1. Implement measures to more widely disseminate information to the college community about the Financial Aid operation's mission and goals, including specific references to its programs and services.

2. The college must replace the current computerized system with an integrated Financial Aid software or web-based system with improved capabilities.

3. The Computing Center must improve its responsiveness to the needs of the Financial Aid operation, hiring additional staff if necessary. With the increasing complexity of the financial aid delivery system, a well-trained programmer must be dedicated to this area and work more closely with the Central Financial Aid operation.

4. The Central Financial Aid operation must work towards an earlier start-date for the uploading of student data to ensure the campus staff has adequate time to review student files in preparation for the enrollment cycle. This would also allow the operation to work out any unanticipated “glitches” which would otherwise delay a timely response to students.

5. The Central Financial Aid Office must produce a comprehensive Policies and Procedures manual to ensure greater consistency among campus offices. In addition, the college should re-consider producing an annual college catalog which provides more up-to-date information.

6. Develop an orientation/training program for all new staff members with necessary support materials.

7. Ensure that the necessary funds are available for support and professional staff members to partake of important training and development opportunities critical to the success of the operation.

8. In order to improve awareness, provide the Financial Aid staff with more information pertaining to personal and institutional liability as well as legal obligations associated with carrying out duties unique to the operation.

9. Collaborate with campus Directors of Financial Aid to establish ties with relevant agencies, i.e., VESID, Dept. of Labor, Veteran’s Affairs, etc., in an effort to enhance outreach activities and develop working relationships beneficial to the operation.
10. Collaborate with campus Directors of Financial Aid to develop a plan which assesses the needs of specific target groups, i.e., adult learners, EOP students, students with disabilities, minorities, single parents, etc. Based upon assessment, establish methods to better serve such populations.

11. Develop and adopt a formal statement of ethical standards to guide the operation.

12. Collaborate with campus Directors of Financial Aid and Institutional Research to develop assessment and evaluation methods, to be used on a regular basis, for the purpose of improving services.
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FINANCIAL AID PROGRAM REVIEW
Ammerman Campus
2000 – 2001

I. Introduction/Overview

A program review of the Ammerman Campus Financial Aid Office was undertaken during the 2000 – 2001 academic year. In accordance with the prescribed Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) Guidelines for Financial Aid programs, the Program Review Committee worked together to assess the practices of the Financial Aid operation and make recommendations which would ensure higher standards.

The former Director of Financial Aid, Michael Carter, completed the CAS Self-Assessment Guide on May 1, 2000 (see Appendix 3). Prior to this, Mr. Carter had formally resigned from his position as Director to assume responsibilities in the Counseling Center. Although Katie Briscoe-Baum was appointed as Director of Financial Aid in July 2000, the Program Review Committee was not entirely formed until December 2000. The Associate Dean of Students, Naomi Phelps, appointed the following members to serve on the committee: Katie Briscoe-Baum (Chairperson), Maureen Bybee, Professor of Health and Recreation Programs; Christine Crowe, Assistant Director of Admissions; Donna Della Rocca, Counselor; Gerard Fleming, Counselor; and Veronica Miller, Professional Assistant. A student representative, Nina Steffek, was appointed to the committee in January 2001.

Dean Phelps convened the committee’s first meeting in December 2000 to provide an overview of the timeline and procedures, clarify the committee’s charges, and answer questions. At the initial meeting, individual folders containing the following documents were distributed to committee members: CAS Self-Assessment Guide and completed Assessment, The Role of Student Financial Aid Programs/CAS Standards Contextual Statement, Student Affairs Program Review Revised Guidelines, 1999 – 2000 Annual Report, Financial Aid Office Goals & Objectives for 2000 – 2001, and Ammerman Campus Enrollment Management Recruitment and Retention Plan. The chairperson suggested that the committee form into sub-committees which would, in turn, review two or more sections in preparation of the Program Review report. It was agreed that each sub-committee would have an initial meeting with the Chairperson for clarification of the standards and guidelines relevant to their areas and to review the current practices of the Financial Aid operation. The sections were divided amongst the committee members as follows:

K. Briscoe-Baum and Veronica Miller  Mission, Program, Funding, Facilities
D. Della Rocca and M. Bybee  Human Resources
D. Della Rocca and G. Fleming  Leadership and Management Organization and Administration
G. Gleme and M. Bybee  Legal Responsibilities
(Overview, cont.'d)

G. Fleming and M. Bybee
Equal Opportunity, Access, and Affirmative Action

C. Crowe and N. Steffek
Campus and Community Relations
Ethics
Evaluation

In November 2000, student surveys were mailed to a randomly selected group of 1,500 enrolled students (all campuses) who had applied for financial aid during the 1999-2000 academic year (see Appendix 4). Surveys were also distributed to students who visited the Ammerman campus Financial Aid Office between November 2000 and February 2001. On March 12, 2001, the results of the Student Survey were distributed to the Financial Aid Directors for review. The Ammerman campus respondents totaled 94.

In April 2001, surveys were mailed to 489 faculty/administrators (college-wide). On May 8, 2001, the results of the Faculty Survey were distributed to the Financial Aid Directors and included the responses of 73 Ammerman campus faculty/administrators.

Over the course of the spring 2001 semester, February through May, the sub-committees continued to meet and prepare their respective reports based upon their findings. These reports were submitted to the Chairperson prior to the close of the semester and the Chairperson worked on the initial draft of the Program Review throughout the summer 2001, making revisions as necessary. The final report was distributed to David Bergen, Dean of Students, Naomi Phelps, Associate Dean of Students, and John Pryputniewicz, Executive Dean, in September 2001.
FINANCIAL AID PROGRAM REVIEW
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Part 1 ~ Mission

The Financial Aid operation works effectively towards fulfilling its mission and goals and meets most of the assessment criteria set forth in the CAS Standards and Guidelines. The operation has adopted a mission statement and objectives, prepared by the Central Financial Aid Operation (Appendix 6) which is consistent with the stated mission of the institution. The mission statement addresses the issues of access and opportunity, diversity, and outreach as they apply to a wide array of financial and personal situations amongst the students attending SCCC. The mission statement and objectives serve as a blueprint in guiding the department and ensure that awarding practices, services and resources are appropriate and available to all students with financial need. In addition, the campus operation prepares an annual statement of Goals & Objectives to further guide it towards fulfilling its mission.

The Financial Aid Directors and other key staff members meet monthly to discuss the many issues which relate to the delivery of services and also to find ways in which to minimize or eliminate obstacles which may impede the campuses in carrying out their responsibilities. The staff is highly trained in the use of professional judgement, as permitted by federal regulations, to assist individual students with unique circumstances and needs, i.e., loss of income, estrangement from parents, academically at-risk, emergency financial needs, etc. Procedures are reviewed on a regular basis and revised as necessary.

The Financial Aid Office provides comprehensive financial counseling and advisement services to all students seeking assistance. The office also produces promotional materials to inform students on all aspects of the financial aid process, i.e., application procedures, assistance programs, deadlines, financial and academic criteria, etc. The Financial Aid Office recognizes the effectiveness of outreach activities in fulfilling its mission and goals and has sought to increase awareness of its programs and services through high school presentations, Financial Aid Awareness Week, workshops, seminars, and targeted mailings. Students receive individual assistance with electronic filing in the Financial Aid Computer Lab and may also speak with a counselor or advisor without an appointment.

Recommendations:

Campus:

1. Review Mission Statement and Goals & Objective with all staff members annually (and as necessary) to ensure implementation of all goals is effectively achieved with full participation.
College-wide:

1. Implement measures to more widely disseminate information to the college community about the Financial Aid operation's mission and goals, including specific references to its programs and services.
FINANCIAL AID PROGRAM REVIEW
Ammerman Campus

Part 2 – Program

The Financial Aid Office, based upon its stated mission and goals, works purposefully and intentionally to provide students with the funds they require in order to achieve their educational goals. Furthermore, the Director and professional staff are aware of the role the operation plays in co-curricular learning and collaborate to create opportunities to enhance students’ learning and development through its services and programs.

These learning opportunities may occur for students through a variety of ways: the requirement that students initiate the financial aid application process and conduct the necessary follow-up, the interaction involved in counseling sessions and workshops, the instruction and hands-on experience acquired through the utilization of the Financial Aid Computer Lab, and the communication of needs and choices inherent in seeking such services.

As stated in the Mission Statement, the Financial Aid program adheres to practices which address the demographic profiles and special needs of the various cohorts served. These cohorts often include students from low- and middle-households, students who are single parents or dependents of single parents, students and families who’ve experienced a sudden change to their financial situations, students estranged from their parents, and students with learning or other disabilities. The Financial Aid program is designed to evaluate students with special needs, allowing the maximum flexibility allowable within the guidelines of the regulations. Following the principles of professional judgement, for example, the financial aid professional may adjust a family’s or student’s income to better reflect its overall financial strength, or disregard the income of a student’s parents (dependency override) when the student documents an unusual family situation. The professional may also increase a student’s grant funding or approve an emergency loan when unanticipated circumstances affect the student’s ability to remain in school. Such are examples of the awareness and responsiveness of the Financial Aid staff in assisting students in achieving their educational goals.

The financial aid staff make necessary referrals to other departments when appropriate, i.e., Special Services, Counseling, EOP, Student Support Services, etc. The staff is mindful of the collaborative effort required to facilitate students through enrollment and other processes.

From an administrative standpoint, the Financial Aid operation is in full compliance with federal and state laws, as well as institutional policies. The professional staff is regularly informed of programmatic and regulatory changes through meetings and communications from the Central Financial Aid operation, publications, on-line resources, memos, emails, etc.
At present, two critical areas of concern with the program involve 1) the delay in reviewing application data and notifying students regarding their eligibility for assistance and 2) delivering funds in a timely manner. Three factors have contributed to these deficiencies:

- An inefficient, non-automated computerized system which requires that individual student files are reviewed manually. This outdated technology is labor-intensive to utilize and completely unsuited to an institution which reviews more than 6,000 aid applicants annually. Furthermore, the current system is incapable of generating automated “missing information” letters to students with incomplete files, does not record important information such as specific dates documents are received by the Financial Aid Office, and does not permit staff members to record important narrative information for others who may access the record.

- A critical staff shortage (Sr. Clerk-Typist transferred out of department in February; College Aide on indefinite medical leave since May; Professional Assistant 3 ceased working for department on June 22). The remaining staff includes two relatively new employees (Clerk-Typist and Professional Assistant 3 hired, both hired spring 2000) and the staff’s only Counselor did not work in the area during the summer.

- In recent months, the college’s Computing Center has not been able to meet the needs of the college’s Financial Aid operations. The Central Financial Aid staff relies heavily upon the programmers of the Computing Center staff to implement the programs which facilitate the delivery of funds, i.e., uploading student data, testing the award programs, interfacing the financial aid module with other modules, ensuring that funds are paid to eligible students in a timely manner and withheld from ineligible students. With increasing frequency, these programs are not properly run and result in delayed and occasionally erroneous payments. This calls into question issues of liability, accuracy and integrity.

**Recommendations:**

**College-wide:**

1. The college must replace the current computerized system with an integrated Financial Aid software or web-based system with improved capabilities.

2. The Computing Center must improve its responsiveness to the needs of the Financial Aid operation, hiring additional staff if necessary. With the increasing complexity of the financial aid delivery system, a well-trained programmer must be dedicated to this area and work more closely with the Central Financial Aid operation.

3. The Central Financial Aid operation must work towards an earlier start-date for the uploading of student data to ensure the campus staff has adequate time to review student files in preparation for the enrollment cycle. This would also allow the
operation to work out any unanticipated "glitches" which would otherwise delay a timely response to students.
FINANCIAL AID PROGRAM REVIEW
Ammerman Campus

Part 3 - Leadership

A financial aid program leader, Katie Briscoe-Baum, was appointed in July 2000. The Director reports to the Associate Dean of Students, Naomi Phelps, with whom she confers on matters relating to budget, staffing, facilities, daily operations, enrollment management issues, and goals and objectives. The Director also maintains a reporting line with the Central Director for Financial Aid, Carl Bello, and receives direction on financial aid programs, policies, procedures, delivery of funds, technology, and related matters. In essence, the Director must regularly report to two separate areas which adds a degree of complexity to her responsibilities.

The appointed Director of Financial Aid for the Ammerman Campus was an in-house transfer. The Appointed Director was the Acting Director of Financial Aid for the west campus with previous experience at both the east and west campuses (four years) as a Professional Assistant. Working at both private and state post-secondary institutions for nine years prior to coming to SCC, she acquired professional experience as a Sr. Financial Aid Advisor, Loan Coordinator, and Student Employment Coordinator. The Director, other than her position as Acting Director, has no prior director/administrative experience, which was indicated as a preferred requirement. However, she brings a willingness to accept the challenge of the position, to learn and grow within the position, and to maximize her knowledge and experience.

The College has established its accountability expectations for the Director through the job description established for the position, the Financial Aid Mission Statement, and the annual Goals and Objectives statement for the program. The College assesses the Director's performance through an annual review by the Associate Dean of Students.

The Director of Financial Aid exercises authority over the resources for which she is responsible but has limited control of funding levels and availability. The annual budget is approved for the program at the discretion of the campus and college administration, with input from the director, and is subject to cutbacks.

The program director articulates a vision for the organization. She has established appropriate goals and objectives which reflect the mission of the office, the Enrollment Management division, and the college.

The program director prescribes and practices ethical behavior, adhering to the Statement of Principles for professionals as outlined by the NYSFAAA organization, in addition to other relevant documents addressing ethical and professional behavior.

The program director selects staff members in accordance with union guidelines (AME and Faculty Association). The director supervises and promotes the development of staff members by encouraging participation in continuing education, workshops, seminars and conferences.
The director communicates effectively with program subordinates and superiors, through formal and informal meetings, emails, memos, etc. The director promotes cooperation with professional colleagues, staff members, other institutional constituencies, and persons outside of the college.

The Director of Financial Aid addresses behavior of individuals who inhibit the program goal achievement through individual meetings, if and when necessary.

The Director of Financial Aid office addresses organizational and environmental conditions that inhibit program goal achievement. She communicates as necessary with the Associate Dean and Director of Physical Plant concerning the poor environmental conditions of the present office space, i.e., excess moisture, leaks, air quality and mold and mildew, and works to ensure all issues are addressed in a timely manner.

The Director has improved program services and continues to do so through outreach initiatives, i.e., Financial Aid Awareness Week, student workshops, expansion of computer lab services, and staff training.

In accordance with the Financial Aid Mission Statement and NYSFAAA Statement of Principles, the Director advocates for the financial needs of the students, operations and staffing of the financial aid program.

The Director of Financial Aid ensures the development and implementation of policies and procedures, in collaboration with the campus administration and Central Financial Aid operation. The director ensures that criteria used in financial aid decision-making procedures are clear and understood by all staff members. However, ongoing training remains a high priority as staff members are not equally well-informed on all matters and issues.

The Director ensures that all professional staff members have the opportunity to appeal, evaluate, or revise policies and procedures as appropriate. This may occur through participation at the monthly Directors meetings, at which the professional staff are usually present, office meetings of the professional staff (to which the Head Clerk is also invited for input and feedback), and through individual discussions. The Director's open-door policy further encourages these interactions with all staff members.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Campus/College-Wide:

1. In order to more effectively address the budgetary needs of the program, the Director must have greater control over the acquisition and utilization of funds for the area.
FINANCIAL AID PROGRAM REVIEW
Ammerman Campus

Part 4 – Organization and Management

The program is structured and managed purposefully to achieve its stated goals, as defined by the Financial Aid Mission Statement and the annual report of Goals and Objectives. However, the program is not functioning as optimally as it could be, due to budgetary, staffing, and space constraints.

The staff receives written updates throughout the year as policies and procedures change (federal, state, and institutional). However, they have not been organized into a written Policies and Procedures manual and, therefore, information is not readily accessible to staff members. Also, the college’s bi-annual catalog is printed once every two years and therefore doesn’t contain the most up-to-date information concerning financial aid policies and procedures.

A basic organizational chart exists (see Appendix 7). Although staff members carry out their daily functions and are aware of their specific roles within the organization, written service delivery expectations available have not been prepared to better guide staff performance. With the exception of the professional staff, Head Clerk, detailed position descriptions do not exist for all employees. The program organization exhibits effective management through a well-defined channel of authority from the Director down through the college and student aides. College aides and clerical staff report to the Head Clerk concerning schedules, duties, and routine procedures. The professional staff reports to the Director. Effective communication practices include meetings of the professional staff, informal discussions with all staff members, memos, and emails. As noted elsewhere, the director strongly encourages staff feedback and maintains an open-door policy to support this.

Systematic decision-making and conflict resolution procedures are in practice. The Director works with the Head Clerk to resolve any conflicts involving the clerical and part-time College/Student Aides. Conflicts involving the professional staff are handled one-on-one or, if necessary, through group discussion. Such occurrences are uncommon.

The Financial Aid Program has demonstrated responsiveness to changing institutional and environmental conditions. Owing to multiple re-organizations, the office has been physically re-located twice in the last two years. On each occasion the staff has adapted well to its new environment, despite the disruption and other disadvantages which resulted. At present, the space the operation occupies is extremely limited and not well suited for the many functions of the area.

The financial aid office is audited on a regular basis by county, state and federal government agencies to ensure fiscal and procedural accountability. In addition, the Central Financial Aid operation, together with the program Director, monitors the funds management on a regular basis through the review of data, reports, policies, and procedures.
Unfortunately, opportunities to recognize and reward staff members for good performance are limited. The unions representing the respective areas have established procedures for advancement, i.e., civil service exams and faculty promotions. However, in the case of civil service employees, a Director cannot offer an upgrade if the position the employee may advance to is not available within the department. This occurred during the spring 2001 semester and the office was not able to retain a valued employee who wished to remain in the department. Aside from the Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Professional Service, no formal recognition programs exist within the operation or college.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Campus:

1. The Financial Aid operation must produce a comprehensive Policies and Procedures manual which is accessible to all staff members.

2. A more detailed organizational chart and updated job descriptions for all employees are needed to clarify responsibilities and reporting lines, streamline office workflow, and clearly define expectations for service delivery among individual staff members. Job descriptions should be reviewed with individual staff members at least once a year and amended as necessary and appropriate.

3. Create and implement a formalized, internal recognition/reward program for employees (professional and clerical) who demonstrate exemplary performance, i.e.,

College-wide:

1. The Central Financial Aid Office must produce a comprehensive Policies and Procedures manual to ensure greater consistency among campus offices. In addition, the college should re-consider producing an annual college catalog which provides more up-to-date information.
FINANCIAL AID PROGRAM REVIEW
Ammerman Campus

Part 5 – Human Resources

The Financial Aid Office is not staffed adequately by individuals qualified to accomplish its mission and goals. The program is under-staffed, both professionally and clerically. The office professional staff is comprised of one director, one counselor, one Professional Assistant 3, one Professional Assistant 2 (vacant line, search underway), and one part-time PA2 line (12 hrs. week/soft money).

In April 2000, the office was fortunate to acquire a much-needed additional Professional Assistant 3 line. Veronica Miller filled this position, although she had no prior financial aid experience and, therefore, did not satisfy the minimal qualifications required of candidates for such positions. She has, however, attended intensive training workshops and continues to receive hands-on training by the senior office staff. She has made excellent progress, despite her previous lack of experience, and has been instrumental in the success of the Financial Aid Computer Lab.

The director lacks any administrative back up throughout the year. During the summer months, the busiest of the year, the director must fill the void left by the full-time counselor, seeing students on a regular basis and answering numerous queries by the clerical staff. Thus, the multitude of administrative duties cannot be adequately accomplished in a consistent and timely manner.

In the way of support staff, the office has four full-time clerks (an additional line, vacant since February 2001, remains frozen), and six part-time college aides, of which one has been on indefinite leave since May 2001 due to health issues. The loss of the full-time clerical staff member, who also served as secretary to the director, has had a tremendous impact on productivity during the past six months. As each secretary is responsible for more than 1000 student files, the backlog created by the secretary’s departure could not be effectively absorbed. This has resulted in increased phone and walk-in inquiries by students and parents whose aid eligibility has not been reviewed. Two college aides have received minimal training in an attempt to absorb some of this work. However, their services are required primarily at the service counter and in answering phones, areas for which they are more appropriately trained. As college aides are required to take a two week furlough every 20 weeks, the office is not consistently staffed throughout the year.

More than 6400 Ammerman campus students applied for financial aid during the 2000-01 academic year, resulting in the disbursement of more than $9.6M in funding (Annual Report, Appendix 5). Given these numbers, the Financial Aid office is not adequately staffed throughout the year to maintain its many functions and services at more than a minimally operational level.

The Program Review Student Survey results indicate that, of those students responding, only 58.5% found staff helpful when reached by telephone and only 44% received the information they requested by phone. This suggests the need for both additional training
for all staff and the addition of professional staff to expand the ability of the office to provide quality services to students. As reported in the Executive Summary from the 1997 Middle States Self-Study section entitled Campus Environment Supporting Learning and Teaching, “As invaluable as the staff is to the student body, the number of qualified professional and support staff personnel is inadequate to serve the population seeking financial aid on the Ammerman Campus.” The findings from the report recommended the addition of “at the very least, two additional professional assistants” to meet the “ever increasing demand upon this office.” Since this time, the office has acquired one additional full-time Professional Assistant and three College Aides.

The operation expanded its services with the opening of its Computer Lab in the summer of 2000. Through August 2001, more than 580 students used the facility for electronic filing, creating an even greater burden on the professional and support staff.

Additionally, the operation is now required to scan all documents onto the Feith imaging system. These added functions have stretched staffing resources to an unreasonable extent. As the operation plays an increasingly important role in recruitment and retention efforts, as it seeks new ways to expand its outreach services, and as the complexity of the financial aid delivery system continues to increase, increased staffing for this area is critical.

With the limited professional staff of the Financial Aid office, clerical staff members are required to perform duties beyond those normally expected in such positions, i.e., reviewing income and other documents to determine financial aid eligibility, discussing complex financial situations with students and parents, etc. This raises the concerns of liability and professional ethics. However, with additional professional staff to absorb some of these functions and provide the necessary reinforcement and training, the operation can achieve a more appropriate balance.

The program has established procedures for staff selection, following the guidelines set forth by the AME, Faculty, and Guild unions when hiring new staff.

There is no formal training program for new staff members. Clerical staff hirees are in particular need of such training as they assume a vast and complex array of responsibilities with no prior experience in the field, unlike professional staff hirees. Although the professional staff is encouraged to attend training through outside workshops and conferences, most knowledge of policies and procedures is acquired through observation, hands-on experience, and prior experience in the field.

Staff evaluations are done in compliance with individual union guidelines. Though not formalized, evaluations may also occur when assessing annual goals in preparation of the annual report.

The program provides for and encourages appropriate professional staff development opportunities through workshops and conferences (See Annual Report - Appendix 5). However, such opportunities are dependent upon budgetary support from the college. Recent budgetary problems resulted in an unreasonable delay in the reimbursement of expenses incurred by support and professional staff members following their participation in important training activities.
Individual professional staff members hold earned graduate degrees in fields relevant to their respective positions or possess an appropriate combination of education and experience.

Student employees are carefully selected through office interviews with the Head Clerk and Director. They are supervised by senior-level support staff as well as by the professional staff members. However, they do not receive any formalized training nor are they formally evaluated from one semester to the next, though a college-wide Federal Work-Study evaluation form exists for this purpose.

Students are instructed to refer to professional and support staff members for assistance when their knowledge and skills are not adequate for particular situations, as are part-time college-aide employees. The use of FWSP student aides to handle confidential student information raises a concern regarding confidentiality, liability, and professional ethics. It is also possible that student aides providing reception services creates the same concerns. The Director has composed memos and provides verbal instruction, as necessary, to inform student employees and support staff of their obligation to refer specific issues and situations to the professional staff.

Although most professional and support staff members are procedurally and technologically proficient, additional training is needed as levels of proficiency vary among employees.

Clerical responsibilities within the operation far exceed the duties normally assigned at this level, i.e., reception, phone inquiries, mail handling, equipment maintenance, etc. These duties are assigned primarily to the College Aides. The clerical staff performs work most commonly assigned to professional staff members at many other post-secondary institutions, i.e., reviewing student files to determine eligibility for financial assistance, income verification, discussing complex financial issues with students/parents, etc. In addition, the Head, Principal and Sr. Clerks also assume the added responsibilities of their positions, i.e., Office Manager, Secretary to the Director, coordination of FEITH Imaging, etc.

The clerical staff must meet AME standards and pass civil service examinations in order to be hired for particular assignments. All prospective clerical staff members are carefully interviewed before hiring and evaluated during the probationary period. However, there is a disparity among clerical employees relating to individual classifications and duties as compared to other departments within the college. The complexity of work performed among the clerical staff within the operation is generally not recognized outside of the operation. The current classifications do not agree with the complexity, amount of training, and degree of responsibility each staff member assumes.

Salary levels and fringe benefits for all permanent staff members are commensurate with those for comparable positions in the institution, in similar institutions, and within the local geographic area. However, college aides are not adequately compensated for the responsibilities they assume within the department. Additional professional and clerical staff members would result in a more appropriate re-distribution of duties and responsibilities.
With the exception of one blind full-time counselor, diversity does not exist among the staff. To a great extent, affirmative action practices to increase diversity in staff are limited by adherence to the contractual requirements for hiring and promotion imposed by three employee unions: GUILD, AME and the Faculty Association. EEO/AA guidelines are not formally prescribed in the hiring process.

The Campus Director is informed of changes within the field through attendance at professional conferences, written sources from government agencies and professional organizations (Department of Education, NASFAA, NYSFAA, NYSHEC), through websites for financial aid professionals (IFAP, NASFAA), list-serves, and through communications from the College Director of Financial Aid. The campus director relays this information effectively through email, staff meeting, and written memos.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Campus:

1. Vacant professional and clerical lines must be filled.

2. Evaluate specific duties assigned to clerical, professional, and part-time support staff and assess how duties may be more appropriately re-assigned. If necessary, hire an additional full-time professional to better assist the operation in achieving its mission and goals.

3. Develop and implement a written policy and procedures manual. This document would be an important component of a formal training program for all new staff members.

4. Utilize the Federal Work-Study Student Evaluation Form for all student employees.

5. Develop a progressive training program for all staff members in the utilization of all software and web-based applications, i.e., NSLDS, Edexpress, EdConnect, HESCWeb. Seek the support of Central Financial Aid operation with training program.

6. Assess the duties of each Civil Service classification in relation to the work performed. Develop a plan to more appropriately assign duties and approve re-classification, as appropriate, to reduce disparities.

7. Require all prospective student employees to sign a Confidentiality Agreement before commencing employment.

College-wide:

1. Develop an orientation/training program for all new staff members with necessary support materials.
2. Ensure that the necessary funds are available for support and professional staff members to partake of important training and development opportunities. Such participation is critical to the success of the operation.
FINANCIAL AID PROGRAM REVIEW
Ammerman Campus

Part 6 – Financial Resources

The financial aid program operates within a budget that is not consistently adequate in allowing the operation to accomplish its mission and goals. In the midst of a particularly difficult budget year in which the college’s financial resources were extremely scarce, the financial aid program was hard-pressed to carry out its functions and work towards improving its services. In general, the budget for Financial Aid has, in recent years, fallen short in providing the funds required of an operation which, in 2000-2001, generated more than $9.5 annually to more than 6,400 students. The college required departments to reduce their budget requests during the current fiscal year in order to minimally meet operating expenses. This resulted in a reduction from $14,221 to $10,427 to the Financial Aid operation.

In recent years, an increasing complexity in federal and state regulations has challenged the Financial Aid operation to keep up with ongoing change—procedurally and technologically. Advances in the financial aid delivery system have forced the operation to embrace and adapt to the many computer-based applications it must now maintain and utilize. A good example includes the Computer Lab which the office now maintains for students, requiring that staff members are available throughout the day to assist students with electronic filing and other online needs. At the same time, the available staff must keep up with an increasing list of other responsibilities. Expanded services, in addition to a delivery process which has become more complex and time-consuming, have placed a tremendous burden on the Financial Aid operation, stretching its available resources to their limits, i.e., staffing, equipment, facilities, etc.

In two of the past three years, the operation was forced to reduce the hours of its part-time Professional Assistant and six College Aides in an effort to conserve funds. As these staff members perform vital functions within the operation, and as the program had only two professionals throughout the summer, the burden on the full-time staff to make up the work was over-taxing.

Although the Financial Aid Director assumes full responsibility for identifying the areas of priority for funding and preparing the appropriate annual budget, the Director has no assurance that requested funds will be available for the needs of the operation.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Campus/College-Wide:

1. In order to more effectively address the budgetary needs of the program, improve services, and increase productivity, the Director must have greater control over the acquisition and utilization of funds for the area.
FINANCIAL AID PROGRAM REVIEW
Ammerman Campus

Part 7 – Facilities

The current facility in which the financial aid program operates is inadequate to support its mission and goals. As stated in the 2001 – 2002 Annual Report, the physical space does not provide staff members with the room they need to comfortably carry out their functions nor to properly serve students. Furthermore, the area is in constant need of maintenance as a result of excess moisture, leaks, and persistent mold.

Five full-time secretaries and one part-time Professional Assistant share a workspace measuring less than 300 square feet. The complex, detail-intensive review of financial documents that these staff members perform requires a high level of concentration and minimal noise, neither of which is achievable in the current space configuration. Required phone conversations with students are a distraction due to the limited space between their desks. Other departments within the Division occupy spaces which afford their clerical staff significantly more space and comfort. The restricted space in the Financial Aid Office contributes to low morale among staff members and a sense of being under-valued.

Tantamount to a student being properly served is their ability to relay certain private financial and academic information so that the appropriate forms can be given and the ability of the staff to explain important subsequent actions that the students needs to take.

The college and student aides, who are the first point of contact with the students, do not have adequate space to discretely confer with students. In addition, they do not have the required workspace for handling mail, preparing packets, or carrying out other projects. The service counter is an L-shaped design measuring just 5 x 4 feet. The counter has three computer stations on it so that the staff can service 3 students at a time, there is no partition. It is totally inadequate to meet the staff’s and the student’s needs. Students and parents must literally rub elbows and backsides with other students as they stand at the counter and disclose highly sensitive personal and financial information. The noise level at the service counter is unreasonably high and contributes to an atmosphere of chaos and non-professionalism. The limited counter does not allow staff and students to comfortably or privately review documents.

The facility lacks sufficient storage space as well as the necessary space in which to set up the Feith imaging operation and the fax machine. The Suffolk County Fire Marshall recently mandated that this equipment be removed from the corridor in which it was set up, as it violated the fire safety code. The equipment has temporarily been re-located to the office of the anticipated new Professional Assistant. It will need to be relocated to another office once the position is filled. The operation’s copier machine is located at the far end of the hallway outside the main work area and is shared with the office of Special Services, an inconvenient arrangement for an office which makes thousands of document
copies per year. Also this location sets up the financial aid staff to have to say no when
students see the copier and request to make copies that they have to submit. They
question why they have to go to another building to make copies of their taxes or other
documents.

The Financial Aid Computer Lab space is too small to accommodate the ten computers,
which were intended to occupy the space. As a result, three of the ten PC’s have been
situated at the service counter for Internet access. The computer lab serves multiple
purposes. One of the purposes is to aid the student with filing electronically. Another is
to provide the student with an assessment of the codes that appear on the Confirmation
Page once they electronically submit the FAFSA. This leads to disclosure of the
individual’s tentative aid and financial need. There is no area set aside to discuss with the
student what their probable financial aid and tuition liability will be nor are there any
partitions for the students while they work on the computers with their tax papers.

The operation will soon benefit from a hardware upgrade (six updated PC’s and
monitors) in compliance with Department of Education requirements. However, the
financial aid interface of the mainframe system is sub-standard and inefficient given the
number of applicants reviewed annually (see Part 2).

Finally, as referenced above, the office is plagued with moisture problems, which are
responsible for recurring leaks and mold build-up on walls throughout the year. As the
office is located in the basement of the Ammerman building, a higher level of moisture is
expected. A dehumidifier was provided to the area last fall to help remedy the problem.
However, the sources of moisture and leaks are numerous (floors, wall, and ceiling) and
the problem requires constant monitoring and phone calls to Maintenance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Campus:

1. Expand or re-locate the existing Financial Aid operation so as to provide the
necessary space for staff and equipment, and also to create a more professional
working environment in which to service students. (This facility is often the first stop
for new students)

2. Enlist Physical Plant/Maintenance to find preventative, more permanent ways to
address the persistent problems of excessive moisture, leaks and mold.
FINANCIAL AID PROGRAM REVIEW
Ammerman Campus

Part 8 – Legal Responsibilities

The professional staff of the Financial Aid Office is knowledgeable about and responsive to laws and regulations relevant to respective programs and services. This is achieved through conference attendance, workshops, open discussion and communications from the Director. However, members of the support staff are not as familiar with the broad array of laws and regulations and require more training.

A statement of “Financial Aid Goals and Objectives 2000-01” (Appendix 5) indicates the need for ongoing training through a “series of training sessions in order to ensure that support staff members…are fully informed on all aspects of financial aid so as to provide the most accurate and up-to-date information possible to students and parents.” Due to staffing reductions and other initiatives implemented during the spring 2000-2001 academic year, a comprehensive training program was not carried out and remains a top priority for 2001-2002.

During the past year, issues concerning confidential student information were notable. Specifically, students and/or parents individually requested that the Financial Aid Office, among other departments, not divulge academic or financial information to interested third parties. In accordance with the Federal Educational Right to Privacy Act (FERPA), the Director issued memos and other warnings to the staff to further remind them of the department’s exposure to liability. However, very little written information was readily on this issue and its legal implications which resulted in some confusion among departments and staff members.

The staff is required to know that any legal questions should be referred to the College’s attorney, though this is not common knowledge. As a matter of routine, the staff directs questions involving legal issues to the Director. The Director, in turn, consults with the Associate Dean of Students with regard to issues which have potential legal ramifications. For the purpose of limiting liability, members of the professional staff are careful to keep accurate records within each student file in order to document situations which may come into question at a later date and raise any liability concerns.

On a number of occasions, the staff was not adequately prepared to address major procedural changes which exposed the operation to potential liabilities—for example, the implementation of questions mark symbols on student schedules to denote courses which are either repeated or out-of-curriculum and, therefore, ineligible for funding. The appearance of these symbols on students’ bills, without prior notification and less than one month prior to payment due dates, created confusion among both student and staff members, requiring students from cashier to financial aid to counseling to resolve each individual student’s situation. The timing caused some students to incur liability that could not be covered by financial aid. In both cases, the changes caught the staff unaware. Although the institution tried to inform the staff quickly, a
good deal of student liability was generated without chance of resolution.

A document entitled “Suffolk County Community College Ammerman Campus Enrollment Management/Retention Plan” details the schedule of office activities and mailings to students that will keep students informed about legal and procedural matters in regard to their financial aid status. A series of form letters including: “Revised Award Letter”, “APTS Information Notice”, “Appeals process due to loss of FA due to academic progress”, “Authorization for Continued Aid on a Trial Basis”, “Ineligibility for FA Due to Poor Academic Progress”, etc. have been devised and are used to inform students of their status in a timely way, thereby ensuring the Financial Aid operation disseminates critical information in a consistent, systematic way so as to minimize or eliminate liability.

Staff members aware of the legal and ethical limits and standards relevant to their roles and perform their functions accordingly. For example, College Aides provide basic information to students and seek assistance from the full-time support and professional staff when uncertain about specific details. Likewise, members of the full-time support staff seek guidance from the professional staff when required to ensure they are providing accurate information about complex issues. The Counselor is solely responsible for the duties required in his position, whereas the Professional Assistants recognize the limitations of their roles and act in accordance with the college’s contract provisions. The staff consult among themselves about problematic cases and involve the Director if necessary. The professional staff regularly read publications such as the The Student Aid News and The Financial Aid Transcript which address a full range of legal issues within the financial aid field.

Examples of enforcement of legal matters and working within prescribed roles include a memorandum to the staff from the director, dated 10/23/00, regarding new form letters (informing staff of office procedure and of referral to the full-time counselor for assistance with matters beyond the purview of their role) and another dated 3/13/01 from the director specifically addressing issues of confidentiality and the release of information only to the student or his/her authorized representative (in compliance with FERPA regulations).

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Campus/College-Wide:

1. Develop training initiatives for all staff members which address specific topics relating to liability and legal issues as college employees and members of the Financial Aid operation. Utilize college resources, i.e., legal counsel, where necessary to participate and provide necessary training materials.
FINANCIAL AID PROGRAM REVIEW
Ammerman Campus

Part 9 – Equal Opportunity, Access, and Affirmative Action

Members of the Financial Aid operation perform their duties in a manner which ensures the delivery of financial aid services on a fair and equitable basis, following well-established policies and procedures. The financial aid office upholds this through the adherence to its own mission statement (see Appendix 6) and the College’s mission statement (College Catalog, p. 8).

Utilizing the Department of Education’s Federal Methodology formula, and in accordance with standardized packaging policies, financial aid funds are distributed to students via an automated mainframe system. On a case-by-case basis, using professional judgment practices and standardized procedures, consideration for exceptions or increased funding is considered for students who can document extraordinary circumstances and financial need. Such exceptions typically include Dependency Overrides, Income Adjustments and in response to the Appeal of Cancellation of Financial Assistance. This occurs without regard to age, color, disability, gender, national origin, race, religious creed, sexual orientation and/or veteran status, as mandated by CAS Standards.

Full disclosure of its services are available through a variety of mediums in order to reach multiple audiences. With this in mind, the office provides free printed material in its own office and in most public areas of the college, a variety of workshops open to all students and a web page linked to the college’s home page as well as to the federal and state financial aid sites of importance to our students. The office conducted a Financial Aid Awareness Week on the Ammerman campus from March 26 to March 29, 2001 as part of an initiative to focus attention to the available financial aid programs and services. In addition, a variety of other workshops were offered throughout the spring 2001 which related to more specific topics to enhance student awareness of financial aid issues. Members of the professional staff, through discussions at staff meetings, have suggested the development of yet additional workshops targeted to particular campus populations e.g. Educational Opportunity Program, English as a Second Language, and Student Support Services Program as a way to expand the delivery of services. These proposals are outlined in the “Financial Aid Goals and Objectives 2000-2001 (see Appendix 5).

Financial aid services are available to students weekdays from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. For specified, high volume periods during the final enrollment period of each semester, the office is open for extended hours in order to better accommodate working students and their parents. To some degree, the hours of operation are extended by the availability of Audix services on individual staff member phones allowing students to leave messages after hours which will be answered the following day. The Financial Aid web site provides detailed information concerning financial aid programs and services, in addition to an email link so that students may direct questions to individual staff. Unfortunately, accommodations for students requiring evening and/or weekend hours beyond the final enrollment period are not available, due in part to budgetary constraints.
which limit funds for “overload” from which to pay evening staff. On occasion, staff members may voluntarily stay up to one hour after normal business hours to accommodate individual appointments but this is not a routine, advertised practice.

The office is located in the Ammerman Building on the ground floor, adjacent to the door and ramp for wheelchair accessibility. The office is also located next to and has a cooperative relationship with the Office of Special Services that allows use of adaptive equipment if necessary for individual students. Students with limited vision may use the lighted reader in the Computer Lab or obtain information in Braille from the Department of Education’s FAFSA on the Web.

The office is ADA and 504 compliant in all respects. Deaf and hearing impaired students affiliated with the Special Services Office have the assistance of an interpreter. Many students are served at home by use of the FA Office’s web page and its links to relevant information including online completion of the FAFSA. Additionally, staff is now able to respond to e-mail inquiries or voice mail messages at their individual numbers. Students encountering any difficulties in accessing the office, its services or financial aid information are assisted individually by staff members.

Although students are this office’s primary constituency, faculty and staff are also served by the Financial Aid staff. Service includes sharing information regarding policy and procedures so that faculty may assist students with inquiries, accepting referrals of students who are in need of individualized attention, and also providing assistance and information to fellow employees with family members attending SCCC or other colleges. All students regardless of age, color, disability, gender, race, national origin, religious creed, sexual orientation and/or veteran status are provided the opportunity to apply for and receive financial aid assistance. Staff is encouraged to reach out to those populations on campus that might benefit from additional contact with the FA office. (See suggested workshops, above).

All of the rules, policies, federal regulations and laws are present, visible and accessible to all staff as they assist students, e.g. FERPA, U.S. Codified Federal Regulations, and the current college catalog. Grants, awards and loan offers are made following all pertinent federal, state and local law and policy. The office has not identified any significant imbalances in student participation in services offered.

There is little diversity in the staff with the exception of one Caucasian, blind, male Counselor. The remainder of the staff is Caucasian and female. Affirmative action to increase diversity in staff is limited by adherence to the contractual requirements for hiring and promotion imposed by three employee unions, AME, Guild and the Faculty Association. To the extent that these union bodies promote and practice Affirmative Action policies, the departments that comprise the college may or may not reflect diversity among its staffs.

Financial aid publications reflect relevant federal, state and institutional policies and practices. The campus collaborates with the Central Financial Aid operation to ensure all flyers, brochures, and communications to students (including award letters) reflect adherence to established practices. The College Catalog, website, and also adhere to these requirements.
RECOMMENDATIONS:

Campus:

1. To the extent that funds may be available, explore available staffing options which would allow for the possibility of extended hours throughout the academic year, in order to better serve evening, working and part-time students who would benefit from greater accessibility.

College:

1. Evaluate current Affirmative Action practices to ensure that future hiring patterns within the Financial Aid operation may reflect a more diversified staff.
The financial aid staff consistently works with other campus and college departments to exchange information and assist with the delivery of services. It has also increased its efforts to develop and maintain relationships with the local community and other outside entities in order to expand its role in promoting its services and reaching out to potential students. Included among these groups are high schools, Department of Social Services, Department of Labor, VESID, Town of Brookhaven Outreach Programs, NYSHESE, lending agencies, and the Department of Education. Members of the professional staff have participated in high school presentations regarding the financial aid application process as well as presentations to community agencies targeted to specific populations. On-campus outreach efforts during the 2000-01 academic year included informational workshops for students, Financial Aid Awareness Week, listserv announcements, targeting mailings, and flyers (see Appendix 9, Financial Aid Workshops and Events).

Institutional functions and constituencies linked to Financial Aid include Admissions, Registrar, Counseling Services, Special Services, Career Services and Co-Operative Education, Student Support Services, Business Office/Cashier, Educational Opportunity Program, Child Care, Health Services and Athletics. Communication and cooperation with these departments is frequent and particularly crucial during the enrollment process. The new director has expressed a desire to work closely with the Director of the Business Office/Cashier in an effort to improve relations among the staff and better serve students. In recent years, a lack of communication between these two areas has seriously undermined the ability to deliver services in a cooperative, mutually respectful manner. In addition to the departments mentioned above, Financial Aid also frequently interacts with various academic departments within the college and encourages teaching faculty and departmental secretaries to refer students or call the office on students’ behalves.

Specific examples of how Financial Aid interacts with other campus departments:

ADMISSIONS: Students are referred from Admissions to Financial Aid and vice versa. Staff in the Financial Aid office routinely review the mainframe transcript screen to ascertain if the student has formally applied to the college and has been accepted and matriculated into a degree program as required for financial aid eligibility.

COUNSELING CENTER: Staff in the Financial Aid office must evaluate schedules and SAIN reports to verify that students’ courses fit within the curriculums. Any student whose schedule has question marks is referred to the Counseling Center for assistance in selecting eligible courses. Often, phone calls or visits are made between the two offices to assist students more efficiently.
REGISTRAR: The staff in the financial aid office must be aware of the dates established by the Registrar that affect students' ability to register, add/drop or withdraw. The Registrar will refer students to Financial Aid in order to assess the impact of dropping/withdrawing on a student's financial aid eligibility. The Reg

BUSINESS OFFICE/CASHIER: The Financial Aid Office interacts with the business office on a daily basis during the registration period on matters including schedule holds, deferrals, and payment due dates, refunds, award discrepancies, accounts, etc. The directors for each area consult when issues arise which require special attention.

CAREER SERVICES/COOPERATIVE EDUCATION/INTERNSHIPS: The Financial Aid Office works closely with Career Services in relation to the Federal Work-Study Program. Financial Aid refers students awarded FWS to Career Services to discuss placement options, both on- and off-campus (America Reads/America Counts). In addition, the two departments discuss individual students who are at risk of exceeding their FWS allocation or have work-related issues, i.e., supervision, absences, inappropriate conduct, etc. Together, the departments agree on an appropriate course of action. Financial Aid and Career Services have also planned to jointly sponsor workshops for FWS supervisors to better inform them of their responsibilities.

Financial aid and admission decisions are made independently. However, the Financial Aid office does have access, upon request, to appropriate information in students' admission files to assure compliance with applicable rules and regulations, i.e., high school transcripts, Admission applications, etc. Most required information is available via the Transcript screen on the college mainframe and/or via the college's imaging system, FEITH.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Campus:

1. Continue to build upon existing inter-departmental relationships in order to better serve students and develop an open exchange between departments that is mutually respectful.
FINANCIAL AID PROGRAM REVIEW
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Part 11 - Diversity

The Financial Aid Mission Statement (Appendix 6) includes among its principles that the program "is intended to provide full financial aid services to the entire population that needs such assistance." More specifically, the Statement acknowledges that the populations it serves are "extremely diverse" and therefore with specific needs. The Financial Aid operation has implemented specific policies and procedures which address the characteristics and needs of its diverse population, some of which are mandated by federal statutes and others that were developed at the campus level.

The Central Financial Aid Office, with input from the campus directors, annually reviews the student budgets it uses when calculating the cost of education for various cohorts of students, i.e., Single Independent, Single Independent with Child Care Expenses, Dependent, Independent on Public Assistance. These budgets determine the potential level of funding available to students' to meet their total educational costs. This process involves gathering data to accurately estimate the costs students incur and makes allowances for increases which are deemed reasonable. Another example of how the operation addresses the needs of its populations is the availability of a Computer Lab, which allows students who may not own a personal computer the option of electronic filing with assistance.

The Financial Aid Office works closely with certain offices which specifically assist students with special needs, i.e., Educational Opportunity Program, Student Support Students, Special Services, English as a Second Language, and Child Care. As needed, students referred from these areas receive individualized assistance in order to better address their unique needs. Staff members from these departments are also advised of policies and procedures which may impact their respective student populations.

An established Emergency Loan program exists in order to provide temporary financial relief to any student awarded financial aid in need of funds. The reasons for such requests are varied but may include transportation, car repairs, child care, food, and loss of employment. In many cases, students would not be able to continue their studies without the financial assistance the loan offers.

The Financial Aid operation is currently developing workshops intended to target special groups of students i.e., EOP, single parents, disabled students, minority students, adult learner, etc. Representatives are present at all organized school events such as Open Houses, Student Activities Day, Suffolk Soapbox, Transfer Day, Career Day, etc. This allows students of all backgrounds accessibility to the information provided by the Financial Aid program. In addition, staff members participate in workshops for women
of low-income households who are poorly trained and educated such as the Displaced Homemakers Organization and the Town of Brookhaven Dress for Success program.

Eligible students of all backgrounds are informed and encouraged to take advantage of college employment through the Federal Work-Study Program, providing them the opportunity to gain valuable work experience and improve their career and transfer prospects.

As addressed in Part 9, the Financial Aid department offers expanded office hours during final enrollment so that all students have the opportunity to obtain assistance with filing and related matters.

Information is regularly dispersed through countywide mailings and distribution of flyers, pamphlets, brochures and forms to county libraries, high schools and other pertinent organizations. The added use of the World Wide Web for both information purposes and application ability greatly increases the outreach to more diverse populations.

Involvement with the promotion of cultural educational experiences and appreciation of culture and heritage is limited within the Financial Aid operation and not specifically included in its mission. However, the professional and support staff would benefit from training to improve their understanding and appreciation of the different cultures of the students they serve.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Campus:

1. On an ongoing basis, meet with department heads which have contact with specific populations in order to continually assess student needs and incorporate new services into the financial aid program which address these needs.

2. Provide periodic training of all staff members regarding cultural groups and issues to increase sensitivity, awareness, and appreciation.
The New York State Financial Aid Administrators Association's manual states, "A Code of Ethics is needed to produce consistency in making awards and in dealing with students and parents". While there does not seem to be a written statement of ethics as part of the Ammerman campus financial aid operation the adherence to NYSFAAA's "Statement of Good Practices" bear witness to the fact that ethical awarding policies are in place. In a personal context, staff members display ethical conduct in the way they deliver services to all students. The staff in the financial aid office is "aware" of (FERPA) Family Education Right To Privacy Act, the Buckley Amendment, policies in the Suffolk County Community College catalog, and non-discriminatory recommendations.

The Director of Financial Aid makes regular observations of staff members awarding procedures to assure that packaging policies are being applied faithfully in all cases. Staff meetings are held with staff Professionals and memos sent to the support staff to ensure that there is clarity in the funding procedures that must be followed including new grant aid limits and new academic implications to awarding practices.

Limitations of facility size present non-complacence concern regarding FERPA. This is cause of concern in regard to whether the customer service conditions are ethical.

**Campus Recommendations**

1. The Financial Aid department should have a written statement of expected behavior. Staff development should be scheduled to review ethical policies and procedures.
The Financial Aid Office has employed several methods for assessing and evaluating the quality of its programs, though they are limited in the frequency of these efforts. Assessments such as the Middle States Self-Study and SUNY Student Satisfaction Survey include questions relating to the Financial Aid operation but are not comprehensive enough. Quantitative evaluations which objectively measure overall performance, such as student opinion surveys, are not utilized. Nor is there any means by which students are invited to provide feedback on the services.

Below is a list of other methods currently used:

- Annual Reports which describe the programs, activities, financial aid expenditures, program statistics, staff achievements, etc.
- Statement of Goals and Objectives
- Periodic internal audits which randomly evaluate student files to ensure compliance with federal, state, and institutional standards and regulations.
- Monthly meetings of Financial Aid directors to assess the delivery of services, the implementation of new systems and procedures, and resolve any issues which the campuses bring forward.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Campus:

1. Utilize available resources (Office of Institutional Research, NASFAAA Assessment Guide, CAS Program Review, etc.) to develop surveys and other tools to measure the effectiveness of the Financial Aid operation. Establish a timetable so that surveys are conducted on a regular basis.

2. Install a student “suggestion box” in the reception area and/or Computer Lab for student feedback.

3. Explore the idea of an inter-departmental Financial Aid Assessment Committee to ensure greater objectivity with assessment/evaluation initiatives.

4. In addition to formal performance evaluations already utilized, have individual, informal discussions with staff concerning their performance in relation to the operation’s mission and goals.
College-Wide:

1. Conduct a periodic review of campus Financial Aid operations to ensure mission and goals are being met.

2. Collaborate with campus Directors of Financial Aid and Institutional Research to develop assessment and evaluation methods, to be used on a regular basis, for the purpose of improving services.
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Campus-Wide Recommendations

1. Review Mission Statement and Goals & Objective with all staff members annually (and as necessary) to ensure implementation of all goals is effectively achieved with full participation.

2. The college must replace the current computerized system with an integrated Financial Aid software or web-based system with improved capabilities.

3. The Computing Center must improve its responsiveness to the needs of the Financial Aid operation, hiring additional staff if necessary. With the increasing complexity of the financial aid delivery system, a well-trained programmer must be dedicated to this area and work more closely with the Central Financial Aid operation.

4. The Central Financial Aid operation must work towards an earlier start-date for the uploading of student data to ensure the campus staff has adequate time to review student files in preparation for the enrollment cycle. This would also allow the operation to work out any unanticipated “glitches” which would otherwise delay a timely response to students.

5. In order to more effectively address the budgetary needs of the program, the Director must have greater control over the acquisition and utilization of funds for the area.

6. The Financial Aid operation must produce a comprehensive Policies and Procedures manual which is accessible to all staff members.

7. A more detailed organizational chart and updated job descriptions for all employees are needed to clarify responsibilities and reporting lines, streamline office workflow, and clearly define expectations for service delivery among individual staff members. Job descriptions should be reviewed with individual staff members at least once a year and amended as necessary and appropriate.

8. Create and implement a formalized, internal recognition/reward program for employees (professional and clerical) who demonstrate exemplary performance, i.e., “Employee of the Month” certificates.

9. Vacant professional and clerical lines must be filled in order to adequately carry out the mission of the Financial Aid operation and strive to improve the delivery of services to students and other constituencies.
10. Evaluate specific duties assigned to clerical, professional, and part-time support staff and assess how duties may be more appropriately re-assigned. If necessary, hire an additional full-time professional to better assist the operation in achieving its mission and goals.

11. Develop and implement a written policy and procedures manual. This document would be an important component of a formal training program for all new staff members.

12. Utilize the Federal Work-Study Student Evaluation Form for all student employees.

13. Develop a progressive training program for all staff members in the utilization of all software and web-based applications, i.e., NSLDS, Edexpress, EdConnect, HESCWeb. Seek the support of Central Financial Aid operation with training program.

14. Assess the duties of each Civil Service classification in relation to the work performed. Develop a plan to more appropriately assign duties and approve re-classification, as appropriate, to reduce disparities.

15. Require all prospective student employees to sign a Confidentiality Agreement before commencing employment.

16. In order to more effectively address the budgetary needs of the program, improve services, and increase productivity, the Director must have greater control over the acquisition and utilization of funds for the area.

17. Expand or re-locate the existing Financial Aid operation so as to provide the necessary space for staff and equipment, and also to create a more professional working environment in which to service students. (This facility is often the first stop for new students)

18. Enlist Physical Plant/Maintenance to find preventative, more permanent ways to address the persistent problems of excessive moisture, leaks and mold.

19. Develop training initiatives for all staff members which address specific topics relating to liability and legal issues as college employees and members of the Financial Aid operation. Utilize college resources, i.e., legal counsel, where necessary to participate and provide necessary training materials.

20. To the extent that funds may be available, explore available staffing options which would allow for the possibility of extended hours throughout the academic year, in order to better serve evening, working and part-time students who would benefit from greater accessibility.
21. Continue to build up existing inter-departmental relationships in order to better serve students and develop an open exchange between departments that is mutually respectful.

22. On an ongoing basis, meet with department heads which have contact with specific populations in order to continually assess student needs and incorporate new services into the financial aid program which address these needs.

23. Provide periodic training of all staff members regarding cultural groups and issues to increase sensitivity, awareness, and appreciation.

24. The Financial Aid department should have a written statement of expected behavior. Staff development should be scheduled to review ethical policies and procedures.

25. Utilize available resources (Office of Institutional Research, NASFAAA Assessment Guide, CAS Program Review, etc.) to develop surveys and other tools to measure the effectiveness of the Financial Aid operation. Establish a timetable so that surveys are conducted on a regular basis.

26. Install a student “suggestion box” in the reception area and/or Computer Lab for student feedback.

27. Explore the idea of an inter-departmental Financial Aid Assessment Committee to ensure greater objectivity with assessment/evaluation initiatives.

28. In addition to formal performance evaluations already utilized, hold informal discussions with individual staff members concerning their performance in relation to the operation’s mission and goals.
FINANCIAL AID PROGRAM REVIEW
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2001-02

College-Wide Recommendations

1. Implement measures to more widely disseminate information to the college community about the Financial Aid operation’s mission and goals, including specific references to its programs and services.

2. The college must replace the current computerized system with an integrated Financial Aid software or web-based system with improved capabilities.

3. The Computing Center must improve its responsiveness to the needs of the Financial Aid operation, hiring additional staff if necessary. With the increasing complexity of the financial aid delivery system, a well-trained programmer must be dedicated to this area and work more closely with the Central Financial Aid operation.

4. The Central Financial Aid operation must work towards an earlier start-date for the uploading of student data to ensure the campus staff has adequate time to review student files in preparation for the enrollment cycle. This would also allow the operation to work out any unanticipated “glitches” which would otherwise delay a timely response to students.

5. The Central Financial Aid Office must produce a comprehensive Policies and Procedures manual to ensure greater consistency among campus offices. In addition, the college should re-consider producing an annual college catalog which provides more up-to-date information.

6. Develop an orientation/training program for all new staff members with necessary support materials.

7. In order to more effectively address the budgetary needs of the program, the Director must have greater control over the acquisition and utilization of funds for the area.

8. Evaluate current Affirmative Action practices to ensure that future hiring patterns within the Financial Aid operation may reflect a more diversified staff.

9. Develop training initiatives for all staff members which address specific topics relating to liability and legal issues as college employees and members of the Financial Aid operation. Utilize college resources, i.e., legal counsel, where necessary to participate and provide necessary training materials.
10. Ensure that the necessary funds are available for support and professional staff members to partake of important training and development opportunities critical to the success of the operation.

11. In order to improve awareness, provide the Financial Aid staff with more information pertaining to personal and institutional liability as well as legal obligations associated with carrying out duties unique to the operation.

12. Collaborate with campus Directors of Financial Aid to establish ties with relevant agencies, i.e., VESID, Dept. of Labor, Veteran’s Affairs, etc., in an effort to enhance outreach activities and develop working relationships beneficial to the operation.

13. Collaborate with campus Directors of Financial Aid to develop a plan which assesses the needs of specific target groups, i.e., adult learners, EOP students, students with disabilities, minorities, single parents, etc. Based upon assessment, establish methods to better serve such populations.

14. Develop and adopt a formal statement of ethical standards to guide the operation.

15. Collaborate with campus Directors of Financial Aid and Institutional Research to develop assessment and evaluation methods, to be used on a regular basis, for the purpose of improving services.

16. Conduct a periodic review of campus Financial Aid operations to ensure mission and goals are being met.
CAS
COUNCIL FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF STANDARDS
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CAS 1998 STANDARDS
SELF-ASSESSMENT GUIDE

Rater: MICHAEL C. CARTER Date: 5/1/00

Program Reviewed: FINANCIAL AID

Administrative Unit Reviewed: FINANCIAL AID

Instructions:
The assessment criterion measures in this self-assessment worksheet are based directly on the
CAS Standards as boxed in bold print. Use the scale below to rate the program under study
against the assessment criterion statements. Place ratings in the space to the right of each
criterion statement. Use the Information Not Available (INA) response ONLY when documentation
or other information is unavailable to support the observation. Use the Exemplary (EX) response
ONLY when documentation indicates that the criterion was met in exceptional fashion.

Part 1: MISSION
The financial aid program must develop, record, disseminate, implement and regularly review its
mission and goals. Mission statements must be consistent with the mission and goals of the
institution and with the standards in this document.

The financial aid program shall develop, review, and disseminate financial resources to students to
assist them in achieving their educational goals from pre-enrollment through graduation. Many
aspects of financial aid are mandated by federal and state entities that define the parameters within
which institutional programs must operate. In a manner consistent with the goals of the institution, the
mission and goals of the financial aid program must address the following.

Students in Transition.
Such students move from secondary to postsecondary education, from one postsecondary institution to another,
including undergraduate to graduate school, and return from a period of non-enrollment to formal learning or re-
enrollment in the institution.

Awarding Practices.
Such practices establish, promulgate, and implement financial aid criteria that accurately represent the financial needs
of the applicant pool, set priorities within this group, and respond with funding to the extent possible.

Financial Counseling.
Such counseling provides high quality services to students for (a) the purpose of providing better understanding of
financial aid, (b) financial guidance, (c) individual review of situations that may require special consideration, and (d)
guidance in academic and financial matters especially as they relate to satisfactory academic progress.

Goal Integration.
Goals should be consistent with the mission, goals, policies, procedures and characteristics of the institution and be
compatible with the ability of the institution to provide adequate resources to meet the needs and educational goals of
the students.

Review of Goals.
Institutional goals for financial aid should be developed and reviewed regularly. Such goals should be consistent with
statements of good practices articulated by relevant and appropriate professional associations such as the National
Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators and the Canadian Association of Student Financial Aid
Administrators.
Assessment Criteria:

Scale Score

1.1 The financial aid program has a written mission statement that is consistent with the stated mission of the institution and the standards in this document

1.2 The program has a written set of goals that is consistent with the stated goals and purposes of the institution

1.3 The stated mission and goals are used to guide the implementation of program activities

1.4 Program goal statements are reviewed on a regular basis

1.5 Program goal statements are disseminated on a regular basis

1.6 Program goals and objectives are consistent with all CAS financial aid standards presented within this document

1.7 The program develops and reviews financial resources for students

1.8 The program disseminates financial resources to students

1.9 Financial resources are available to assist students in achieving their educational goals from pre-enrollment through graduation

1.10 The program functions within parameters established by governmental entities

1.11 Within the context of institutional mission and goals, the program addresses

1.11a students in transition

1.11b awarding practices

1.11c financial counseling

1.11d goal integration

1.11e review of goals

Sum of Mission Ratings: 5/20

A. Cite CAS Guidelines to be assessed as program criterion measures for the self-study:

ALL CAS GUIDELINES ARE MET AS REFERRED TO ABOVE

B. Identify, summarize, and cross reference documentation that affects rating decisions:

MONTHLY FA DIRECTORS MEETINGS, CENTRAL MISSION + OBJECTIVES STATEMENT,
AWARD NOTICES TO STUDENTS, FEDERAL, STATE COMPLIANCE + RULES & REGULATIONS;
FINANCIAL AIDS + HANDOUTS TO STUDENTS

C. Identify and list discrepancies between assessment criteria and actual program practice:

There are no discernible discrepancies. Assessment & practices are synchronous.

D. Identify and list action plans proposed to bring the program into compliance with standards:

ALL AID PROGRAMS ARE IN COMPLIANCE WITH STANDARDS OF NASFAA GUIDELINES AND FEDERAL & STATE RULES & REGULATIONS.

E. Identify and list recommended action plans proposed to enhance program quality:

Enhancement can only be achieved with the addition of professional staff members. Current professional staff inadequate to service campus student population.

CAS Self-Assessment Guide 3

Financial Aid Program
Part 2: PROGRAM

The formal education of students is purposeful, holistic, and consists of the curriculum and the cocurriculum. Co-curricular programs and services must be (a) intentional, (b) coherent, (c) based on theories and knowledge of learning and human development, (d) reflective of developmental and demographic profiles of the student population, and (e) responsive to special needs of individuals.

The financial aid program must assist students by addressing financial issues that may serve as barriers to the achievement of educational goals.

The financial aid program must promote learning and development in students by encouraging outcomes such as intellectual growth, ability to communicate effectively, realistic self-appraisal, enhanced self-esteem, clarification of values, appropriate career choices, leadership development, physical fitness, meaningful interpersonal relations, ability to work independently and collaboratively, social responsibility, satisfying and productive lifestyles, appreciation of aesthetic and cultural diversity, and achievement of personal goals.

The financial aid program must
- comply with federal and state law, provincial statutes, and institutional policies;
- promote and maintain integrity, accuracy, and timeliness in the delivery of financial aid;
- provide adequate information for students and parents to make informed decisions regarding the financing of their education; and
- promote and provide equal access to eligible students interested in pursuing an education at the institution.

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**Assessment Criteria:**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>2.1 The financial aid program is purposeful</th>
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<td>2.2 The program is holistic, consisting of the curriculum and cocurriculum</td>
<td>2.2 5</td>
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2.3 The program is intentional in its . . .

2.3a implementation 2.3a 5

2.3b outcome objectives 2.3b 5

2.4 The program is . . .

2.4a coherent in its approach 2.4a 5

2.4b based on relevant theoretical foundations that incorporate knowledge of learning and human development 2.4b 5

2.4c reflective of developmental and demographic profiles of the students served 2.4c 5

2.4d responsive to the special needs of students being served 2.4d 5

2.5 The program promotes student learning and development by encouraging . . .

2.5a intellectual development 2.5a 5

2.5b effective communication skills 2.5b 5

2.5c realistic self appraisal 2.5c 5

2.5d enhanced self-esteem 2.5d 5

2.5e clarification of values 2.5e 5

2.5f appropriate career choices 2.5f 5

2.5g leadership development 2.5g 5

2.5h physical fitness 2.5h 5

Financial Aid Program 4 CAS Self-Assessment Guide
2.5i the ability to relate meaningfully to others
2.5j a capacity to work both independently and collaboratively
2.5k the capacity to function in socially responsible ways
2.5l a capacity to engage in a personally satisfying and productive style of living
2.5m appreciation of cultural differences
2.5n appreciation of aesthetic differences
2.5o achievement of personal goals

2.6 The program addresses financial issues that may serve as barriers to students achieving their educational goals

2.7 The financial aid program...
2.7a complies with federal and state law, provincial statutes, and institutional policies
2.7b maintains integrity, accuracy, and timeliness in delivering financial aid
2.7c provides adequate information for students and parents to use when making informed decisions regarding educational financing
2.7d provides equal access to eligible students interested in institutional study

Sum of Program Ratings: 30

A. Cite CAS Guidelines to be assessed as program criterion measures for the self-study:
Compliance with all federal, state, and institutional laws, regulations, policies, and procedures related to student/parent needs and institutional responsibilities.

B. Identify, summarize, and cross reference documentation that affects rating decisions:
Audit reports, filed with the student, the institutional annual budgets, and policies, need blind procedures, criteria, and dissemination of pertinent information to students, parents, and institutional information workshops.

C. Identify and list discrepancies between assessment criteria and actual program practice:
Delivery of awards could be more timely, although measures are in place to accommodate students at any time.

D. Identify and list action plans proposed to bring the program into compliance with standards:
Forward year policies and procedures provided to academic centers early enough to get award packages out sooner to students. Earlier communication with students to impact school choice decisions.

E. Identify and list recommended action plans proposed to enhance program quality:
More outreach activities, better communication in the form of information letters, workshops, and phone calls. Improved schedule/bill information as it pertains to the various aid programs, more flexible tuition payment plans.

CAS Self-Assessment Guide 5 Financial Aid Program
Part 3: LEADERSHIP

Effective and ethical leadership is essential to the success of all organizations. Institutions must appoint, position and empower leaders within the administrative structure to accomplish stated missions. Leaders at various levels must be selected on the basis of formal education and training, relevant work experience, personal attributes, and other professional credentials. Institutions must determine expectations of accountability for leaders and fairly assess their performance.

Administrators of financial aid programs must exercise authority over resources for which they are responsible to achieve their respective missions. Leaders must articulate a vision for their organization; set goals and objectives; prescribe and practice ethical behavior; recruit, select, supervise, and develop others in the organization; manage, plan, budget, and evaluate; communicate effectively; and marshal cooperative action from colleagues, employees, other institutional constituencies, and persons outside the organization. Leaders must address individual, organizational, or environmental conditions that inhibit goal achievement. Leaders must improve programs and services continuously in response to changing needs of students and institutional priorities.

The institution should designate a well-qualified senior administrator with appropriate financial aid experience and training to effectively lead the financial aid program staff.

The senior financial aid administrator must be able to advocate for and to represent the financial needs of students, the operation and staffing of the financial aid program, and the institution.

The senior financial aid administrator must insure the development of . . .

- a set of policies and procedures that includes descriptions of the administrative processes;
- clearly stated criteria used in the decision making process for financial aid and the source of authority for the criteria employed;
- steps for appealing, evaluating, or revising policies and procedures;
- a statement of the institution's mission, goals, and objectives for the financial aid programs;
- an effective system to manage the programs, services, and personnel of the financial aid program;
- an assessment plan for its programs and services;
- means for coordinating the financial aid program with other institutional agencies; and
- criteria for selecting qualified staff and ensuring adequate opportunities for staff development.

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Assessment Criteria:

3.1 A financial aid program leader has been appointed

3.2 The appointed leader is positioned appropriately within the administrative structure to accomplish financial aid program goals and objectives

3.3 Appointed leaders are selected on the basis of . . .

3.3a formal education and training

3.3b relevant work experience

3.3c relevant personal attributes

3.3d relevant professional credentials

3.4 The institution has established its accountability expectations for the program leader

3.5 The institution fairly assesses the leader's performance

3.6 The leader exercises authority over resources for which he or she is responsible

3.7 The program leader . . .

3.7a articulates a vision for the organization

3.7b sets appropriate goals and objectives

Financial Aid Program 6 CAS Self-Assessment Guide
3.7c prescribes and practices ethical behavior
3.7d recruits and selects well qualified staff members for positions in the organization
3.7e supervises and otherwise promotes the development of staff members in the organization
3.7f manages everyday operations of the program
3.7g leads planning efforts for the program and service
3.7h plans and manages the program budget
3.7i assures that program evaluation processes and procedures are in place and operational
3.7j communicates effectively with program subordinates and superiors
3.7k promotes cooperation and collaboration with professional colleagues, staff members, and other institutional constituencies
3.7l promotes cooperation with persons outside the institution

3.8 The leader addresses behavior of individuals who inhibit program goal achievement
3.9 The leader addresses organizational conditions that inhibit program goal achievement
3.10 The leader addresses environmental conditions that inhibit program goal achievement
3.11 The leader improves program services continuously in response to changing needs of students

3.12 The senior financial aid administrator advocates for the...
   3.12a financial needs of students
   3.12b operation and staffing of the financial aid program
   3.12c institution

3.13 The senior financial aid administrator represents the...
   3.13a financial needs of students
   3.13b operation and staffing of the financial aid program
   3.13c institution

3.14 The senior financial aid administrator ensures the development of...
   3.14a policies and procedures describing administrative processes
   3.14b clearly stated criteria used in financial aid decision making processes
   3.14c steps for appealing, evaluating, or revising policies and procedures
   3.14d a statement of the financial aid program's mission, goals, and objectives
   3.14e an effective system to manage programs, services, and personnel
   3.14f a program assessment plan
   3.14g means for coordinating the program with other institutional agencies
   3.14h criteria to select qualified staff
   3.14i opportunities for staff development

Sum of Leadership Ratings: 180
A. Cite CAS Guidelines to be assessed as program criterion measures for the self-study:

   Advocacy for needs of the student, operation & staffing of the
   FA programs, and institution (senior admin. carries out program criteria)

B. Identify, summarize, and cross reference documentation that affects rating decisions:

   Input into central policies & procedures. Monthly directors meetings.
   Administrative evaluations

C. Identify and list discrepancies between assessment criteria and actual program practice:

   Office operating budget not commensurate with volume of
   dollars its generates. Hiring of experienced personnel decided
   outside of leadership's review

D. Identify and list action plans proposed to bring the program into compliance with standards:

   Regular communication with upper level administrators to
   provide valued input into budget, staffing, and space
   requirements.

E. Identify and list recommended action plans proposed to enhance program quality:

   Improve communication and support, less micro-managing
   in place of adversarial relationships. Deans
   should promote more advocacy relationships
Part 4: ORGANIZATION and MANAGEMENT

The financial aid program must be structured purposefully and managed effectively to achieve stated goals. Evidence of appropriate structure must include current and accessible policies and procedures, written performance expectations for all employees, functional work-flow graphics or organizational charts, and service delivery expectations. Evidence of effective management must include clear sources and channels of authority, effective communication practices, decision-making and conflict resolution procedures, responsiveness to changing conditions, accountability systems, and recognition and reward processes.

The financial aid program must provide channels within its organization for regular review of administrative policies and procedures.

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<td>4.1 The program is structured purposefully to achieve its stated goals</td>
<td>4.1 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.2 The program is managed effectively to achieve its stated goals</td>
<td>4.2 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.3 Policies and procedures are current and accessible</td>
<td>4.3 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.4 Accurate written performance expectations are in place for all employees' functional work assignments</td>
<td>4.4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.5 An accurate organizational chart shows functional work responsibilities and reporting relationships within and beyond the program</td>
<td>4.5 2</td>
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<td>4.6 Service delivery expectations are available to guide staff performance</td>
<td>4.6 5</td>
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<td>4.7 The program organization exhibits effective management through inclusion of . . .</td>
<td>4.7h 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7a clear sources and channels of authority</td>
<td>4.7a 5</td>
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<td>4.7b effective communication practices</td>
<td>4.7b 5</td>
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<td>4.7c systematic decision-making procedures</td>
<td>4.7c 4</td>
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<td>4.7d conflict resolution procedures</td>
<td>4.7d 5</td>
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<td>4.7e responsiveness to changing institutional and environmental conditions</td>
<td>4.7e 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.7f appropriate and well-monitored accountability systems</td>
<td>4.7f 5</td>
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<td>4.7g appropriate staff recognition and reward processes</td>
<td>4.7g 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.7h channels for regular review of administrative policies and procedures</td>
<td>4.7h 5</td>
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Sum of Organization and Management Ratings:

A. Cite CAS Guidelines to be assessed as program criteria measures for the self-study:
   - Central and local policies & procedures. College/wide/campus
   - Organizational charts. Position descriptions. Monthly
   - Director's meetings

B. Identify, summarize, and cross reference documentation that affects rating decisions:
   - Informal channels of authority and employee expectations.
C. Identify and list discrepancies between assessment criteria and actual program practice:

- Need written chart instead of implied roles and responsibilities.
- Decision making procedures geared toward merit and circumstances.
- Civil service practices inhibit reward process.

D. Identify and list action plans proposed to bring the program into compliance with standards:

- Clear concise roles and responsibilities in written format, not informal.
- Decision making procedures and policies need to be outlined and made available to all personnel.
- Performance expectations.

E. Identify and list recommended action plans proposed to enhance program quality:

- Improve effective communication.
- Measure accountability within parameters of program intent.
Part 5: HUMAN RESOURCES

The financial aid program must be staffed adequately by individuals qualified to accomplish its mission and goals. The program must establish procedures for staff selection, training, and evaluation; set expectations for supervision, and provide appropriate professional development opportunities.

Continued training is essential for all financial aid staff. It is imperative to be alert to change within the field and to be able to integrate changes into daily practice.

Every financial aid staff members should be:
- familiar with federal, state/provincial, and institutional regulations, policies, and practices regarding the awarding of financial aid funds;
- willing to seek out and implement new ideas;
- able to translate new ideas into practical methods for improving the overall operation of the financial aid program;
- respectful of the confidential nature of the profession;
- willing to seek out and use new conceptual frameworks and equipment that bring information to students more clearly and effectively; and
- aware of relevant developments in higher education and be able to incorporate these developments.

Job descriptions with the duties and responsibilities for each staff member should be developed. Financial aid staff members should have knowledge and understanding of the mission, programs and services of the institution. Institutional training should be provided for all staff members to include:
- a thorough tour of the campus;
- familiarization with publications, academic programs, admission policies, and services of the institution; and
- rights and responsibilities as an employee of the institution.

Professional staff members must hold an earned graduate degree in a field relevant to the position description or must possess an appropriate combination of education and experience.

Suggested formal training in preparation for professional financial aid employment includes such fields as business administration, computer sciences, information systems, college student personnel, higher education administration, counseling and other human behavior disciplines; course work may include computer literacy, research and statistical methods, counseling, legal issues of higher education, and leadership and management.

Professional staff should be competent to provide assistance to students that may include but not be limited to:
- careful and concerned analysis of each student's need;
- knowledgeable guidance and counseling on all financial aid issues and concerns;
- explanation of federal and state, and, if appropriate, provincial statutes of Canada; and
- interpretation of institutional policies and procedures.

Graduate students, interns, and others in training must be instructed and supervised adequately by professional staff members.

Student employees and volunteers must be carefully selected, trained, supervised, and evaluated. When their knowledge and skills are not adequate for particular situations, they must refer students or others in need of assistance to qualified professional staff members.

Student employees and volunteers should be trained in public relations, referral techniques, peer counseling, and dissemination of information. They should be knowledgeable in their individual job assignments and understand the confidential nature of their positions.

The financial aid program must have secretarial and technical staff adequate to accomplish its mission. Such staff must be technologically proficient and qualified to perform activities including reception duties, office equipment operation, records maintenance, and mail handling.

Support staff members should be skilled in interpersonal communications, public relations, referral techniques and dissemination of information. Professional and support staff members with higher technical responsibilities should possess the academic background and experience for effective performance. Support staff members should understand the confidential nature of their job.

Appropriate salary levels and fringe benefits for all staff members must be commensurate with those for comparable positions within the institution, in similar institutions, and in the relevant geographic area.
To reflect the diversity of the student population, to ensure the existence of readily identifiable role models for students and to enrich the campus community, institutions must intentionally employ a diverse staff.

Affirmative action must occur in hiring and promotion practices as required to ensure diverse staffing profiles.

Degree or credential seeking interns or others in training must be qualified by enrollment in an appropriate field of study and relevant experience.

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**Assessment Criteria:**

5.1 The program is staffed adequately by individuals qualified to accomplish its mission and goals

5.2 The program has established procedures for...
   5.2a staff selection
   5.2b staff training
   5.2c staff evaluation

5.3 The program has set expectations for staff supervision

5.4 The program provides and encourages appropriate professional staff development opportunities

5.5 Individual professional staff members hold either an earned graduate degree in a field relevant to the position held or possess an appropriate combination of education and experience

5.6 Interns and others in program-sponsored training are qualified by enrollment in an appropriate field of study and relevant experience

5.7 Interns and others in training receive effective training and supervision from professional staff members

5.8 Student employees and volunteers are...
   5.8a carefully selected
   5.8b trained and supervised by professional staff members
   5.8c evaluated in their work

5.9 When the knowledge and skills of student employees and volunteers are not adequate for particular situations, they refer students and others to qualified professional staff members for assistance

5.10 The program has secretarial and technical staff adequate to accomplish its mission

5.11 Staff members are technologically proficient to accomplish assigned tasks

5.12 Clerical staff members are qualified to perform...
   5.12a reception duties
   5.12b office equipment operations
   5.12c records maintenance
   5.12d mail handling

**Scale Score**

5.1 3

5.2a 5

5.2b 5

5.2c 5

5.3 5

5.4 3

5.5 5

5.6 1 (INA)

5.7 1 (INA)

5.8a 5

5.8b 5

5.8c 4

5.9 5

5.10 5

5.11 5

5.12a 5

5.12b 5

5.12c 5

5.12d 5
5.13 Salary levels and fringe benefits for all staff members are commensurate with those for comparable positions in...

5.13a the institution
5.13b in similar institutions
5.13c in the local geographic area

5.14 The program employs staff members from diverse cultural, ethnic, and social backgrounds

5.15 Program hiring and promotion practices reflect affirmative action patterns as required to ensure diverse staffing profiles

5.16 The program is alert to changes within the field and integrates them into daily practice

Sum of Human Resource Ratings: 5/5

A. Cite CAS Guidelines to be assessed as program criterion measures for the self-study:

Staff Education & Experience, Adequacy of Staff Size, Professional Experience, Evaluation Process

B. Identify, summarize, and cross reference documentation that affects rating decisions:

Conference requests denied, insufficient professional staffing (cite NASFAA guidelines on staffing w/ campuses of comparable size)

C. Identify and list discrepancies between assessment criteria and actual program practice:

Actual program practices are within federal & state compliance.
No system in place for student evaluation. Staff members not chosen with regard to diversity. Staff insufficient or inadequate to serve population (MDS & states evaluation)

D. Identify and list action plans proposed to bring the program into compliance with standards:

Shast + Professional Development must go beyond contractual limitations. Need for credit worker evaluations.

E. Identify and list recommended action plans proposed to enhance program quality:

Program quality can be enhanced with more administrative support. Required training + updates must be encouraged & supported.
Part 6: FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The financial aid program must have adequate funding to accomplish its mission and goals. Priorities, whether set periodically or as a result of extraordinary conditions, must be determined within the context of the stated mission, goals, and resources.

Funding for the financial aid program should cover staff salaries; purchases and maintenance of office furnishings and equipment, including state of the art technology; purchases of supplies and materials; telephone, fax, electronic communication and postage costs; printing and media costs; institutional membership in appropriate professional organizations; relevant subscriptions and necessary library resources; attendance at professional association meetings, conferences, workshops and other professional development activities. In addition to institutional commitment of general funds, other funding sources may be considered including state appropriations, federal resources, student fees, fines, donations and contributions.

The financial aid program budget must be properly prepared, clearly detailed and defined, continually monitored and adequately funded for full program support.

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Assessment Criteria:

6.1 Funding is adequate to carry out the program's mission and goals
   Scale Score: 6.1 2

6.2 Priorities are set within the context of the program's stated mission and goals
   Scale Score: 6.2 5

6.3 Priorities are set within the program's available fiscal resources
   Scale Score: 6.3 4

6.4 The program budget is . . .
   6.4a properly prepared
   Scale Score: 6.4a 1
   6.4b clearly detailed and defined
   Scale Score: 6.4b 1
   6.4c continually monitored
   Scale Score: 6.4c 1

Sum of Financial Resources Ratings: 14

A. Cite CAS Guidelines to be assessed as program criterion measures for the self-study:
   BUDGET REVIEW AND FUNDING LEVELS

B. Identify, summarize, and cross reference documentation that affects rating decisions:
   INADEQUATE FUNDING LEVELS

C. Identify and list discrepancies between assessment criteria and actual program practice:
   FUNDING AND BUDGET NOT COMMENSURATE WITH PROGRAM VOLUME OF DOLLAR AWARDS AND POPULATION SERVED

D. Identify and list action plans proposed to bring the program into compliance with standards:
   ADMINISTRATION MUST PROVIDE FOR ADEQUATE BUDGET FUNDING
   PURCHASING SHOULD BE STREAMLINED - TOO MUCH STAFF TIME INVOLVED

E. Identify and list recommended action plans proposed to enhance program quality:
   CENTRAL DIRECTOR & CAMPUS DIRECTOR SHOULD WORK WITH CAMPUS ADMINISTRATION TO ARRIVE AT A REALISTIC OPERATING BUDGET TO IMPROVE EMPLOYEE WORKING CONDITIONS

Financial Aid Program 14 CAS Self-Assessment Guide
Part 7: FACILITIES, TECHNOLOGY, and EQUIPMENT

The financial aid program must have adequate, suitably located facilities, technology, and equipment to support its mission and goals. Facilities and equipment must be in compliance with relevant federal, state/provincial, and local requirements to provide for access, health and safety.

The financial aid program should be readily accessible, included on campus maps, and have highly visible signage. The program should have facilities or have access to:
- private office or space for confidential counseling, interviewing, and other meetings;
- office, reception, and storage space and security sufficient to accommodate assigned staff, supplies, equipment, library resources, and machinery; and
- conference room or meeting space.

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<td>7.2 The program has adequate technology to support its mission and goals</td>
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<td>7.3 The program has adequate equipment to support its mission and goals</td>
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<td>7.4 Program facilities are suitably located to support its mission and goals</td>
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<td>7.5 Program technology is suitably located to support its mission and goals</td>
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<td>7.6 Program equipment is suitably located to support its mission and goals</td>
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<td>7.7 The program's facilities are in compliance with relevant federal, state/provincial, and/or local requirements to provide appropriate access, health, and safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.8 The program's technology is in compliance with relevant federal, state/provincial and/or local requirements to provide appropriate access, health, and safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.9 The program's equipment is in compliance with relevant federal, state/provincial and/or local requirements to provide appropriate access, health, and safety</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sum of Facilities, Technology, and Equipment Ratings: 4.3

A. Cite CAS Guidelines to be assessed as program criterion measures for the self-study:

FACILITIES, TECHNOLOGY, AND EQUIPMENT

B. Identify, summarize, and cross reference documentation that affects rating decisions:

- FACILITIES: INADEQUATE IN COMPARISON TO SIZE OF STAFF
- STORAGE INADEQUATE
- SIGNAGE INSUFFICIENT. INTERVIEW AREA DOES NOT LEND ITSELF TO CONFIDENTIALITY
- SPACE RESTRICTIVE. NO VISIBLE SIGN OF SECURITY
- SUPPLIES & EQUIPMENT REQUIRES LARGER BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

C. Identify and list discrepancies between assessment criteria and actual program practice:

- INCREASE STAFF SPACE. INTAKE PRIVACY AN ISSUE

D. Identify and list action plans proposed to bring the program into compliance with standards:

- EXPAND, IMPROVE, AND DEVELOP FACILITIES, TECHNOLOGY AND EQUIPMENT

E. Identify and list recommended action plans proposed to enhance program quality:

- EXPAND, IMPROVE, AND DEVELOP FACILITIES, TECHNOLOGY AND EQUIPMENT

CAS Self-Assessment Guide 15 Financial Aid Program
Part 8: LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Financial aid program staff members must be knowledgeable about and responsive to laws and regulations that relate to their respective program or service. Sources for legal obligations and limitations are constitutional, federal, statutory, regulatory, and case law; mandatory laws and orders emanating from federal, state/provincial and local governments; and the institution through its policies.

Financial aid staff members must use reasonable and informed practices to limit the liability exposure of the institution, its officers, employees, and agents. Staff members must be informed about institutional policies regarding personal liability and related insurance coverage options.

The institution must provide access to legal advice for staff members as needed to carry out assigned responsibilities.

The institution must inform staff and students, in a timely and systematic fashion, about extraordinary or changing legal obligations and potential liabilities.

Financial aid staff members must be aware of the legal and ethical limits and standards relevant to their roles and perform any counseling or guidance functions accordingly.

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Assessment Criteria:

8.1 Staff members are knowledgeable about and responsive to laws and regulations relevant to respective programs and services

8.2 Staff members exhibit practice that is reasonable and informed and that limits the institution and its officers, employees, and agents to liability exposure

8.3 Staff members are informed about institutional policies regarding personal liability and related insurance coverage options

8.4 Staff members are provided access to legal advice as needed to implement assigned responsibilities

8.5 Staff members and students are informed in a timely and systematic fashion about extraordinary or changing legal obligations and potential liabilities

8.6 Staff members are aware of the legal and ethical limits and standards relevant to their roles and perform counseling and guidance functions accordingly

Sum of Legal Responsibilities Ratings: 26

A. Cite CAS Guidelines to be assessed as program criterion measures for the self-study:

KNOWLEDGE OF AND RESPONSIVE TO LAWS + REGS.

B. Identify, summarize, and cross reference documentation that affects rating decisions:

COLLEGE CATALOG, FERPA, BUCKLEY AMENDMENT

UNION CONTRACTS, FEDERAL + STATE RULES + REGS


Financial Aid Program 16 CAS Self-Assessment Guide
C. Identify and list discrepancies between assessment criteria and actual program practice:

There are no discrepancies

D. Identify and list action plans proposed to bring the program into compliance with standards:

More info. is required for item 8.3

E. Identify and list recommended action plans proposed to enhance program quality:

Item 8.3 needs further exploration
Part 9: EQUAL OPPORTUNITY, ACCESS, and AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Financial aid staff members must ensure that services and programs are provided on a fair and equitable basis. Each program and service must be accessible. Hours of operation must be responsive to the needs of all students. Each program and service must adhere to the spirit and intent of equal opportunity laws.

The program should ensure that its programs, services, and facilities are accessible to and provide hours of operation that respond to the needs of special populations, including traditionally under-represented, evening, part-time and commuter students.

The financial aid program must not be discriminatory on the basis of age, color, disability, gender, national origin, race, religious creed, sexual orientation, and/or veteran status. Exceptions are appropriate only where provided by relevant law and institutional policy.

Consistent with its mission and goals, the financial aid program must take affirmative action to remedy significant imbalances in student participation and staffing patterns in keeping with court mandated, institutional, local, state/provincial, and federal laws.

Institutional and financial aid publications must reflect relevant federal and state law, Provincial Statutes, if applicable, and institutional policies and practices.

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**Assessment Criteria:**

**Scale Score**

9.1 Staff members ensure the provision of financial aid services on a fair and equitable basis 9.1 __5__

9.2 The program and its services are accessible to all constituents 9.2 __5__

9.3 Program hours of operation are responsive to the needs of all students, including traditionally under-represented, evening, part-time, and commuter students 9.3 __5 (3)__

9.4 The program adheres to the spirit and intent of equal opportunity laws 9.4 __5__

9.5 The program does not discriminate in its policies with regard to age, color, disability, gender, race, national origin, religious creed, sexual orientation, and/or veteran status 9.5 __5__

9.6 Exceptions to program policy are made only as required by law or institutional policy 9.6 __5__

9.7 Affirmative action is practiced to remedy significant imbalances in student participation and staffing patterns 9.7 __5__

9.8 Financial aid publications reflect relevant federal and state law, provincial statutes, and institutional policies and practices 9.8 __5__

**Sum of Equal Opportunity, Access, and Affirmative Action Ratings:** __50__

A. Cite CAS Guidelines to be assessed as program criterion measures for the self-study:

**EQUAL ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY / NON-DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES AND POLICIES**

B. Identify, summarize, and cross reference documentation that affects rating decisions:

**COLLEGE CATALOG / ALL FEDERAL AND STATE GUIDELINES**

**RULES & REGULATIONS / SEMESTER PUBLISHED HOURS OF OPERATION**
C. Identify and list discrepancies between assessment criteria and actual program practice:

No discrepancies to cite

D. Identify and list action plans proposed to bring the program into compliance with standards:

Programs & Practices in full compliance

E. Identify and list recommended action plans proposed to enhance program quality:

No enhancements to recommend
Part 10: CAMPUS and COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The financial aid program must establish, maintain, and promote effective relationships with relevant campus offices and external agencies.

Institutional functions and constituencies linked to financial aid typically include admissions, registration and records, athletics, business services, academic advising, counseling services, student affirmative action, outreach programs, educational opportunity programs, career planning and placement, institutional development and faculty and alumni affairs.

Financial aid documents must be accurate and their confidentiality maintained by all offices at the institution.

Financial aid and admission decisions should be made independently. However, the financial aid program should have access to appropriate information in the student’s admission file to assure compliance with applicable rules and regulations.

The financial aid program should maintain relationships with interested groups within the community regarding general and institutional financial aid practices. The community may include grant and scholarship agencies, high schools, and other community outreach programs.

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Assessment Criteria:

10.1 The program has established and maintained effective working relationships with campus offices whose operations are relevant to its mission and goals

10.2 The program promotes effective working relationships with campus offices whose operations are relevant to its mission and goals

10.3 The program has established and maintained effective working relationships with external agencies whose operations are relevant to its mission and goals

10.4 The program promotes effective working relationships with external agencies whose operations are relevant to its mission and goals

10.5 Confidentiality of financial aid documents is maintained throughout the institution

Scale Score

10.1 5

10.2 5

10.3 5

10.4 5

10.5 5

Sum of Campus and Community Ratings: 25

A. Cite CAS Guidelines to be assessed as program criterion measures for the self-study:

B. Identify, summarize, and cross reference documentation that affects rating decisions:

- Document Accuracy/Confidentiality/Campus and Community Relations
- Enrollment Services Team/Award Checks/Balances (Transactional)
- Limited Computer File Access/Outreach/Computer Listserv/Student Workshops

C. Identify and list discrepancies between assessment criteria and actual program practice:

- None

D. Identify and list action plans proposed to bring the program into compliance with standards:

- None

E. Identify and list recommended action plans proposed to enhance program quality:

- None
Part 11: DIVERSITY

Within the context of each institution's unique mission, multi-dimensional diversity enriches the community and enhances the collegiate experience for all; therefore, programs and services must nurture environments where similarities and differences among people are recognized and honored.

The financial aid program must promote cultural educational experiences that are characterized by open and continuous communication, that deepen understanding of one's own culture and heritage, and that respect and educate about similarities, differences and histories of cultures. The financial aid program must address the characteristics and needs of a diverse population when establishing and implementing policies and procedures.

Financial aid staff members should be particularly sensitive to the needs of traditionally under-represented students and students with special needs.

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Assessment Criteria:

11.1 The financial aid program nurtures environments where similarities and differences among people are recognized and honored

11.2 The program promotes cultural educational experiences that...
11.2a are characterized by open and continuous communication
11.2b deepen understanding of a student's own culture and heritage
11.2c respect and educate about similarities among people
11.2d respect and educate about differences among people
11.2e respect and educate about the histories of various cultures

11.3 The program, when establishing and implementing policies and procedures, addresses unique characteristics and needs of the diverse population it serves

Scale Score:

11.1 5
11.2a 5
11.2b 5
11.2c 5
11.2d 5
11.2e 5
11.3 5

Sum of Diversity Ratings: 35

A. Cite CAS Guidelines to be assessed as program criterion measures for the self-study:

B. Identify, summarize, and cross reference documentation that affects rating decisions:

C. Identify and list discrepancies between assessment criteria and actual program practice:

D. Identify and list action plans proposed to bring the program into compliance with standards:

E. Identify and list recommended action plans proposed to enhance program quality:

All programs are in compliance with standards

No action is required
Part 12: ETHICS

Students must be provided access to financial aid programs and services on a fair and equitable basis. All persons involved in the delivery of financial aid must adhere to the highest principles of ethical behavior. Programs and services must develop or adopt and implement statements of ethical practice addressing the issues unique to each program and service. Programs and services must publish these statements and insure their periodic review by all concerned.

In the formulation of these standards, ethical standards statements adopted by the profession at large or relevant professional associations may be of assistance and should be considered.

Financial aid staff members must ensure that confidentiality is maintained with respect to all communications and records considered confidential unless exempted by law. Information disclosed in individual counseling sessions must remain confidential, unless written permission to divulge the information is given by the student. However, all staff members must disclose to appropriate authorities information judged to be of an emergency nature, especially when the safety of the individual or others is involved. Information contained in students’ educational records must not be disclosed to non-institutional third parties without appropriate consent, unless classified as “Directory” information or when the information is subpoenaed by law. The financial aid program must apply a similar dedication to privacy and confidentiality to research data concerning individuals. All staff members must be aware of and comply with the provisions contained in the institution’s human subjects research policy and in other relevant institutional policies addressing ethical practices.

Financial aid staff members must recognize and avoid personal conflict of interest or appearance thereof in their transactions with students and others. Staff members must strive to insure the fair, objective, and impartial treatment of all persons with whom they deal. When handling institutional funds, all staff members must ensure that such funds are managed in accordance with established and responsible accounting procedures.

Financial aid staff members must maintain the highest principles of ethical behavior in the use of technology. Financial aid staff members must not participate in any form of harassment that demeans persons or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive campus environment.

Staff members must perform their duties within the limits of their training, expertise, and competence. When these limits are exceeded, individuals in need of further assistance must be referred to persons possessing appropriate qualifications.

Financial aid staff members must use suitable means to confront and otherwise hold accountable other staff members who exhibit unethical behavior.

Financial aid administrators must insure timely and fair administration of policies regarding financial aid decisions and proper notification.

Publications and written communications should include a financial aid deadlines and information on opportunities for financial aid.

Financial aid must be awarded in compliance with applicable rules and regulations governing financial aid.

When appropriate, the senior financial aid administrator and professional staff members may need to exercise professional judgment in making exceptions to established financial aid policies. These decisions should be made in a fair and objective manner with supporting documentation.

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Assessment Criteria:

12.1 All staff members adhere to the highest principles of ethical behavior

12.2 Staff members have developed and/or adopted a statement of ethical standards for the program and service to use as a guide to professional practice

Financial Aid Program: 22

CAS Self-Assessment Guide
12.3 The adopted ethical standards are available in written form and accessible to staff members

12.4 The adopted ethical standards are reviewed periodically by professional staff

12.5 Appropriate measures are in place to assure the privacy of individuals and confidentiality of information concerning all communications and records considered confidential, unless exempted by law

12.6 Appropriate steps have been taken to insure that information disclosed in individual counseling sessions remains confidential unless written permission to divulge the information is given by the student.

12.7 Program policy provides for disclosure of information judged to be of an emergency nature to appropriate authorities when the safety of the individual or others is involved.

12.8 Program policy protects information contained in students' educational records from disclosure to non-institutional third parties without appropriate consent, unless classified as "Directory" information or when the information is lawfully subpoenaed

12.9 The program and service protect the privacy and confidentiality of research data concerning individuals in a fashion similar to that of other confidential information.

12.10 Staff members are informed about and comply with the provisions of the institution's human subjects research policy and other relevant institutional policies addressing ethical practices.

12.11 Staff members recognize and make concerted efforts to avoid personal conflicts of interest or the appearance thereof in their transactions with students and others

12.12 Staff members ensure the fair, objective, and impartial treatment of all persons with whom they deal

12.13 Staff members function so as to ensure that institutional funds are managed in accordance with established and responsible accounting procedures.

12.14 Staff members do not participate in any form of harassment that demeans persons or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive campus environment.

12.15 Staff members perform their duties within the limits of their training, expertise and competence and refer individuals in need of advanced levels of assistance to staff members who possess appropriate qualifications.

12.16 Staff members apply suitable means to confront and otherwise hold accountable other staff members who exhibit unethical behavior.

12.17 Staff members maintain high principles of ethical behavior when using technology.

12.18 Students are provided access to services on a fair and equitable basis.

12.19 Policies are in place that assure

12.19a timely financial aid decisions and proper notification

12.19b fair financial aid decisions

12.20 Financial aid is awarded in compliance with applicable rules and regulations.

Sum of Ethics Ratings: 7.5

A. Cite CAS Guidelines to be assessed as program criterion measures for the self-study:

Federal + State Rules + Regulations THAT GLOVEN FA PROGRAMS,

FAIDs (FA Advisors) Amends. NYSFAA + NASFAA Guides

CAS Self-Assessment Guide 23 Financial Aid Program
B. Identify, summarize, and cross reference documentation that affects rating decisions:

REFERENCE TO THE COLLEGE CATALOG, FERPA GUIDELINES
(BUCKLEY AMENDMENT), STUDENT GUIDELINES

C. Identify and list discrepancies between assessment criteria and actual program practice:

No discrepancies to my knowledge

D. Identify and list action plans proposed to bring the program into compliance with standards:

All programs and practices are in full compliance with standards

E. Identify and list recommended action plans proposed to enhance program quality:

Monthly meetings and updates to reinforce ethical standards

ETHICAL STANDARDS HANDOUT
AS REMINDER
Part 13: ASSESSMENT and EVALUATION

The Program and service must regularly conduct systematic qualitative and quantitative evaluations of program quality to determine whether and to what degree the stated mission and goals are being met. Although methods of assessment vary, programs and services must employ a sufficient range of measures to insure objectivity and comprehensiveness. Data collected must include responses from students and other affected constituencies. Results of these evaluations must be used in revising and improving programs and services and in recognizing staff performance.

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<td>Info. Not Available</td>
<td>Exemplary</td>
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**Assessment Criteria:**

13.1 The financial aid program regularly conducts systematic qualitative program evaluations to determine how well its mission and goals are being met. 

13.2 The program regularly conducts systematic quantitative program evaluations to determine how well its mission and goals are being met.

13.3 The program employs a sufficient range of measures to insure objectivity and comprehensiveness.

13.4 Among the data collected are responses elicited directly from students and other affected constituencies.

13.5 Assessment and evaluation results are used to revise and improve program services.

13.6 Assessment and evaluation results are used to recognize staff performance.

**Scale Score**

13.1 4

13.2 5

13.3 5

13.4 5

13.5 5

13.6 5

**Sum of Assessment and Evaluation Ratings:** 29

A. Cite CAS Guidelines to be assessed as program criterion measures for the self-study:

**Qualitative and Quantitative Evaluations**

B. Identify, summarize, and cross-reference documentation that affects rating decisions:

- Student Opinion Surveys
- Monthly Cross-Campus Director's Meetings

C. Identify and list discrepancies between assessment criteria and actual program practice:

**Surveys are not frequent enough**

D. Identify and list action plans proposed to bring the program into compliance with standards:

- Periodic Internal Program Reviews
- Internal Audits

E. Identify and list recommended action plans proposed to enhance program quality:

- Student Opinion Surveys should be distributed with every aid application
- Central FA should perform regular campus aid office reviews
- Resuscitate the F.A.R.C. Meetings

CAS Self-Assessment Guide 25 Financial Aid Program
### CAS

COUNCIL FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF STANDARDS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

CAS Financial Aid Program Standards
Criteria Rating Summary Sheet

After completing the worksheet rating process, write the sum of the ratings for each component in the space provided and divide by the Total Possible Rating value immediately to the right. Then write the resulting percentage in the Component Compliance Score space on the right. That Compliance value reflects the difference between the highest possible rating and the self-assessment team’s ratings. The larger the resulting percentage, the greater the component’s compliance with the standards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard Component</th>
<th>Component Total Rating</th>
<th>Total Possible Rating</th>
<th>Component Compliance Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part 1. MISSION</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Part 2. PROGRAM</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>93%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Part 3. LEADERSHIP</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>94%</td>
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<td>Part 4. ORGANIZATION and MANAGEMENT</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>89%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Part 5. HUMAN RESOURCES</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>90%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Part 6. FINANCIAL RESOURCES</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>47%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Part 7. FACILITIES, TECHNOLOGY, and EQUIPMENT</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 8. LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>87%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Part 9. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY, ACCESS, and AFFIRMATIVE ACTION</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Part 10. CAMPUS and COMMUNITY RELATIONS</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Part 11. DIVERSITY</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Part 12. ETHICS</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Part 13. ASSESSMENT and EVALUATION</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>97%</td>
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**INTERPRETING THE CRITERIA SUMMARY RATINGS**

A Component Compliance Score less than 50% of the Total Possible Rating value indicates need for action plans to substantially improve the component.

A Component Compliance Score greater than 50% but less than 75% of the Total Possible Rating value indicates need for action plans targeting improvement in that area.

A Component Compliance Score greater than 75% but less than 100% of the Total Possible Rating value indicates the component is functioning in a reasonably adequate way, but action plans should be developed to strengthen the area.

A Component Compliance Score of 100% of the Total Possible Rating value indicates that the component meets all essential standards, although action plans might be considered to increase program effectiveness.
Suffolk County Community College
Office of Financial Aid
Student Survey

This survey has been designed by the Suffolk County Community College Financial Aid Office to assess your level of satisfaction with the financial aid services we offer and to assist the college in improving its services and programs.

Instructions: Please read the questions below, select the response that best describes your experience and darken the bubble that corresponds to your answer. Return the completed form in the enclosed envelope.
Please use a No.2 pencil.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campus</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Family Income</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>under 18</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>$0-24,999</td>
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<td>Ammerman</td>
<td>18-19</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>$25,000-$49,999</td>
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<td>West</td>
<td>20-22</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>$50,000+</td>
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<td>23-24</td>
<td>Female</td>
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<td>25-34</td>
<td>Female</td>
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<td>35-44</td>
<td>Male</td>
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<td>45-59</td>
<td>Female</td>
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<td>60 or older</td>
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1. Please indicate which of the following applies to you with regard to financial aid for this year. (2000-2001)
   ☐ First-time applicant ☐ Repeat applicant ☐ Did not apply

2. Without financial aid, how would your attendance at SCC for this semester have been affected?
   ☐ I would have been able to attend SCC this semester.
   ☐ I would have been able to attend SCC this semester, but would have taken fewer courses.
   ☐ I would not have been able to attend SCC this semester at all.
   ☐ Not Applicable. I do not have financial aid this semester.

3. Please indicate the type of financial assistance you are receiving.
   ☐ Grant (Pell, SEOG, TAP, APTS)
   ☐ Loan (subsidized, unsubsidized)
   ☐ Work Study
   ☐ Don't know what type
   ☐ Applied, but didn't receive aid
   ☐ Did not apply

4. Have you received any information about financial aid programs, policies, and application procedures?
   ☐ No
   ☐ Yes
   If yes, please indicate which activities provided you with information. (Mark all that apply.)
   ☐ Meeting with financial aid counselor or advisor
   ☐ Loan counseling
   ☐ Financial aid application workshop
   ☐ General financial aid information workshop
   ☐ Financial aid brochures and printed information
   ☐ Phone calls to the Financial Aid Office
   ☐ Financial aid Web site
   ☐ Electronic filing at Financial Aid Office
   ☐ Conversation with financial aid staff member at reception counter
   ☐ Other, specify: ______________________

5. If you have had occasion to telephone the Financial Aid Office, please indicate your purpose(s). (Mark all that apply.)
   ☐ Information about application process/request application forms
   ☐ Assistance in completing forms
   ☐ Check on the status of aid application
   ☐ Discuss award package or denial
   ☐ Inquiry regarding billing, payment or disbursement of financial aid funds
   ☐ To seek assistance from counselor or advisor regarding special circumstance
   ☐ Other (i.e., waiver, emergency loan, academic eligibility, withdrawal impact, or work study)

6. Please indicate your experience when telephoning the Financial Aid Office. (Mark all that apply.)
   ☐ Staff member was helpful
   ☐ Received information I requested
   ☐ Given an appointment to see a counselor
   ☐ Persistent busy signals
   ☐ No answer during business hours
   ☐ On hold for too long
   ☐ Received recorded message
   ☐ Staff member was not helpful
   ☐ Left message and received return call

Continued
Please list any aspects of the Financial Aid office services that particularly pleased or displeased you.

- "I am still waiting to find out about my Federal aid. Folder has been sitting around since September."
- "Very helpful and friendly staff. They walk you through the entire process without stressing you out."
- "The house they are available are good. They are there all the time."
- "Displeased when you call the financial aid office you get a recorded message throughout the day."
- "Displeased about having an audience while discussing my financial information."
- "The clerk was helpful. She gave me instructions on what to do if I needed help and gave me a name and phone number to call after hours."
- "Have had no interaction/contact with the SCCC financial aid office. Just filled out FAFSA on line and TAP by mail. Have not received any notification as to results of applications."
- "They helped me fill out my application that was very helpful because I got to do it on line and I don't have a computer at home."
- "Staff very helpful, thank you very much."
- "They are very friendly at the Financial Aid office. They help you promptly."
- "The attitudes on the women in the financial aid office at Ammerman! They are very intimidating!!"
- "The fact that I am white and cannot receive any because my family makes to much I DON'T MAKE ENOUGH!"
- "The only aid I received was APTS. I was unaware it was not dispersed until the end of the semester. I had to borrow money."
- "The fact that service is given where everyone can hear you."
- "The counselors should be there to help instead they talk to you like an idiot and act like they don't have time for you. Attitude is very poor."
SUFFOLK COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Financial Aid Student Survey
Ammerman Campus Student Comments

- "One thing that was displeasing was the way I was rushed in and out of the office."
- "I was pleased they could help me."
- "The financial aid process was virtually painless."
- "I have used Western, as well as, Ammerman and Western was much more helpful and patient."
- "They were very helpful and extremely nice when I called."
- "I went through independent means to seek financial aid, a the financial aid office didn’t seem to be readily available to assist me."
- "Everyone has been very nice and helpful."
- "It would be helpful to note on tuition bills, which semester it is for. (I’m referring to overdue notices)."
- "The counselor was nice, but I’m still uncertain about a little bit of this whole process."
- "Mary Zat was a wonderful help."
- "Everyone is very pleasant and extremely helpful at financial aid."
- "WOW. If only other students knew how knowledgeable and helpful the staff were, they would also be very pleased. A lot of stress of going to school has been lifted from my shoulders."
- "Very patient and helpful."
- "The help from Veronica at Suffolk Community Campus in Selden financial aid office."
- "The promptness of coming into the office to request and receive the information I needed."
- "The office was extremely helpful and answered all my questions."
- "Very friendly and helpful. Never turns away a student no matter how busy."
- "Very helpful."
- "Rude!"
1. The office is understaffed; set-up is terrible and leads to frustration on students' parts. The staff is excellent especially under the conditions in which they work. Let's hope we don't lose Annette Ambrogini or that office will be in big trouble.

2. I do not know enough about the Financial Aid Office to provide a valid answer to Q 10.

3. Kate Baum and Veronica are doing a fantastic job – the whole staff is efficient and complete and helpful to campus students – keep up the good work!

4. I often speak with students who will not withdraw from a course because it will affect their financial aid. Consequently, they remain and usually receive a low or failing grade. I'm not so sure this policy best serves the student.

5. Carl Bello, this is the best survey. I commend you on taking the time to administer a quality survey such as this. Hopefully, others will take “time out” during their busy schedules to take part. Congrats! Well done.

6. This survey should be online.

7. All incoming students should be made aware of financial aid opportunities. I have students who should be eligible who did not know of programs.

8. Short on staff Office conditions poor

9. Students should be made more aware of availability of emergency loans and other aid etc.

10. Send more interoffice information to each department about programs available through your office. This way it can be posted in classrooms so faculty members can point it out to students who may ask questions about programs, financial aid etc. they can’t answer.

11. Rock on!

12. Concerning questions 2,3 and 4 – need a “Rarely” category, 9 – “Don’t know”, 10 – “Not enough knowledge to evaluate”

13. It all appears you all have a public relations problem. You need to sell yourselves to general faculty (adjuncts and full-timers).

14. Mr. Fleming has been extremely helpful with student that I have referred to his office.

15. Question, do students know difference between grants and loans? What happens when students start and stop more than one semester?

16. What little interaction I have had has always been positive.

17. Bello rules! I am also aware that he is a key contributor to the success of the Clipper baseball team (Suffolk Life – fall '01').

18. Staff seems to do a great job considering lack of resources and personnel.

19. I can’t answer 9 & 10 because I don’t know.
## Campus

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I. OVERVIEW

The 2000-01 academic year was a period of major transition and significant challenges for the Financial Aid Office (FAO), beginning with the arrival of a new director in July 2000 and ending with the near completion of a comprehensive program review. Among the initiatives which the FAO implemented during the year were the establishment of the Computer Lab, in-person and on-line Loan Entrance Counseling for first-time borrowers, and "Financial Aid Awareness Week." With the addition of a Professional Assistant in the spring of 2000, the operation also made significant progress in its campus and community outreach efforts. To date, the FAO has awarded in excess of $9.6M to more than 3,800 students (see charts). With the exception of the full implementation of the FEITH imaging system, the FAO successfully achieved its goals for the 2000-01 academic year. However, the coming academic year will likely prove to be an even greater challenge in the face of a serious staffing shortage compounded with ongoing college-wide budget shortfalls. Below is a summary of the years’ activities:

II. PROGRAM STATISTICS

- **Comparison of Award Volume by Program** for 1998-99, 1999-00, 2000-01: see attached chart

  As of 5/31/01, federal and state grant award volume for 2000-01 increased by 9% over 1999-2000, with increases for each of the five grant programs.

  Student loan volume actually decreased by 10% since 1999-2000 and by 14% since 1998-1999. This is partially attributable to changes to the packaging policy which restricts loan offers to Pell grant-eligible students. (This measure, together with our Loan Entrance Interviews, will assist us in keeping our campus loan default rate to a minimum).

- **Distribution of Aid by Program** for 2000-01: see attached chart

  Percentage of student population receiving aid: 35%

  Data to confirm total number of applicants (as opposed to actual award recipients) is not yet available. Therefore, we cannot report the percentage of the student population that applied for but didn’t actually receive financial aid in 2000-01. Updated information will be provided after Central Financial Aid completes 2000-01 FISAP report.

III. TRAINING & STAFF DEVELOPMENT

The Financial Aid staff participated in a variety of in-house and off-campus training activities to increase and enhance their knowledge in the areas of software applications (Microsoft Word, Outlook Express, EDEExpress, EDConnect, FEITH), on-line applications (FAFSA on the Web, HESCWeb, National Student Loan Data System-NDSLDS,) as well as federal, state, and institutional policies, procedures, and regulations. The addition of the FA Computer Lab
required staff members, particularly the College Aides, to become proficient with the websites utilized by students in order to assist them. Veronica Miller, PA3, took the lead in developing training materials for the Computer Lab and conducting the sessions with the staff. Professional staff members regularly attended monthly NYSFAAA meetings/training workshops in addition to training seminars offered by the Department of Education and NYS Higher Education Services Corporation. With the increasing complexity of the procedures and regulations governing financial aid, ongoing staff training and development will remain a top priority in 2001-02 (see Goals & Objectives). Despite budgetary constraints, it is critical that the necessary funding be available for this purpose so as to ensure a high standard of service delivery.

IV. OUTREACH

The FAO launched an earnest campaign within the campus community to increase awareness of our programs and services. Among the areas with whom we collaborated to provide staff and students with important financial aid information were: Admissions, Advising & Testing/Counseling, Career Services, Child Care, CS15 instructors, Dean of Students, EOP, GED, and Student Support Services. In addition, the following workshops were offered to students during the spring 2001 semester: Completing the FAFSA (2), Scholarship Opportunities, Forms, Facts & Fantasies, & Money Management. These workshops were not well attended, despite advertisements in the Calendar of Events and through CS15 instructors. We must clearly look for alternative ways to inform students about future workshops.

The FAO launched its first annual "Financial Aid Awareness Week" campaign March 26 – 29, to coincide with the start of Priority Registration. This four-day (10 am – 2 pm) outreach effort resulted in 132 student contacts in the Babylon Student Center. The FAO staff will continue to look for new ways to promote its services and encourage students to begin the application process earlier (see Goals & Objectives).

Other outreach activities included presentations to local high schools and agencies (HOSES, Brookhaven Town's Dress for Success Women's Group, Comsewogue HS, Center Morchue HS, Miller Place HS, Western Suffolk Guidance Counselors Association), SCCC Open House, SUNY Farmingdale College Fair, and SCCC Financial Aid Seminar.

Number of student contacts at the FAO service counter, August 1 2000 – May 31, 2001 (10 mos.): 11,877/ avg. 1188 month.

V. COMPUTER LAB

Since we opened its doors last July, Veronica Miller has done an excellent job coordinating the Computer Lab, training the staff and developing reference workbooks for staff and students for the various financial aid websites. She has also been very effective working with the Computer Support technicians to resolve hardware and software problems.

The FAO Computer Lab has become an integral part of the Financial Aid operation, providing students the option of filing their FAFSAs electronically, correcting their data, checking their FAFSA and TAP application status, registering with Selective Service, and completing their loan entrance and exit interview sessions on-line. From August 1, 2000 through May 31, 2001, more than 400 students used the Computer Lab. We fully expect the demand for this service to continue to increase as the federal and state agencies offer more on-line options and as
more students become aware of the lab's availability. As students often require one-on-one assistance in the lab in addition to preliminary assistance preparing and reviewing their application data, the process is very time-consuming and an increasing drain on our staffing resources. Although we have recently attempted to restrict the hours of operation (11 AM – 2 PM or by appointment) in order to better allocate our staff, we are also not comfortable turning students away. As we approach the busiest enrollment period of the year, when the lab services are in greatest demand, we are uncertain as to how we will handle the business without adequate staffing.

VI. LOAN ENTRANCE/EXIT INTERVIEWS

The FAO adopted in-person Loan Entrance Interviews during the spring 2001 semester, requiring first-time borrowers to attend a group session to learn about all aspects of the loan programs and the consequences of delinquency and default. Those unable to attend were given the option to complete the session on-line. Annette Ambogini, Professional Assistant, coordinated this initiative. Although the on-line method is available, it is less preferred as students cannot interact and readily ask questions. Unfortunately, we have recently abandoned group sessions and shifted to on-line sessions due to the increasing demands on our staff for other services. As in past years, Ms. Ambogini recently held the Loan Exit Interview sessions for graduating students, inviting a loan representative from Citibank to conduct the session.

VII. PROGRAM REVIEW

Although the Financial Aid Program Review Committee was not in place until late fall 2000, the review was conducted throughout the spring semester and is in its final stages of preparation. The initial draft will be presented to the Dean and Associate Dean of Students during June or July 2001 (committee members must still review student/faculty survey results). Needless to say, this project was a monumental undertaking and would not have been possible without the focus and dedication of the individual committee members, which included Gerry Fleming and Veronica Miller from the FAO staff.

VIII. IMAGING

Unfortunately, the FAO did not fully incorporate imaging into its operation during the year. The hardware and work-station were not set up until the spring 2001 semester. Although the Central staff from Computer Information Systems offered several training sessions to the staff, other office functions (i.e., Computer Lab, service counter, phone calls, packaging, etc.) took priority. As a result, continuity with learning this new technology was difficult to achieve. We are unable, at this point, to image our 2000-01 files but have started with the 2001-02 files. With a minimum of 15,000-20,000 documents to image annually, this added function will be a very labor-intensive undertaking and will definitely impact our work flow. At this time, we are advertising for work-study students who we hope to train to assist with the imaging operation.

IX. MISCELLANEOUS

Additional items of importance:
Academic Progress Appeals: Fall 2000: 994 waiver applications mailed—7 approved for TAP, 32 denied for TAP; 106 approved for federal, 22 denied for federal; Spring 2001: 411 waiver applications mailed—9 approved for TAP, 18 denied for TAP; 36 approved for federal, 15 denied for federal.

Dependency Overrides: In an effort to adhere more closely adhere to federal guidelines, the FAO established new procedures in cases when students ask to exclude parental income from FAFSA. Professional staff met periodically to discuss individual requests and develop consistent professional judgement standards in this area. Gerry Fleming, Counselor, has primary responsibility for these decisions.

Emergency Loans: 36 student requests approved for a total of $14,631 (9/00 – 5/01)

Service Counter Enhancements: Due to restricted space within the Computer Lab, three of the lab PCs were used to replace mainframe IBMs at the front service counter. As a result, the counter staff may now access up-to-date information from FAFSA and NYHESC websites concerning student application and award status.

X. ISSUES & CONCERNS

- Staffing: The loss of Roseanna Michelsen (Sr. Clerk-Typist) in February was a serious setback for the operation and has had a significant impact on our award activity for the spring 2001 semester and now the 2001-02 award year. We have attempted to address this loss by dividing her workload among two college aides and our two P.A.’s but progress has been very slow owing to the other demands placed upon these staff members. We also lost our work-study student, Kelly Croken, at the start of the spring 2001 semester.

  With the plan to mail bills to students by mid-June (four weeks earlier has in the past), the staff has had minimal time to review 2001-02 applicant lists in order to generate new awards. Unfortunately, we did not receive this data from Central F.A. to begin the process until late April. As a result of these two factors, we are anticipating unusually high phone and walk-in volume from students whose aid will not initially appear on their bills. Although we are in favor of earlier billing, this will place a tremendous burden on the staff and seriously impede productivity at a critical time. The loss of our counselor during the busiest summer months and our difficulties in finding qualified professional help during this period remains a serious problem as well.

- Space: The current space configuration of the FAO does not meet our operational needs and, hopefully, can be addressed in the near future. The staff (particularly the secretaries and college aides) does not have the space it requires to comfortably perform its duties. Our five secretaries and part-time Professional Assistant are working unreasonably close to one another and it is difficult for them to concentrate on their tasks amidst the noise and chaos. We do not provide students with the privacy they require to discuss personal matters at the service counter. We also lack adequate storage space, meeting space, as well as the necessary work space for the imaging and fax equipment (which obstructs the back corridor near the exit).
Comparison of Financial Aid Volume, Grants & Loans
(as of 5/31/01)

1998-1999
$10,596,447

1999-2000
$9,530,631

2000-2001
$9,622,722

Award Year
Comparison of Volume by Financial Aid Program
(as of 5/31/01)
2001-02 Distribution of Aid by Program
(as of 5/31/01)

899 students
Unsub. Loan
(23%)

1848 students
Pell
(27%)

665 students
Sub. Loan
(16%)

568 students
APTS
(4%)

2347 students
TAP
(23%)

1176 students
SEOG
(5%)

105 students
FWS
(2%)
Financial Aid Professional Staff Activities/Achievements
2000-01

Katie Briscoe-Baum, Director:

NYSFAAA (NYS Financial Aid Administrators Association):
  Attended monthly meetings
  Attended two-day Advanced Workshop, Albany, Nov. 2000
  NYSHESS electronic training, Dec. 2000
  Received "Outstanding Service Award 2000", Region VII
  Co-chair, Tri-regional meeting May 2001
U.S. Dept. of Ed. training, April 2001
Presentations:
  SCCC Open House, Nov. 2000
  SUNY Farmingdale College Fair, Nov. 2000
  Center Moriches HS, Jan. 2001
  Comescogue HS, Feb. 2001
  SCCC Financial Aid Seminar, April 2001
College-wide Academic Waiver Review Committee, June 2000
Volunteered for student ID photos, Dec. 2000
Member Ammerman Campus Scholarship Committee, 2000-01
Graduation, June 2001

Gerard Fleming, Counselor:

Meeting with Special Services to update technology for disabled, Sept. 2000
Meeting with college-wide Committee on Accessible Technology for the Disabled concerning SCCC website, Oct. 2000
Assist college webmaster in ensuring college website is compatible with talking computer access technology for visually impaired, ongoing.
Member, Financial Aid Program Review Committee, Spring 2001
Financial Aid Awareness Week, April 2001
Presented Financial Aid workshop, April 2001

Annette Ambrogini, PA3:

Attended monthly NYSFAAA meetings
NYSHESS electronic training, Dec. 2000
U.S. Dept. of Ed. training, March 2001
Financial Aid Awareness Week, April 2001
Committee member, NYSFAAA Support Office Staff workshop, April 2001
Presentations:
  SCCC Open House, April 2001
  BOCES student workshop, May 2001
  Western Suffolk Guidance Counselors Association, May 2001
  SCCC Continuing Ed. classes: Outlook '98, Intro. MS Word, Researching the Internet
  In-person Student Loan Entrance-Exit Counseling sessions, spring 2001
  Monthly meetings with lender representatives re: student loan issues
  College-wide Academic Waiver Review Committee, June 2000

(cont'd)
Veronica Miller, PA3

NYSFAAA
  Novice Training Workshop (7 days), June 2000
  Electronic training, Dec. 2000
  Workshop for new professionals, Fordham, April 2001
U.S. Dept of Ed. training, April 2001
Financial Aid Awareness Week, April 2001
SCCC Continuing Ed. classes: Power Point
SCCC events: Open House (fall, spring), Activities Day, Transfer Day, student I.D.
  Photos, Graduation
SCCC outreach: GED class, OS15, Nursing, Compass, Advising/Testing, Financial Aid
  seminar
Off-campus outreach:
  Town of Brookhaven Dress for Success
  Miller Place HS “Learning for Life” program
  SUNY Farmingdale College Fair
Faculty Mentor for SCCC Faculty Assoc.’s New Mentor program, July 2000
Instructor: HM60 (fall/spring) and WS12 (fall)
Continuing appointment granted, Dec. 2000
NY State Permanent Certification in Teaching, English 7-12, Elementary Ed. K-6
GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Financial Aid Office – Ammerman Campus
2001-02

I. Training & Staff Development: In order to stay up-to-date with all aspects relating to financial aid, all staff members must receive training on an ongoing basis. Such training also serves to ensure that the information we disseminate is consistent, accurate and thorough. Additionally, the office must improve the channels of communication so that all staff members are aware of any new information. Some objectives by which this can be achieved:

- Schedule regular training sessions for all support staff to review important topics and issues in financial aid. With the assistance of the Head Clerk and professional staff, develop an itinerary prior to each semester and share with staff in advance.

- Create handbooks for staff members in which reference material on all topics is accessible and up-to-date.

- Offer intensive training to designated staff members to serve as resources or “point persons” for specific areas, i.e., imaging, Computer Lab, TAP, FWS, academic progress, etc.

II. Outreach: The FAO will continue to find ways to promote awareness of its services and programs among students and within the campus community. Such awareness improves student understanding of the filing process and also strengthens our ties with other departments. Some objectives by which this can be achieved:

- Create additional educational materials, i.e., flyers, letters, posters, to inform students of financial aid procedures, issues, workshops, etc. Coordinate with other departments within Division regarding dissemination of materials.

- Expand “Financial Aid Awareness Week” from one to two weeks, coinciding with the onset of Priority Registration.

- Consider the possibility of an Open House for members of the Student Services division.

- Utilize the college (or campus) list-serve as a means for disseminating up-to-date information concerning F.A. policies and procedures.

III. Federal Work-Study Program: The FAO, in collaboration with Career Services, will develop new initiatives to improve the promotion of the Federal Work Study (FWS) program and increase spending. Student earnings in this program have fallen well below federal allocation levels for the campus (42% of allocation spent for 1999-2000, 65% in 2000-01 to-date). Objectives by which this can be achieved:

- FAO and Career Services will meet on monthly basis throughout 2001-02 to develop ideas aimed at promoting FWS program to students and campus departments. Will also look for ways to streamline and improve award notification and placement procedures.

- Possible formation of a campus FWS Advisory Committee, comprised of members of the FAO and Career Services Staff in addition to departments which currently employ FWS students.
Financial Aid
Goals & Objectives 2000-01

I. Training & Development

Implement a series of training sessions in order to ensure that support staff members (student aide, college aides and clerical staff) are fully informed on all aspects of financial aid so as to provide the most accurate and up-to-date information possible to students and parents. Develop written materials to reinforce training. In addition, encourage clerical and professional staff to participate in a variety of on- and off-campus training opportunities.

II. Computer Lab

Promote the Financial Aid Computer Lab in an effort to increase student utilization of electronic FAFSA filing and other on-line functions, i.e., loan entrance/exit counseling, data corrections, grant/loan status checks, selective service and voter registration, scholarship searches, etc. Develop resource materials for lab users in conjunction with lab support personnel. Offer workshops for small groups within lab to encourage and improve student familiarity with on-line features.

III. Outreach

Develop initiatives to increase awareness of financial aid both within and outside the campus community. Create promotional materials to support outreach efforts. Such initiatives may include:

☐ Collaboration with other student service departments (Admissions, Business Office, Career Services, Counseling, etc.) to create and disseminate relevant financial aid materials

☐ Workshops for students which address specific financial aid topics and issues, i.e., completing the FAFSA, on-and off-campus FWS opportunities, scholarship opportunities, debt management/budgeting, etc.

☐ Announcements in campus publications concerning filing procedures, deadlines, and other important information

IV. Student Loan Entrance Interviews

In accordance with Dept. of Ed. Regulations, implement in-person student loan entrance interviews for all first-time borrowers prior to pre-approval. Organize regularly scheduled group sessions which address all aspects of the federal student loan program, i.e., loan limits, deferment and repayment options, consequences of loan default, etc.
V. Program Review

Establish Program Review Committee to assess all aspects of Financial Aid operation and develop recommendations aimed at improving efficiency and delivery of services.

VI. Imaging

Implement Feith Imaging System and ensure all staff are proficiently trained with use of system.
Suffolk County Community College
Financial Aid

MISSION STATEMENT

1. The Financial Aid Service is committed to encouraging and creating higher education access and opportunity to the residents of our service area. This commitment exists from initial recruitment to final graduation without hesitation or compromise.

2. It is intended to provide full financial aid services to the entire population that needs such assistance. This commitment is in place at all of the campuses of SCCC and is implemented with full endorsement.

3. It is generally recognized that the clientele that SCCC serves is extremely diverse. It includes traditional students and adult students across all socioeconomic categories.

4. It is also understood, however, that there is a particularly large segment of students at SCCC that have limited higher education choices and extremely limited resources which restricts the element of choice for those students. They select the affordable choice: Suffolk County Community College.

5. The target groups are many. They consist of students whose families have been dissolved involuntarily or otherwise. They may be attempting to enroll on their own or with the assistance of a single parent charges with the maintenance of the whole family. In many cases the students are themselves single parents seeking to establish a career. There are those students attempting to achieve academic and/or vocational accomplishments while receiving Public Assistance, Social Security, Vocational Education Services, and other transfer payments. Moreover, this college is still the primary choice of military veterans who enroll while utilizing the benefit programs available to them. Finally, we have the large number of traditional students who come from low- to middle-income families with multiple siblings of college age. For reasons dictated by affordability, high school preference or economic choice, they have chosen SCCC as their institution.
# Financial Aid Office Staff

**Ammerman**

**Director**  
*K. Briscoe-Baum*

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<td>M. Zatorski</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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Clerk-Typist  
*J. Lovell*
SUFFOLK COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Ammerman Campus

Position Description
DIRECTOR OF FINANCIAL AID

The Director of Financial Aid reports to the Associate Dean of Students and is responsible for implementing all financial aid policies, programs, and services at the Ammerman Campus.

SPECIFIC DUTIES:

1. Manages the day-to-day operation of the Ammerman Campus Financial Aid Office, including the implementation of all federal and state programs.

2. Coordinates all financial aid advising and information-dissemination, including assistance with financial aid and emergency loan applications, bookstore roster updates, financial aid transcripts, and the academic progress waiver process.

3. Coordinates the processing of student financial aid applications, including the collection of all required data and documents followed by case review and award determination.

4. Supervises and evaluates counselors, clerical staff, and student staff assigned to the Financial Aid Office; recommends candidates for vacant positions to the Associate Dean of Students.

5. Coordinates with colleagues to assure consistency and ongoing communication regarding admissions, advising, testing, financial aid, registration, placement of students receiving Federal Work Study awards, etc.

6. Participates in internal training sessions, selective external workshops, and internal program reviews and audits; conducts training and staff meetings for professional and support staff.

7. Works with the College Director of Financial Aid and campus financial aid colleagues to develop and implement college-wide guidelines, policies, systems, procedures, and publications related to financial aid.

8. Monitors campus financial aid expenditures.

9. Reviews and authorizes financial aid student payment transmittals.

10. Prepares and distributes campus-specific mailings (e.g., award letters, action letters); disseminates financial aid application materials to the campus population.

11. Reviews technical materials and/or professional publications disseminated by the College Director of Financial Aid (e.g., Bulletins, Dear Colleague Letters, etc.)

12. Coordinates collection of financial aid data to assist the Director of the Educational Opportunity Program to verify student eligibility for the program.
13. Sets annual goals and assures that financial aid services are carried out in accordance with institutional priorities and division goals.


15. Collects data for campus and college reports; prepares an annual report describing goals, activities, outcomes, and highlights.

16. Represents the Ammerman Campus at professional conferences and meetings related to financial aid.

17. Advises and counsels students, when appropriate.

18. Serves on College-wide and campus committees.

19. Performs other duties as assigned by the Associate Dean of Students.
The Counselor for Enrollment Services reports to the Director of Enrollment Services and is responsible for performing all counseling duties as assigned by the Director and the Assistant Director of Enrollment Services.

**Position Description**

1) Advise students about general admissions criteria and specific curriculum requirements.
2) Advise students about financial aid application procedures, availability, and award criteria of the various federal, state and local financial aid programs and capability for incorporating financial aid information into the admissions process.
3) Participate in recruitment strategies and approaches for marketing a community college to prospective students including offsite visitations and events.
4) Possess computer skills and general understanding of computerized admissions and financial aid systems.
5) Screen student admissions folders to identify students for special curricula or programs.
6) Participate in all Open House recruitment initiatives.
7) Provide students with information on the appeals process and monitor student’s academic pursuit and progress standards in conjunction with federal and state requirements.
8) Coordinate with colleagues to assure consistency and ongoing communication regarding admissions, advising, testing, financial aid, registration, orientation, campus enrollment management and college marketing efforts.
9) Counsel students and their parents on all enrollment services initiatives.
10) Conduct enrollment services workshops for new and continuing students.
11) Perform other duties as assigned by the director of enrollment services.
Minimum qualifications for this position include an appropriate master’s degree. Experience in admissions and financial aid, effective communication and organizational skills.
Annette Ambrogini
Position Description – Professional Assistant 3
Office of Financial Aid

1) Advise students and parents, both individually and in groups, regarding federal and state financial aid programs, i.e., types of available aid, eligibility criteria, filing procedures, deadlines, and student responsibilities. Provide information about enrollment process and campus/college policies.

2) Assist students on-line application for federal financial assistance using FAFSA on the Web.

3) Responsibility for Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) programs and electronic Pre-Approved Loan (PAL) processing. In coordination with part-time PA, resolve student loan problems, review exception reports, utilize state agency (NYSHESC) website for loan corrections and updates.

4) Coordinate student loan Entrance and Exit Interviews, in accordance with federal regulations, i.e., in-person group sessions and mailings.

5) Responsibility for federal electronic on-line applications, corrections, and transmittals. Serve as liaison with Central Financial Aid for implementation and coordination of policies and procedures.

6) Responsibility for New York State’s Aid for Part-Time Study (APTS) program. Award grant funds to eligible students, in accordance with state rules and regulations. Requires close monitoring of program expenditures and student eligibility.

7) Review Federal Grant Transmittal Exceptions Reports to ensure appropriate payment or cancellation of financial aid.

8) Provide information to students relating to academic progress requirements and the Financial Aid appeals process. Participate on Appeals Committee when necessary.

9) Assist in the development of data, statistics and reports relevant to areas of responsibility.

10) Work cooperatively with Campus Business Office to ensure financial aid recipients are properly and expeditiously served.

11) Work cooperatively with college and campus (east and west) Financial Aid Offices, in concert with Campus Director of Financial Aid to ensure information and procedures are current.

12) Other duties as assigned by the Director.
1. Advise students and parents, both individually and in groups, regarding federal and state financial aid programs, i.e., types of available aid, eligibility criteria, filing procedures, deadlines, and student responsibilities.

2. Manage the Financial Aid Computer Lab, including scheduling, staffing, publicity, materials, and hardware maintenance. Provide individual assistance to students with electronic filing and other online functions.

3. Assist the Director with the development of outreach initiatives to increase awareness of financial aid both within and outside the campus community. Create promotional materials to support outreach efforts. Collaborate with other campus departments when necessary.

4. Develop and participate in financial aid workshops

5. Assist with verification and packaging, in compliance with federal, state, and college regulations and guidelines.

6. Assist in the collection, analysis, and reporting of financial aid data relevant to areas of responsibility.

7. Provide information to students relating to academic progress requirements and the Appeals process. Participate on Appeals Committee when necessary.

8. Work cooperatively with Campus Business Office to ensure financial aid recipients are properly and expeditiously served.

9. Work cooperatively with college and campus (east and west) Financial Aid Offices, in concert with Campus Director of Financial Aid, to ensure information and procedures are current.

10. Other duties as assigned by the Director.

Revised 2/01
Kim Mokarry
Position Description – Professional Assistant 2 (part-time)
Office of Financial Aid

1. Primary responsibility for electronic transmission of all federal data (applications, corrections) using Dept. of Education’s EdConnect software. Liaison with Dept. of Ed. technical support staff when resolving transmittal problems. Must attend all software training sessions offered by Dept of Ed.

2. Review Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) exception reports (twice weekly) to ensure student loan funds are appropriately cancelled, adjusted, or disbursed. Communicate with college Business Office to resolve discrepancies. Utilize NYSHECS website, HESCWeb, to check student loan approvals and cancellations and make all necessary on-line adjustments. Must attend all training sessions offered by NYSHECS.

3. Liaison with NYSHECS for on-line student loan entrance interviews. Must ensure all electronic confirmations are reviewed for student loan.

4. Assist full-time Professional Assistant with the administration of New York state’s Aid for Part-Time Study (APTS) program.

5. Respond to student inquiries (phone and walk-ins).

6. Assist Director of Financial Aid and other staff members with projects as necessary.
Financial Aid Workshops & Events
Ammerman Campus
Spring 2001

March 1  FAFSA Workshop  3 - 4 pm
          Babylon Student Center rm. 112

March 26 - March 29
   Financial Aid Awareness Week  10 - 2 pm
          Babylon Student Center Lobby
          Representatives available to offer assistance with forms and
          information about electronic FAFSA filing. Free giveaways!!!

March 28  Scholarship Workshop  11 - 12 noon
          Babylon Student Center rm. 112
          Find out about SCCC scholarships, transfer scholarships,
          And how to search for scholarships on the internet

March 29  Scholarship Workshop  3:30 - 4:30
          Babylon Student Center rm. 112 (see above description)

April 5  Financial Aid: Forms, Facts & Fantasies  10 - 11 am
          Babylon Student Center rm. 112

April 19  Dollars & Sense: Learn How to Manage Your Money
          Babylon Student Center rm. 112  3:30 - 4:30 pm
          A representative from the Consumer Credit Counseling Center
          will discuss budgeting, debt management and credit issues

May 3  FAFSA Workshop  3:30 - 4:30 pm
          Babylon Student Center - Mildred Green Lounge