enabled schedulers to more efficiently service customers and also confirmed that the wait time was not long in the cashiering line, as had been assumed by upper management's visual inspection of the hallway. Cashiering services deployed new credit card terminals that capture the customer's payment in less time. Cashiering services worked the cashiering line answering student questions while students waited for a cashier window to be available. Students who had to be sent to another campus department and return to the cashiers were given "front of the line" passes, so they would not have to wait in line again. Web payment services are heavily promoted so students can process their fee payments online. Long lines of students are now only seen on the first two days of each semester rather than the first two weeks.

Cashiering services also took on the responsibility of counting and depositing all the campus parking permit machine coin and currency. This has increased the workload of the cashiers and required the purchase of a new coin sorting and counting machine. Additional staff has been brought in to assist the cashier in

lifting and dumping the coin bags and preparing the deposit of these funds. The number of machines has doubled and will soon triple since the years that the cashiers originally counted and deposited these funds. Providing this service has freed up police cadet and officer time and safe guards the funds at a higher level. It has increased the work load and hourly staffing needs of the accounting department which will require a budget increase.

Financial aid students owe health center and student body fees only. Research showed that many financial aid students were receiving their aid, but not paying their fees. Accounting implemented a new system that recovers these delinquent fees prior to the disbursement of financial aid to the student. Recent recoveries totaled \$4000 in delinquent fees per semester. This recovery occurs within the first two weeks of the semester and reduces the number of invoices that are sent to students and eliminates phone calls from students asking why they are blocked from registration for the next term. This has also necessitated the hiring of part-time staff and will cause a need for increased budget.

The budget book has been produced earlier than ever before in the last two years resulting in the satisfaction of the Planning and Budgeting Committee, the President and the Board of Trustees. This was accomplished by setting firm budgeting, year-end closing and budget book production deadlines.

Trends

External Trends

With the current economic uncertainty, it may be expected that student populations may increase if unemployment in this area increases. Therefore the number of students served by the cashiering and financial aid areas is expected to increase. This may necessitate hiring more staff to handle additional fee collections, additional financial aid check disbursements and financial aid reconciliations.

Many changes in service levels are taking place at the local County Office of Education. If this trend continues, additional job functions may be taken on by the District. This may necessitate hiring of additional staff.

Internal Trends

It is expected that $\frac{1}{4}$ of the accounting department will retire or take other jobs in the next five years, and another $\frac{1}{4}$ in the five years after that, which will require hiring and training new staff.

It is expected that advancing technology may aid staff in monitoring bank accounts, reconciling data between systems and reducing the time it takes for students to receive funds and services. It is unknown if technology will lessen staffing needs or increase them.

Strength:

The unit is comprised of experienced staff with good knowledge of the campus systems, policies and procedures. They are dedicated to accomplishing the functions of the unit.

Weaknesses:

Staffing level has been reduced by 1/4 over the past years resulting in many tasks not being accomplished. Inadequate checks and balances exist in key areas of cashiering and payroll due to staffing level reductions. Service to students particularly in the financial aid disbursement area and fee collection and refunds has decreased due to staff reduction and budget cuts that prevent staffing these areas to the level desired. Cashier window hours have been reduced from 56 hours a week to 39 hours a week. The Financial Aid window no longer can provide help 5 days a week. Staff has to close the window for complete days in order to accomplish the increasing work load. Many reconciliation functions are not able to be performed due to lack of staff. Current staff has taken on the job functions of staff that were not replaced. Current staff is only able to keep up with the basics of their functions and often express regret that they are not able to produce an exact product due to time constraints.

Recent loss of staff includes the Director of Accounting and the Accounting Officer, the two top level positions in the department. These losses occurred after the 2008-09 Plan was written. Replacement of these key positions was added to the 2009-10 plan. Both positions were authorized to be filled in 2009-10. An Accounting Officer was hired on December 1, 2009. The previous Accounting Director who had gone to work for another school district will be returning to El Camino to resume the Accounting Director position in March 2010.

Another staffing loss occurred in late April 2009 with the suicide of an Accounting Technician. This position was authorized to be filled. An Accounting Technician was hired January 1, 2010. All current true vacancies were filled during 2009-10.

A Payroll staff member was off on medical leave from July through December 2010. An Accounting Technician left on emergency medical (maternity) leave in from mid September 2009 through January 2010. She has returned to work at a 60% work load until June 2010.

At this time, it is rumored that at least one Payroll Technician will be retiring in the early months of 2010-11. Several staff has chronic medical conditions or work-related injuries that affect their ability to work 40 hours a week.

These medical issues and leaves have forced the remaining staff and management to take on additional work load of the absent staff members.

A separation of work function will occur when the Accounting Department is re-located to the new Fiscal Services and Purchasing area in the Bookstore Building.

The Cashiering windows and financial aid disbursement windows will be located on the ground level with only work stations for the part-time staff and no direct supervisor on site. The managers of that area will be located on the second floor of the building.

This may require the need to promote an existing staff member to a supervisor to have adequate supervision of the area.

Unit's Opportunities and Challenges

Increasing numbers of students, accounts to reconcile and new compliance areas present duties for which no staff are available. Accounting office staff has been cut by 5 positions over the last several years. This has led to existing staff taking on the workload of the staff that was not replaced.

The extra workload has hindered the staff from performing the exacting reconciliations of all accounts and keeping current with monthly financial activities. This lack of ability to satisfactorily address all financial activities has resulted in audit findings and management comments by our external audit firm. Accounting for additional grants and Compton Center financial aid transactions has not been met with an increased accounting staffing level.

Current staffing is at an all time low. At least six positions have been lost from the budget as employees retired or left the district's employment. Budgeted positions were also given up to other departments with the promise that they would be replaced when the one-stop center for student services was built. This was promised in 2001, but has not happened and staff continues to be assigned additional functions. Workload has increased in the general accounting area as the district acquires more externally funded grant programs. Adequate segregation of duties do not exist in the cash handling nor payroll areas due to staffing reductions in both areas that were not approved for replacement. Workload has increased in the financial aid accounting area as staff now processes the financial aid disbursements and reconciliation for the Compton Center students. The payroll and general accounting staff has taken on the processing functions related to retirement and tax sheltered annuities that the Los Angeles County Office of Education used to perform. As LACOE downsizes their operation, the district picks up these functions. Many monitoring and reconciliation functions are no longer occurring due to understaffing. For proper checks and balances and to accomplish the additional workload, additional staff is required. Staffing needs have to be reassessed for the move of the cashiers and student related accounting to the new Student Services Center building.

It is expected that advancing technology may aid staff in monitoring bank accounts, reconciling data between systems and reducing the time it takes for students to receive funds and services. It is unknown if technology will lessen staffing needs or increase them.

Evaluation of Unit's Performance

Increasing workload and the need to achieve a greater level of accounting control and attention to tasks that are not being accomplished necessitates the hiring of additional full time or permanent part-time staff. An increase in staff will increase the efficiency of our service operations. Essential job tasks that had to be abandoned when staffing vacancies were not filled could then be accomplished.

Replace the Accounting Director and the Accounting Officer. This was accomplished.

Increase the staffing level – cashiering, financial aid accounting, payroll, general accounting:

Clerical Assistant – to staff the front service counter. This has not occurred and service is maintained in this critical area with part-time hourly cashiering staff. Staff rotate in this position, due to limitations on the number of days they can work, and because they are needed at the main cashiering windows.

Cashiering services – Day cashier, Cashiering Supervisor/Registration coordinator

This function is currently part of one of the Accounting Technician's job during the day time hours and the responsibility of an Accounting Assistant III during the evening hours. During peak periods of each academic session, and for a good amount of time during the regular year, the Accounting Technician is not able to keep up her reporting and reconciliation functions timely.

Financial Aid accounting – Accounting Technician, Accounting Assistant II

We have implemented the electronic disbursement of student Federal financial aid funds in February 2010. As students become accustomed to the new process, the amount of time needed to service students at our financial aid windows should decrease. Paperwork that needs to be sorted and filed will decrease. This will lessen the need for additional part-time staff in that area. The initial implementation has increased the staff time of the Accounting Officer, Accounting Technician II and the Business Manager. Once the processes for reconciliation are learned, and the system becomes routine, it is estimated that the Business Manager and Accounting Officer will spend about 5% of their time on the twice weekly transactions.

Payroll – Payroll Technician

Three of the four payroll technicians have frequent absences due to chronic weekly illnesses, medical leaves, and work-related injuries. The staff who is present have to take on the work load of the missing staff members and we have

had to use an hourly staff person at the full time rate of pay to accomplish payroll duties in one member's absence.

Payroll staff is unable to keep up the absence accounting for full time and part-time faculty due to not enough time on the job. We then have to hire part-time help to catch the work up. Cal STRS and LACOE have increased the work load of the staff as work was handed off to the Distinct by LACOE. STRS has become very demanding in their requests for immediate corrections to member's retirement accounts and immediate reimbursement of funds due, or they will assess penalties. The staff person responsible for this is unable to keep up the work timely, due to the excessive research it takes, and time to correct each employee's records on the payroll system, and she is hindered by her chronic illness pattern.

General Accounting – Accounting Technicians (2)

Required reconciliations need to be accomplished to satisfy audit requirements and are needed as a control mechanism between the two financial systems we operate. Bank statement reconciliations have to be put on hold for other work to be done. Adjustments based on the current reconciliations are not being completed timely by the staff.

An increased casual staff budget – cashiering, payroll, financial aid to aid staff in sorting, filing, copying, mailing, reconciling of data.

2009-10 was the implementation year of the COTOP fee payment program. The number of emails and phone calls that had to be returned to students and then the research on each account to explain to students what their balance was and to explain the COTOP program to them resulted in hundreds of additional hours of part-time help being needed. The Distinct has also implemented a fee payment deadline process and this has increased the need for cashiers to meet the demand for cashiering services at two deadline periods have been implemented each academic session.

An increased annual supply budget is needed as the cost of toner cartridges is very expensive. We buy the least expensive brand, but then they do not last very long.

We print reports, printouts for students, bills to students, checks to students.

An increased annual equipment budget is needed to handle any external changes in processes that necessitate new equipment. Unused funds in any particular fiscal year will revert back to the fund balance.

An increased conference budget will allow staff to attend bursars' conference to learn the latest technology and processes for cashiering services and allow payroll staff to attend STRS and PERS retirement workshops, and allow accounting staff to attend the Datatel User Group mini-conferences.

Unit's 3-5 Year Strategic Directions

It is hoped that many of the student financial aid disbursements can be made electronically to student's bank accounts, but this will not eliminate the need for producing paper checks for those students receiving State and campus based aid. Electronic aid submissions will require a shift in office resources from manual financial aid processing to a more intense level of local cash management, as Federal funds would now be deposited to a local bank account. This process is in the first two weeks of implementation and the impact on workload and the need to address new business practices and future strategies will be assessed in 4 months time.

Cashiering services will continue to look for ways to achieve a 100% payment of fees by students, by conducting research of fee collection methods employed at other colleges.

Automation of the fee receipt with the parking permit is planned with the aid of the ITS department. Establishment of the fee payment deadlines should result in decreasing levels of unpaid student receivables, thereby increasing cash flow to the district before the start of each academic session.

Payroll will continue to encourage direct deposit of paychecks for all employees which will reduce the time needed to manually process the disbursement of actual paychecks on payday. It is also anticipated that the number of grants will increase which will require additional staffing.

Financial Reporting staff will continue to try to reconcile both financial systems, but will need additional staff to accomplish this objective. Staff has been lost and existing staff have had their workload added to. This leaves little time for additional reconciliations required by audit standards.

The department will continue to focus on continuing to provide efficient service to staff, students and outside agencies. Emphasis on improving service to students will also include the continuous reinforcement with all staff the need to be caring and sensitive and respectful to our various student populations. The department will continue to focus on being responsive to requests for information and service.

Goal #1

Short term (1 year)

Status: complete

Replace Director of Accounting
Key positions in the overall functions of the Accounting department)
The top tier of supervision in the department was lost in Sept 2008.

Strategic Initiative: 1 (a)
Standard IIID

Evaluation of Goal

Both positions replaced by April 15. Staff needs to be replaced and trained before year end close cycle begins. Critical to the success of year end close and audits.

Status: In Progress during 2008-09:
Have been informed by Vice Presidents that replacement of these two positions has been approved by Cabinet. Waiting for Human Resources to open the recruitment process.

Status: In Progress in 2009-10
Interviews were conducted in 2009-10, but a decision was made to not hire from the current group of applicants. It was decided to instead focus on hiring the two staff positions that had been vacated in Dec 2009 and April 2009. Both those positions were filled in Dec. 2009 and January 2010.
Status: Completed in 2009-10 with the rehire of previous Accounting Director effective March 2010.

Objective #1.1

Status: complete

Hire a Director of Accounting

Status: Completed - March 2010

Existing Resources

This position is budgeted for in the 2009-10 budget.
This request is for the replacement of staff for an existing budgeted position.

Resources Needed: Additional Personnel

Position Classification: Manager/Supervisor (classified)

Required for How Long: Ongoing

Position Description:

Director of Accounting

Estimated Cost: \$ 90000

Supporting Rationale:

Lead management position for the department.

Goal #2 Short term (1 year) Status: in progress

1-31-2011 some progress has been made on the goal of the transactions being up to date since a casual worker took over the job from the classified staff person who retired in November. The number of transactions has increased due to the implementation of the Sallie Mae debit card system.

A replacement staff person has been hired effective March 1, 2011 and we will reassess the need for additional help dependent on the new hire's ability to handle the work load.

To provide better service to financial aid students and to keep current with financial aid paperwork which affects student award data. (SI-1b)
This goal can only be accomplished with the hiring of additional staff. Financial Aid Accounting workload has increased to double, as El Camino staff is now responsible for the processing and reconciliation of Compton Center Financial Aid disbursements. Two Federal financial aid check runs are processed weekly instead of one. The accountant who reconciles the El Camino financial aid transactions now has to also reconcile the Compton Center transactions. For audit purposes the two financial aid funds have to be combined and reconciled again to Federal financial web site amounts.
Strategic Initiative 1 (a) Standard IIB and IIID

Evaluation of Goal

All paperwork, including posting of cancelled checks, stale-dated checks in both the Datatel and PeopleSoft systems would be up to date monthly and reconciled by year-end close resulting in the financial aid accountant being able to reconcile the awards with the disbursements. Financial Aid records would match Accounting records. Reconciliations of all awards would be timely and all discrepancies resolved prior to year-end closing and the filing of the annual FISAP report.

Electronic or paper check processing of financial aid disbursements would be handled completely by an outside agency. (outsourcing of the disbursement process)

Elimination of 2-3 casual workers needed now to handle the paperwork and questions associated with in person financial aid disbursements.

Evaluation on this goal will be addressed again in June of 2010. The implementation of automation for a portion of the financial aid disbursement process should reduce the need for additional part-time help.

Objective #2.1

Status: in progress

Implement a direct deposit system for financial aid checks.

Status: In Progress during 2008-09 and 2009-10.

Meetings with outside agencies who can process financial aid disbursements were and are being conducted during 2008-09 and 2009-10. Decision on vendor and proposed initial steps in implementation occurred in 2009-10. Implementation of electronic financial aid disbursements to a student debit card is projected to occur in Spring 2010. Testing is underway in Fall 2009-10.

Status: In Progress and partially completed

The District has entered into an agreement with Sallie Mae Corporation for the electronic disbursement of Federal student financial aid to students in the form of a debit card or a paper check. The first electronic disbursements have been made as of 2-16-2010. There have been some returns due to student provided bad information, or lack of student responsibility, but those are being addressed immediately with each individual. Further evaluation will be necessary in 6 months time.

Impact of Objective on Other Programs, Units, and/or Areas

Impact on the Enrollment Services Program: Financial Aid & Scholarship

Work coordination with Financial Aid Office.

This is a combined goal with the Financial Aid Office.

Impact on the Unit: Information Technology Services (ITS)

There will be additional programming requirements to Datatel to record the receipt of a financial aid award if the awards are disbursed electronically from DOE directly to a student's bank account. Current in house check generation is recorded on the student's account in the Colleague system. There is additional programming required to set up the electronic file transfers of student database to Sallie Mae Corporation and to load each disbursement file.

Resources Needed: Additional Personnel

Position Classification: Classified Staff

Required for How Long: Ongoing

Position Description:

Accounting Technician II - to track and reconcile electronic financial aid disbursements, order funds from DOE and assure they are received at local bank account. Resolve student issues related to electronic award disbursement.

Estimated Cost: \$ 53000

Supporting Rationale:

Eliminates long lines of students who come in to pick up checks. Eliminates lost warrants that have to be replaced because of mail delivery problems, eliminates

postage costs for mailing thousands of financial aid checks each year, eliminates the labor associated with the manual process occurring now.

Should eliminate the need for previously requested staffing for the financial aid area. (Objective 2.1)

This position will eliminate the need for casual workers and this position will be able to assist with other reconciliations in the office.

Objective #2.2

Status: on hold

1-31-2011 same status comment as previously listed

Hire additional staff

This will be required if Objective 2.1 cannot be met or if the automated system requires additional staffing support.

Status: On hold until we can evaluate the new electronic disbursement process. Part of the implementation is explaining the new system to our students and teaching them to rely on themselves, on the Sallie Mae helpline and to use technology to access their records instead of requesting assistance from Accounting office staff. It is hoped this will reduce the need for part-time staffing hours in this area.

Resources Needed: Additional Personnel

Position Classification: Classified Staff

Required for How Long: Ongoing

Position Description:

Accounting Assistant III - process check runs, match checks to documents, disburse checks, assist students, update student accounts in Datatel, cancel checks, filing, assist with reconciliation of accounts.

Estimated Cost: \$ 47600

Supporting Rationale:

Workload has increased with the addition of Compton Center financial aid check runs. Multiple check runs are produced each week. Single person occupying financial aid position is not able to keep up with more critical accounting aspects of her position as time is spent on check processing and disbursement.

Currently assisted by casual workers who cannot be held responsible for all aspects of the position. Current employee is often not well enough to be at work a full week. Work load suffers and the health of the employee suffers as too much is placed upon her to accomplish with the additional responsibility of the Compton Funds and the additional ECC check disbursements per week.

Financial aid accounting always had two people assigned to the function.

Position was not filled when vacated several years ago.

Goal #3 Short term (1 year)

Status: in progress

1-31-2011

we need additional staff to complete this goal. Currently the Business Manager is reconciling the cash account until a new Accounting Officer can be hired.

All purchase and payroll accounts are automatic up loads and downloads of information from Datatel to LACOE's PeopleSoft system and vice versa. Some discrepancies are found through the reconciliation of the cash account.

Goal: To reconcile all Datatel accounts to PeopleSoft accounts as required by audit, and to reconcile and assess balance sheet accounts to comply with audit recommendations. (SI-2b)

Use of audit assessment to improve financial statement accuracy.

Strategic Initiative: 1(a)

Standard IIID

This is both a short term goal - hire staff to do this work and a long term goal - produce consistent results of reconciliations.

Goal: Hire Accounting Technician to handle any workload produced by the impending Federal responsibility of Direct Loans to students.

Colleges will now be required to take on the paperwork responsibilities of the Direct Loan program that was previously handled by banks and the Federal government. This will increase the workload in the financial aid office and the accounting department to account for and reconcile and report on this new loan program.

Strategic Initiative 1-a
Standard IIB and IIID

Evaluation of Goal

All discrepancies between the two financial systems are identified, researched and adjusted within three weeks of the PeopleSoft account transaction upload to Datatel.

All Accounts Receivable are assessed monthly for validity and measures taken to rebill agencies who owe the District funds. All accrued Accounts Payable items are reviewed monthly for validity and bills are paid or the payable accrual is deemed invalid and adjusted off the financial statements.

All Direct Loans responsibilities are being met timely.

Objective #3.1

Status: in progress

1-31-2011

request for staff submitted through plan builder process for three years now, but request has not

made it to the top priority level yet.

Hire Accounting Technician II to review and reconcile all accounts for all funds
This person will also be responsible for accounts receivable and accounts payable review and assessment. Also responsible for bank statement reconciliation.

Responsible for technical review and clearance of audit recommendations.
Assess workload for Direct Lending program, once implemented and hire additional staff as necessary to perform work required.

Resources Needed: Additional Personnel

Position Classification: Classified Staff

Required for How Long: Ongoing

Position Description:

Senior Accounting Technician

Estimated Cost: \$ 60000

Supporting Rationale:

Reconciliation work is not being accomplished with current staffing. Non-accomplishment results in audit citation. Trying to input to and reconcile two systems takes additional manpower.

Direct Lending Program is being imposed on the Colleges and Universities from the Federal government.

Resources Needed: Additional Space or Changes to Facilities

Requested Amount: \$ 0

Description:

This position(s) may require additional work spaces in the new accounting offices.

Reason:

House additional staff person(s)

Location: Bookstore Building-second floor-Fiscal Services

Services Required: None

Goal #4

Short term (1 year)

Status: in progress

1-31-2011

the college has moved to a fee payment deadline which has reduced the amount of outstanding fees. Students who are allowed to pass through the system without paying their fees (drop threshold of \$130) are sent billing letters and sent to COTOP file for collection. This is an after the fact process. We would like the opportunity to be more proactive in fee collection with a system that is more student friendly.

Review other colleges' methods of fee collection, review new technology for student fee collection in effort to find a more efficient process through the use of technology for student fee payment and processing other student transactions at the cashier windows. This will also include invoicing students and follow-up collection methods. Could involve the use of an outside collection vendor, and ITS technology to implement the COTOP program.

Strategic Initiative 1 (a)
Standard IIB and IIID

Evaluation of Goal

All student fees are paid within the first month of the semester. -

This is an in progress goal, that can be evaluated by the end of March 2010 and each semester thereafter. The District has implemented a fee payment deadline for student fees.

All fees are required before the start of the semester; therefore all fees should be paid within the first month of the semester unless students were given a fee payment exemption because other agencies or financial aid would cover the student fees.

All Student refunds will be processed within the first month of the semester.

This is an on-going goal.

Delinquent fees will be reported to the State COTOP program. - this process was implemented in the Fall of 2009 with the reporting of delinquent fees covering the Fall 1999 through Summer 2009 semesters. As of 2-1-2010, approximately \$200,000 had been recovered by the COTOP process, of which the District will keep \$150,000 or 75%.

Objective #4.1

Status: in progress

1-31-2011

no progress yet on this objective (time and funds availability)

Research fee collection rules and processes at other Datatel colleges.

Existing Resources

Existing cashiering staff and accounting officer can review methods used at other colleges. Cashiers can attend the annual bursars' conference to learn the latest technology and fee collection methods used to expedite student payments.

Resources Needed: Additional Budget

Object Code: 5200 TRAVEL AND CONFERENCE EXPENSES

Required for How Long: 1 time

Requested Amount: \$ 4000

Description:

Establish travel budget for annual bursars' conference. Staff would attend every other year when conference is in western United States to learn the latest technology and new methods to improve fee collection as well as network with other cashiers to learn new processes. Also allow for attendance at the Datatel Users Group quarterly meetings.

Supporting Rationale

\$250,000 to \$700,000 a year is written off in uncollected student fees.

Students need faster service/method to pay fees at cashiers' window.

Cashiers need to know best ways to improve collections and to encourage students to pay fees before the start of the semester.

This will improve cash flow to the district and alleviate the amount of bad debt.

Current statistics indicate many students are receiving their education for free.

Objective #4.2

Status: complete

1-31-2011

ECC is starting its second year utilizing the COTOP process to collect delinquent student fees. Over \$700,000 in fees were resolved in the 2010 calendar year.

Implement the programming needed to use the State COTOP system.

Status: COTOP contract was entered into October 1, 2009. Ten years of delinquent debt letters were mailed to 40,000 students. Thousands of phone calls and emails had to be manually handled by accounting cashiering staff and director. Many fees were reversed as the fees were in error. File of debts was sent to Chancellor's Office to be turned over to the Franchise Tax Board in November 2009. An updated file will be sent to COTOP offices in January 2010. Students are still emailing and calling about the COTOP letters as late as 12/22/2009.

Impact of Objective on Other Programs, Units, and/or Areas

Impact on the Information Technology Services (ITS) Program: Application Support

Staff will need to extract delinquent student fee data from Colleague and submit to State of California for recovery. Staff will need to respond to student phone calls and emails to explain bills to students. Staff will need to be increased to collect the delinquent fees that are paid by students in person at Cashiers windows.

Staff will need to examine the COTOP system specifications. (this information was given to ITS several years ago, but nothing has happened, most likely due to understaffing or higher priority issues such as implementing Release 18 and bringing Compton Center on board)

Impact on the Enrollment Services Program: Financial Aid & Scholarship

Financial aid area would have to submit any data on outstanding financial aid loans or overpayments of funds to ITS for inclusion in the COTOP fee collection report.

Existing Resources

Cashiering staff can assist with the identification of the types of fees that are to be reported to COTOP. Cashiering staff will update student records to show collection effort and post any payments received. Existing staff from financial aid and accounting will identify other debts owed by students that are to be reported to the State.

Resources from Other Sources

Resources from Fund 15

Required for How Long: 1 time

Requested: \$ 1

Received: \$ 1

Resources from Fund 11

Required for How Long: 1 time

Requested: \$ 1

Received: \$ 1

Goal #5 Short term (1 year)

Status: in progress

1-31-2011

no progress yet -see individual objectives

To process required payroll transactions for faculty members timely.
Transactions include adjustments to STRS membership contributions, and payroll system adjustments

Implement an online sick leave balance report site for faculty to view their own balances with a link to payroll to inquire on balance.

To record faculty sick leave balances more timely.

Strategic Initiative 1-a
Standard IIID

Evaluation of Goal

STRS corrections:

No complaints or second requests from STRS and part-time faculty

Sick leave balances:

All corrections and sick leave reports processed timely.

STRS corrections researched within 1 week, corrected completely within the current month.

All Sick leave balances are up to date at the end of each semester.

OR

All Faulty leave days posted monthly. Reports are issued on line to faculty and deans. Electronic viewing and updating of balances.

Objective #5.1

Status: in progress

1-31-2011

no progress on this objective...position has not received top priority status in voting process for administrative services area.

Hire part-time or full time help to accomplish the goal.

Payroll technician (Accounting Assistant III)

Resources Needed: Additional Personnel

Position Classification: Classified Staff

Required for How Long: Ongoing

Position Description:

Part-time classified position or full time classified position

Payroll Technician

Estimated Cost: \$ 55000

Supporting Rationale:

Cal STRS is imposing deadlines for corrections. If deadlines are not met, they will impose financial penalties.

Objective #5.2

Status: in progress

1-31-2011

a casual worker was beginning to work on this, but took a permanent job as the Compton Center campus. Current payroll staff are out ill or out on industrial accident leave and unable to keep the job up. We are hopeful for an automated system from ITS services.

Hire casual staff to catch up balances

Work with ITS to develop an automated system that will produce the calculations when staff just input the number of days of absence.

Strategic Initiative 1-a

Standard IIID

Impact of Objective on Other Programs, Units, and/or Areas

Impact on the Unit: Information Technology Services (ITS)

Development of program will require ITS staff resources

Resources from Other Sources

Resources from Fund 11

Required for How Long: 1 time

Requested: \$ 1

Received: \$ 1

Resources Needed: Additional Personnel

Position Classification: Classified Staff (hourly)

Required for How Long: 1 time

Position Description:

Overtime for staff to catch up the sick leave balances for faculty or casual worker to be trained to do the same.

Estimated Cost: \$ 2500

Supporting Rationale:

Balances have to be brought current in order for system to be implemented.

Goal #6 Short term (1 year) Status: in progress

Improve Service to students on the following programs:

COTOP

1098T

Enrollment fee refunds

Enrollment Fee billings and follow-up

Fee Bill corrections

Financial Aid disbursement inquiries

Registration hold inquiries (fee inquiries)

Strategic Initiative 1-a Standard IIB and IIID

Evaluation of Goal

Student inquiries are handled the same day or day after they are received.

Current status: some students never receive a timely response to their inquiry due to lack of staffing.

Objective #6.1

Status: complete

1-31-2011

we received \$25,000 in additional casual worker funding.

Increase hourly worker budget

Resources Needed: Additional Personnel

Position Classification: Casual Worker

Required for How Long: Ongoing

Position Description:

Casual Workers - handle work required to send out letters, billings, respond to all phone calls and emails for COTOP, registration holds, fee bills, refunds, franchise tax offsets.

Estimated Cost: \$ 25000

Supporting Rationale:

Student responsiveness is needed. Students do not receive a timely response now. New programs require additional staffing. These inquiries can be handled by casual workers.