El Camino College
STUDENT SERVICES
2021-2022 Program Review
Financial Aid & Basic Needs

Program Overview

a) Describe the program. How does the program link to the College's mission statement, or statement of values, and local vision goals? Include program mission if appropriate.

The El Camino College Financial Aid Office is committed to the purpose and values of the college's mission to make a positive difference in people's lives and provide excellent comprehensive services that promote student success. The El Camino College Financial Aid Office administers various student financial aid resources, including federal and state grants, scholarships and work study programs. These programs are designed to provide eligible students with monetary resources to assist with the costs of a college education. On an annual basis, the department provides students with over $69 million dollars in financial aid assistance. By providing financial aid assistance to eligible students, the department makes college accessible and affordable for those who may otherwise not have the monetary resources to pursue post-secondary education.

The Financial Aid Office commits itself to promoting a student focused financial aid experience that maximizes the number of students who apply for and receive financial aid, ensures ethical and equitable awarding of financial aid, and meets the demands and needs of a changing campus community. These values are in line with the El Camino College strategic initiatives that promote student success and support, collaboration, community responsiveness, institutional effectiveness, and modernization. The department has focused much of its efforts over the past several years on the following objectives, based on the Chancellor's Student-Centered Funding Formula (SCFF) initiative and the global Covid-19 pandemic:

1. Provide timely, effective, and quality services to students and staff

2. Improve communication and awareness of the various financial aid programs available to the campus community

3. Implementation of efficient, streamlined procedures that reduce unnecessary barriers for students during the financial aid process

4. Ensure compliance with federal and state laws and regulations that govern the administration of financial aid; *provide immediate Covid-19 direct aid to students with HEERF funds. This is one-time allocation of $34 million that not included in the annual total of financial aid dollars above.*

5. Leverage technology to improve the student experience, including increased automation in the awarding of federal and state grant programs. *Covid-19 response forced the financial aid department to utilize technology to pivot to full online services to serve the financial aid population; the Covid-19 pandemic also increased student volume for the financial aid department to serve.*

Financial Aid Application Process

Most students apply to receive financial aid on-line by completing the Free Application for Federal Students Aid (FAFSA) or the California Dream Act Application. U.S. Citizens and eligible non-citizens complete a FAFSA application, whereas undocumented students (often referred to as Dreamers) complete the California Dream Act Application. Students who do not wish to complete the above-mentioned applications and choose to only be considered for the Board of Governor's Fee Waiver (BOGFW), have the option of completing a paper BOGFW application. U.S. Citizens and eligible non-citizens are considered for both federal and state aid programs, however undocumented students are only considered for state-based programs. FAFSA and Dream Act Applications become available on October 1st of the preceding year. For example, applications for the 2018-2019 award year became available October 1, 2017. Students are encouraged to complete their financial aid application before March 2nd in order to be considered for California state grant programs.

After a student completes a financial aid application, a student's eligibility for financial aid is determined based on the student's financial need. Need is determined by subtracting the student's Expected Family Contribution (EFC) from the student's estimated Cost of Attendance (COA). The EFC is calculated based on the information the student provides on their financial aid application and the COA is calculated using the total estimated costs of educational expenses, including room and board, books and supplies, transportation and other miscellaneous expenses. These amounts may be adjusted depending on the unit load a student is enrolled in. Once the financial aid office receives a student's application the financial need is calculated, it is determined if the student needs to turn in any additional documentation, and if all necessary information is received, financial aid awards are made. Approximately 30% of students are selected for a review process called verification which requires students to submit supporting forms and documentation before financial aid funds can be disbursed.

Financial Aid Programs

The California College Promise Grant (CCPG) is a state program that waives enrollment fees for qualified California residents for the entire school year. Students may receive a waiver for any number of units, with no minimum. Students who meet residency requirements and have a need of at least $1,104 are eligible to receive the CCPG.

Federal Pell Grants (Pell)

The Federal Pell Grant is a federally funded program for undergraduates who demonstrate financial need. The amount of the Pell Grant is based on the cost of attendance, the Expected Family Contribution, and the number of units the student is enrolled in. Eligible students receive payments three times each semester. For the 2021-2022 award year the maximum annual Pell Grant award is $6,495. For comparison purposes, the maximum annual Pell Grant award for the 2023-2024 will be $7,395.

Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)

FSEOG is a federally funded grant available to undergraduates who demonstrate exceptional financial need, meet the priority deadline, and are Pell Grant recipients. Students are required to be enrolled in six units. FSEOG allocation has not increased from year to year, therefore the maximum annual SEOG award remains at $600 each aid year.

Federal Work-Study (FWS)

Federal Work-Study is a federal work program for students that allows them to work on-campus or at participating off-campus or non-profit organizations. Students may work up to 20 hours per week and are paid minimum wage or above. Students are required to be enrolled in six units. Students who demonstrate financial need may qualify for federal work study.

Learning-Aligned Employment Program (LAEP)

The Learning-Aligned Employment Program offers eligible students the opportunity to earn money to help defray their education costs while gaining education-aligned, career-related employment. Students may work up to 20 hours per week and are paid minimum wage or above. Students are required to be enrolled in six units. Students who demonstrate financial need may qualify for LAEP.

California Grant B (Cal Grant B)
Cal Grant B is a state program provided to students from low-income families. This grant may be used at community colleges and universities, not to exceed four years. For the 2021-2022 award year the maximum annual Cal Grant B award is $1,648.

California Grant C (Cal Grant C)
Cal Grant C is a state program to help pay for training costs at occupational or career colleges. At California Community Colleges, this award is intended to be used for books, tools and equipment for vocational programs that are at least four months in length. Students may be eligible to receive this award for up to two years. For the 2021-2022 award year the maximum annual Cal Grant C award is $1,094.

b) What students does the program serve (include demographics such as: age, gender, race/ethnicity, financial aid eligibility, class load)

In general, the financial aid process is run by batch, being dependent on systems to help the department management the high volume of applications that are received on a daily basis. All financial aid applications are touched by the system and/or staff member at various points in processing. A financial aid applicant can generate multiple application transaction per aid year and to remain compliance, the financial aid department is required to review each transaction to determine eligibility or change in eligibility. Financial aid must process all applicants and is prevented from designating our processing and/or strategies based on demographic populations, with the exception of students deemed as low-income (i.e. highest financial need).

Based on data reported in the 2021 El Camino College Annual Fact Book, the student population and financial aid recipients that is served by the El Camino College and the financial aid office has been decreasing year over year.

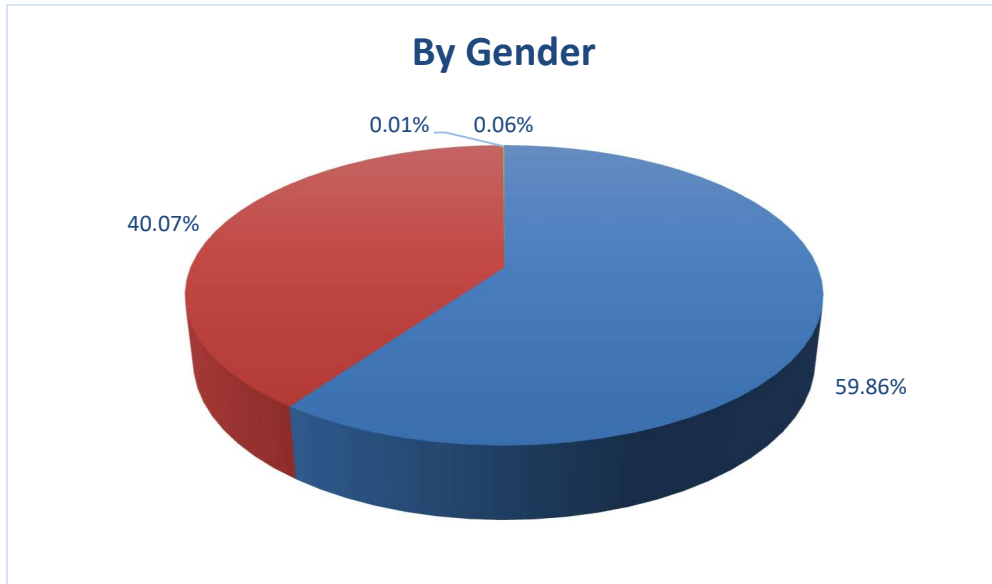|	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Enrollment	33,491	34,308	33,208	30,821	28,313
CCPG	16,962	20,171	16,097	14,362	12,849
Pell Grant	8,283	10,122	8,710	7,136	6,819

The largest financial aid program is the California College Promise Grant which was awarded to 45.3% of the student population in 2021-2022, followed by 37.4% of students receiving grants, 24.0% of students receiving Pell Grant, 1.4% of students receiving scholarships, 0.7% receiving work study, and 0.8% receiving loans. These percentages translate to 14,172 student financial aid awards totaling $69,425,751 including: 12,849 CCPG totaling $10,009,957, 11,155 grants totaling $56,956,215, 402 scholarships totaling $539,603, 204 work study participants totaling $564,938 and 228 student loans totaling $1,363,619.
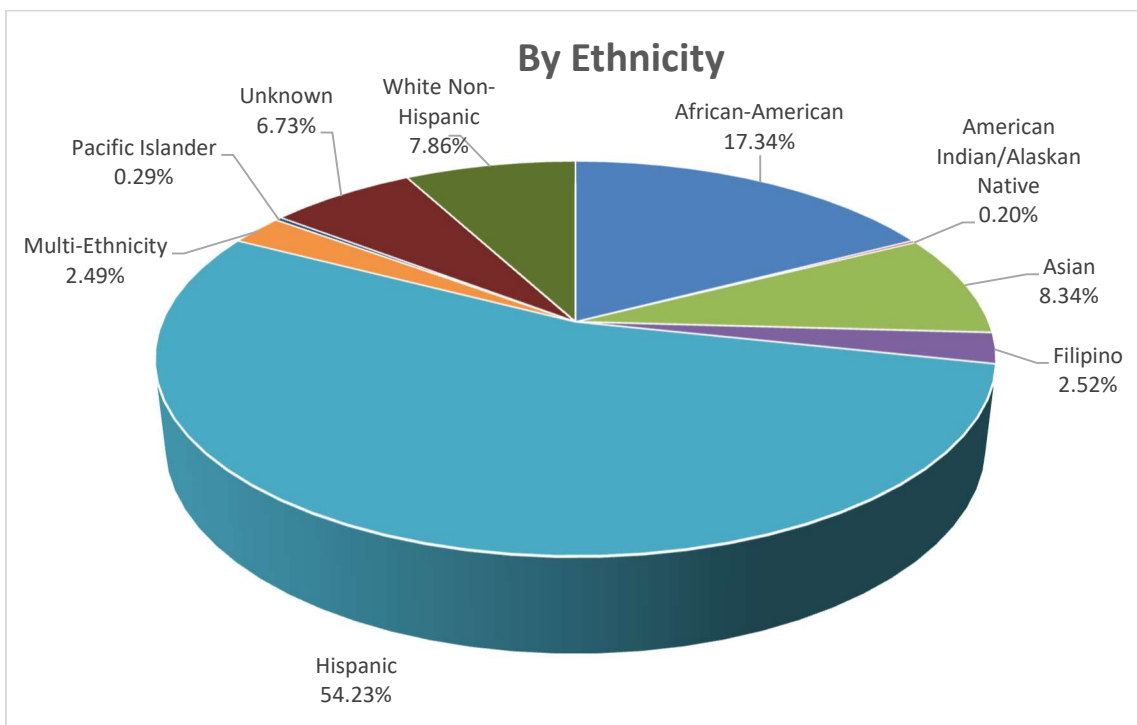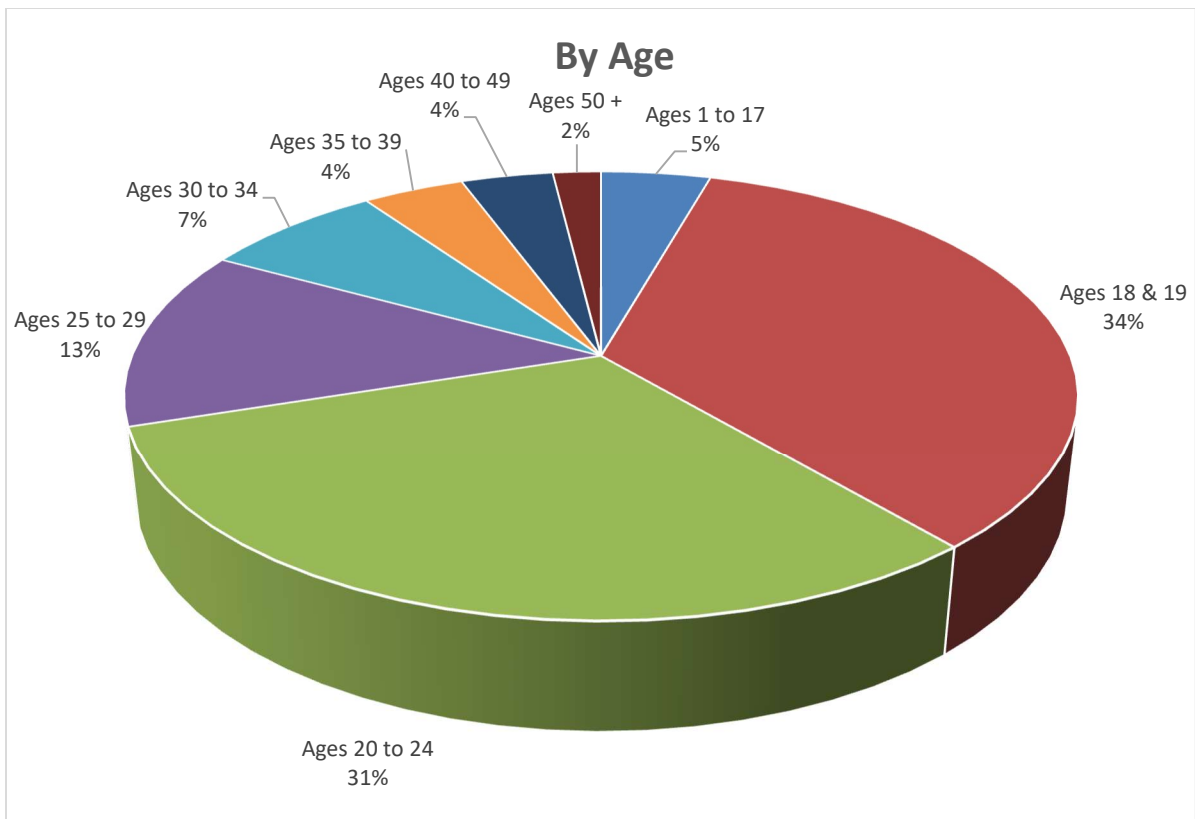
Special Populations
According to the Chancellor's Data Mart, in 2021-2022, the financial aid office disbursed $29,041,412 financial aid dollars to students in special populations at El Camino College. The programs include the Career Advancement Academy (CAA), the CalWORKs program, the CARE program, Disabled Students Programs & Services (DSPS), EOPS (Extended Opportunity Programs and Services), Foster Youth, Mathematics, Engineering and Science Achievement (MESA), military (Active Duty, Active Reserve, National Guard), Puente, Special Admit, Umoja, and Veterans.

Gender, Age, Ethnicity
The demographics of students receiving financial aid are consistent with the demographics of the total El Camino student population. Females continue to receive financial aid at a higher rate (59.8%) than male (40.0%) students. In fall 2021, 54.6% of the total student population was female and 44.9% of the population was male. The demographics of students receiving financial aid by age are almost identical to the student population. Students ages 24 and under make up 69.7% of the total population and make up 65.5% of the population that receives financial aid. Hispanics are the largest represented ethnicity in the total student population at 50%, with Hispanics accounting for 54.2% of the population of students receiving financial aid.

By Gender

0.01%   0.06%

40.07%

59.86%

By Age

- Ages 1 to 17 — 5%
- Ages 18 & 19 — 34%
- Ages 20 to 24 — 31%
- Ages 25 to 29 — 13%
- Ages 30 to 34 — 7%
- Ages 35 to 39 — 4%
- Ages 40 to 49 — 4%
- Ages 50 + — 2%

By Ethnicity

- African-American — 17.34%
- American Indian/Alaskan Native — 0.20%
- Asian — 8.34%
- Filipino — 2.52%
- Hispanic — 54.23%
- Multi-Ethnicity — 2.49%
- Pacific Islander — 0.29%
- Unknown — 6.73%
- White Non-Hispanic — 7.86%

c) What groups of students has the program served particularly well during the last four years?

During the past four years during the Covid-19 pandemic, the financial aid department met with challenge of assisting all students adjust to remote learning with the mandated emergency funding pushed through the Department of Education and the Chancellor's Office. The pressure on the financial aid office to pivot its staff and services to full remote services was immense, not only by the federal government but was also expected from the district. The staff worked together to not only take care of themselves, but ensured that each student received the needed aid, from direct emergency grant to technology funding to continue their education.

The financial aid program is designed to help the most vulnerable, lowest income families pay for college. In this way, this is usually the population that the department assists the most. However, rules and regulations allow the aid office to determine strategies that is best for its student populations. Whenever possible, additional consideration/s are applied to ensure all aid applicants are included, such as the lower middle-class population who are usually unable qualify for the maximum federal Pell Grant, therefore could benefit from receiving an additional FSEOG grant of $600.

Another good example of how the financial aid department reexamined it's awarding strategy is with its usage of HEERF funding student portion allocation. As the rules changed with subsequent funding, the definition of a student became less restrictive. Due to the change in the student definition and the Covid-19 global impact, the department proposed to award CARES grant to undocumented students and F1 students. This provided much funding assistance to undocumented students and F1 students who otherwise would have reduced their unit load and/or stopped attendance (based on student responses).

d) What are notable achievements of the program during the last four years?
   -Online forms (Formstack), online verification: Campus Logic
   -Decreased processing file review, decreased wait time for funds in hand to students
   -FA Helpdesk
   -FA Lab: implemented new customer service for FA applicants
   -Covid-19 response; pivot to all online services and remote work from home for all staff members
   -FAAST Workshops as part of new student onboarding for all ECC students
   -HEERF funds spending
   -SCFF pivot: Outreach, Hiring (Financial Aid Supervisor, Basic Needs Coordinator, FA Advisor for FY and Homeless Youth)
   -Implemented SAP and Cash for College Workshops
   -Designed, planned and moved into new SS building
   -Completed audits (A-133, HEERF, SCFF)
   -Implemented Direct Loan program due to SCFF
   -Participated and played a key role in establishing Basic Needs program
   -Basic Needs obtained Basic Needs Post-Secondary Grant from Department of Education; 1 of 10 colleges nationwide
   -CalFresh Outreach initiative with Chico State

e) What major challenges did the program confront in the last four years? What groups of students need to be a priority during the next four years?

   -Covid-19 shut down and pivot; mental health of students and staff
   -Post pandemic pivot: mental health of students and staff, grieving of what was "normal life"

-Student groups who we lost within the Covid-19 period
-Students who are unable to adapt to online learning
-Students who are unable to adapt to on campus learning
-Non-traditional age students: assisting them, understanding their needs, college navigation, technology, expectation from staff assistance,
-Basic Needs: space, staffing, demand (from students and staff/community),
-New FA changes that are constant: middle income/family with more than one in college/small business owners, revamp of financial aid applications and programs
-FA Lab: technology learning curve, student conduct, maintaining student privacy,
-Understanding what Financial Aid services provide
-FINANCIAL AID FRAUD
-Financial aid cannot prioritize certain groups of students for funding purposes, except for need-based however we can look at our SAP appeal policy to assist certain groups of students based on data, such as first generation, Black/African American male students, etc.

f) How does the program interact with other on-campus programs or with off-campus entities?

-Collaboration: Warrior Welcome Center, Outreach, SRC/High Tech Center, Athletics, Black Student Success Center, ISSP – Liaison, FYE, South Bay Promise
-Cash for College Event: A&R, Outreach, WWC
-Outreach: C4C, FYE, South Bay Promise, Dual Enrollment, WWC
-Call Center: Financial Aid outreach/follow-up
-Awarding: EOPS/Care CalWORKs, Scholarships/Foundation, STEM, Student Equity/FIRST, Fiscal
-Grants/Report: Grant Writing and IRP
-Basic Needs: Los Angeles Regional Food Bank (LARFB), Food Forward, Coordinated Entry System – Sanctuary of Hope, Harbor Interfaith, St. Margarets Center, Hariett Buhai Center for Family Law, Higher Education Homeless Work Group (LAHSA), Shelter Partnership, Athletics, Library – Meta Major Center, Black Student Success Center, Warrior Welcome Center, Chico State University – Center for Healthy Families, Los Angeles Country Department of Public Social Services, Foundation, Rotary Clubs, Kiwanas, U.S. Postal Service, America Honda, Associated Student Organization.

g) Include an Organizational Chart

Financial Aid & Basic Needs Organizational Chart
Updated: May 2023
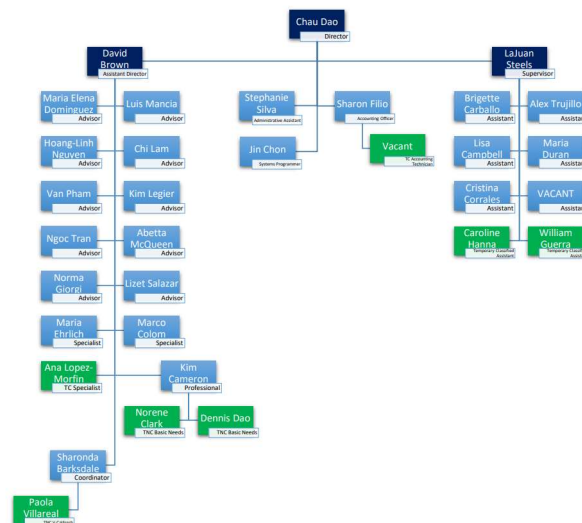
Program Assessment

1. Program Improvement Assessment

a) Review the last program review and explain in what way the program has improved its services to students in the last four years. Where applicable, include qualitative and quantitative data and cite sources of the data. Areas to consider for writing about program improvement may include Student Services Metrics Tool, data that aligns with ECC Institutional Goals, customer service survey findings, and business practices and processes.

SAO #1:
Call and email messaging and FA Lab workshops to assist students with the completion of verification helped increase the number of completed verified files. However, these methods do not and cannot measure the increase in the number of Pell Grant disbursement as there is no guarantee that students who complete verification will be deemed eligible for a Pell Grant. In order to increase the number of Pell Grant eligible students, FA department has instituted Cash for College events to increase the number of financial aid applications. By increasing the number of financial aid applications, this increases the eligibility of Pell Grant recipients. The FA department has also changed our service model to assist students with financial aid applications in the FA Lab. With the Covid-19 pandemic, the FA department has pivoted to providing extended evening hours to assist students with financial aid business.

SAO #2: The FAAST workshops were expanded to all new incoming students as part of college orientation based on the results of the SAO. Students indicated that their knowledge of academic progress increased, meeting the SAO objective. Academic progress information is now embedded into EOPS and FYE orientations, and our general financial aid workshops. Cross-training with the Counseling department on academic progress is now a standard to assist counselors with student appointments.

SAO #3
CampusLogic product was purchased in 2018 to help with the automation of file review as well as the electronic collection of documents. The financial aid department also improved its packaging strategy by automating its processes through auto-packager. The financial aid office also reviewed the timing of file review and moved this process up in order to complete as many files as possible to prepare for the first fall disbursement. Currently, the financial aid department is streamlining its automation to increase efficiency by scheduling processes during off hours; this reduces human intervention and human error.

b) Using the data sources selected above, review and list equity gaps within the program's data. Focus on examining student data by race/ethnicity to dismantle racism on campus.

Verification/file review: streamline verification guidelines, be consistent with treatment of similar file, by date order, standing meetings and discussions to have open examine our own unconscious biases as individuals and as a team.

Academic Progress: explore our Satisfactory Academic Progress policy to determine if there are unintended consequences that impact groups of students based on ethnicity, gender, etc.

2. Service Area Outcomes Assessment
Based on the program's work during the past four years, review the program's SAOs and respond the following questions:

a) To what extent were they achieved? (Fully, partially, not achieved)

SAO #1: Fully, however the SAO needed to discount the increase in the Pell Grant eligibility as Pell Grant eligibility is not a guarantee with verification completion.
SAO #2: Fully, therefore we extended academic progress information into special program orientation and general financial workshops.
SAO #3: Partially because this will be a continuous improvement as financial aid work is ever changing.

b) What evidence supports that SAOs were partially or fully achieved?

Our data and survey results show that SAOs were partially and fully achieved. Data from year to year show increase in financial aid verification completion and first fall disbursements. Survey results showed students learned the objectives of SAO #2 of academic progress information.

c) To what extent were SAOs designed to focus on students in the program with the greatest needs?

-Educating students on how to maintain academic progress to therefore keep their financial aid year over year.
-Increasing the number of students receiving funds on the first week of school.
-Ensuring that all FA staff is mindful of internal priority deadline/first disbursement date assists with the increase of files ready for disbursement.

d) To what extent SAOs were designed to respond to students with diverse learning needs, and to prepare them to actively engage in a diverse society?

Assisting students with the how-to of taking care of their financial aid business can alleviate their time and energy, allowing them to engage in the campus community.

Program Vision and Future Planning

1. Program Vision
a) Describe the vision of the program for the next four years considering the assessment reported in the previous section. A vision statement describes the desired future state of the program.

The Financial Aid Department is accountable to ensure compliance with Title IV participation. We will ensure implementation of new initiatives as well as current processes are in accordance with regulations. Financial aid will also be an engaged partner with the El Camino community in serving its mission.

2. Future Planning
Based on the assessment reported in the previous section and considering the Guided

Pathways framework:

- Advance towards a more equitable program to close equity gaps among groups of students
- Clarify students' paths to completion, further education and employment
- Help students explore options and build foundation skills
- Help students stay on the path

a) Develop program goals to be completed during the next four years.

Financial Aid:
-Implementation of FAFSA simplification in 2024-2025 and beyond
-Cal Grant Program Reform 2025-2026
-Continue to streamline FA processes including automation of loan and auto-packaging processes
-Implementation of the Bachelor program, Respiratory Care
-Implementation of CVC-OEI
-Enhancement of Cybersecurity, Teams Cloud, VPN and Multi-factor authentication
-Cal Grant Program Reform
-CA Dream Act automation via Ellucian baseline with Experience

Basic Needs:
-Permanent space
-Permanent staffing
-Adequate furniture
-Federal Grant Implementation
-Overall Administration Support
-Satellite Space -keep Stadium Room, Store front for Warrior Pantry

b) Develop/adjust the program's Service Area Outcomes (SAOs).

SAO#1: Increase student's knowledge of how to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) standards as defined by the Financial Aid Office by means of Financial Aid Workshops, in addition to streamlining our academic progress appeal process to be student centered minded.

SAO#2: Increase outreach and services provided by Basic Needs staff through ongoing orientation and case management services.

c) What projects will the program complete to achieve the desired goals and SAOs? Please specify at least two for each goal and SAO.

SAO#1:
-pre-test and post-test regarding knowledge of academic progress
-review academic progress appeal process and identify points where student abandon the process
-redesign academic progress appeal process and policy to be student centered minded

SAO#2:
-increase retention and student success
-collect data on student participation in ongoing student orientation and case management services
-monitor by cohort term/year to measure their retention and success through data analysis

d) When the next program review is due, how will the program determine if the goals and SAOs have been met? Please specify at least one quantitative target or qualitative accomplishment for each goal and SAO.

For SAO #1, compare results of pre and post-tests to determine any knowledge has been gained. Compare prior years (2020, 2021, 2022) academic appeal abandonment rate to abandonment rate after redesign of process and policy.

Collective data analysis will need to be done with the three years of cohort data collection to determine the success of SAO #2.

3. Program Resources

In the following areas, what are the resources needed by the program to meet the goals and SAOs for the next four years?

- List resources in order of priority. You might want to prioritize them within each category and/or develop an overall prioritized list of resources.
- Explain how these resources contribute to achieving the program's goals and SAOs.
- Explain how these resources contribute to the ECC Institutional Goals.

a) Staffing

Basic Needs: 6 Success Coaches, 2 Student Services Advisors, Administrative Assistant, TNC for CalFresh Outreach
Financial Aid: Accounting Technician, Systems Technician,

b) Facilities and Equipment

Basic Needs: permanent space/home and satellite space (Stadium Room);
work spaces for privacy/FERPA/HIPPA
Financial Aid: redesign FA Lab to add work spaces for privacy/FERPA;
add work spaces to main financial aid area

c) Technology/Software

Maintain upgrade of technology every 3 years for financial aid staff to adhere to Department of Education guidelines: laptops, desktops, software, etc.

d) Contracts/Services

Ferrilli contract to assist with FAFSA Simplification in 2024-2025
Campus Logic renewal in 2025-2026
Upgrade Ellucian Experience from basic
DocuWare renewal to maintain Department of Education compliance
Case Management software for Basic Needs, such as Maxient