Annual Program Review: Financial Aid

Review time period: July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2021

1. Purpose of the Program

a. State the purpose of program, area, or unit.

The Purpose of the Financial Aid program is to provide all students in need with access and opportunity to a college education. It is a sharing concept in which the funds for students' education are provided by the students, their parents, the state, federal and local agencies. The primary goal of the Financial Aid program is to help the Palo Verde College student population and their families bridge the gap between their needs and the cost of attending college. There are different resources of financial aid to assist students and their families pay for education. The resources encompass grants and scholarships, along with the work study program.

The mission of the Financial Aid department is to provide financial assistance and eligibility awareness to students in need as they pursue their educational goals. The Financial Aid Department continuously strives to provide students with excellent individualized customer service. We also provide equal opportunity for all current and prospective students with easy access to financial aid resources by removing barriers that prevent them from Success.

b. How does the program, area or unit support the College Mission?

The Financial Aid program increases opportunities for student access to Palo Verde College. The program helps students and their families to seek, obtain and make the best use of all financial aid resources that will provide students with an exemplary learning environment with high quality education. Furthermore, the Financial Aid program continues to promote student success and lifelong learning to the Palo Verde College diverse community of learners.

2. Population(s) Served

a. Describe the populations served by the program, area, or unit, identifying special populations, if any.

The Palo Verde College Financial Aid Department serves a diverse community of students, both on the main campus and the Needles Site. Additionally, Palo Verde College has students that take advantage of the services provided through the Financial Aid Department that are not local to our two physical locations within the state of California. The Palo Verde College Financial Aid Department also serves a large and diverse population including non-traditional groups which include but are not limited to incarcerated, Dream Act, Foster Youth, Veterans, ESL, and Athlete students.

b. Describe other populations that should be served by the program, area or unit and identify plans to implement.

The Financial Aid department will reach out to the department of Public Social Services to disseminate information about the various resources Palo Verde College offers to low-income, first generation, disabled students and to invite those students to attend Palo Verde College.

For continuing students, in addition to the traditional orientation and counseling frameworks the Palo Verde Choice program will continue to provide an effective funnel for ensuring that all eligible students are provided with financial aid and scholarship services.

3. Accomplishments in Achieving Goals

a. List area related Strategic Planning Goals and program, area, or unit specific goals, and describe progress in achieving each goal, strategy, objective, and appropriate task during the review period.

Department Goals:

- Increase the number of students served.
- Decrease the amount of funds returned to the department of education under Return to Title 4 (Funding the college has to pay back to the DoE on Behalf of students that withdraw completely or receive straight F's).
- Increase the number of students that receive state/regional scholarship awards.
- Serve more of the Foster Youth, Homeless Youth, Dreamers, and Veterans.

b. Explain modifications, if any, of program, area, or unit specific goals for the upcoming year.

The Financial Aid Department will continue to revise and update its processes and procedures to target obstacles and barriers that prevent students from receiving federal, state, and local educational benefits. Moreover, the department will continue to build close relationships with students, community partners and other Palo Verde College departments to help students maximize the overall student experience both within the department and the institution.

4. Service Area Outcomes (SAO)
a. Revise if needed and provide metric data for Service Area Outcomes in the area or unit.
Service Area Outcome SAO metric

SAO #1: Increase the number of Pell Grant recipients by 2% for the next five years.

SAO #2: Increase by 2% the Number of students completing the FAFSA or CADAA.

b. What changes and initiatives were undertaken during the review period to improve SAO outcomes?
The department organized outreach activities and events, will continue to email, and text students who have not applied for FAFSA, Reach students who have not completed their files, and promote income evaluations to increase pell opportunities. Our outreach events to local high schools have been more frequent as well as the initiative to partner with high school counselors and principals to make arrangements to assist students in the FSA ID, FAFSA and/or CADAA Applications.

5. Strengths, Weaknesses & Accomplishments/Activities
a. List and comment on the major strengths of the program, area, or unit.
- Training - Staff are cross trained and supported in attending conferences and workshops to stay current with Federal regulations.
- Staff characteristics - Staff are encouraged to get involved in activities at the Main Campus, Needles Center, and off-site to help develop better work relationships. The staff is knowledgeable and approachable with a can-do attitude.
- Leadership/Team - Strong and efficient office system that tries to be proactive.
- Communication – Staff work well with each other as well as effectively keeping other departments informed about relevant issues. Staff possess well developed communication skills and are always helpful to other departments.

b. List and comment on the major weaknesses of the program, area, or unit. Discuss gaps or issues identified and propose solutions.
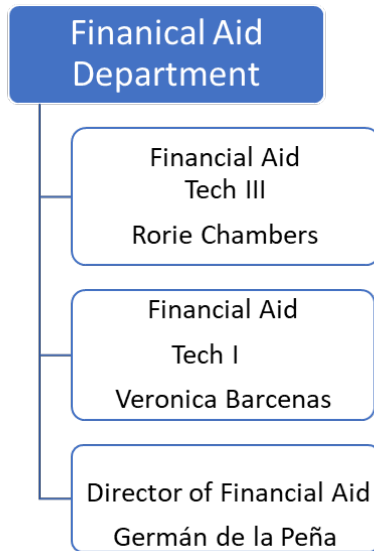- The COVID-19 Pandemic decreased student enrollment, impacting the number of students eligible for Financial Aid.
- Workspace environment – Shortage of space within the department.
- Privacy - Lack of student privacy when meeting with students regarding certain matters.
- Lack of funding - due to lack of funding the staff is not able to attend many of the training courses and conferences to help with professional development.

c. List activities and discuss accomplishments during review period.
See attached Financial Aid Board Reports for Specific activities.

6. Human Resources and Staff Development
a. Provide current organization chart of the program, area, or unit, showing key functions and responsibilities.

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             │ Director of Financial Aid │
             │  Germán de la Peña  │
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b. Are current management and staff adequate to perform functions and responsibilities satisfactorily and to achieve program, area, or unit goals? Explain.
Although there is a current decrease in student enrollment due to the pandemic, the department does need a part-time technician. However, if enrollment increases the Financial Aid Department will need an additional Tech II position.

c. Describe specific professional development activities in which program, area or unit members participate and explain ow such activities benefit or enhance the program and support and facilitate student learning.
Due to limited funding the staff attend minimal training or conferences but do receive federal update notices daily from IFAP and NASFAA (National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators).

· Region IX monthly meetings from July to June

· CCCSFAAA- California Community Colleges Student Financial Aid Administrators

· CASFAA – California Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators

· Department of Education training – Maintaining Institutional Compliance, Review, Refine and Replicate

· Outreach Events in Needles at the Needles Site and Needles High School

· Outreach Events at Palo Verde High School and Twin Palms

· CCCCO (California Community Colleges Chancellor s Office) online seminar for MIS, FISAP, SSARC, Oscher

· Webinars for Cal Grants

· ADMIN 101

d. Describe areas of unmet professional development needs among personnel in this program, area or unit, if applicable, and outline plans to address these needs.
Additional funding to be able to participate in training and conferences, including the following:

- California Student Aid Commission Training
- CHUGACUG Ellucian Colleague users group conference
- Webinars for SSCG (Student Success Completion Grant), Foster Youth and Homeless
- NASFAA Conferences (National Association for Student Financial Aid Administrators)
- FSA (Federal Student Aid) Conference

e. Describe organizational changes that would improve program, area, or unit performance. Provide timelines for the achievement of such changes and describe measures that assess the effectiveness of such changes.
Adding additional Staff to the Department as we increase the number of students will assist with the daily workload. This will allow staff to assist more students with completing their files, FAFSA applications, scanning, and processing incarcerated students CCPG (California College Promise Grant).

7. Facilities
a. Are current facilities adequate to support the program, area, or unit? Explain.
No, the department has an additional office that is being used for another department that can be used to provide private services to students with sensitive confidential situations.
We need access control in our doors to keep the work site safe and secure by controlling the movements of people wishing to access our work area.
The use of platforms such as Adobe sign, campus logic has helped us to turn the department into a paperless workplace.

b. Describe plans for future changes to support facilities.
Soon we expect to have access to that extra office space to provide students with sensitive issues a private secure space to discuss and resolve their issues.
Collaborate with other departments to add control access to our front doors to keep the work area safe and secure.
Continue to use platforms and our technological equipment to keep the department a paperless workplace.

8. Technology and Equipment
a. Is the current technology and equipment adequate to support the program, area, or unit? Explain.
The Financial Aid Department is in the process of updating all its technology. We have spent ordered power stations, monitors, computers, tablets that will be used to assist students in their application and verification processes, as well as in outreach events to the local high schools and the community. Moreover, the department will continue its contracts with platforms such as Signal Vine, Ocelot, Campus Logic, etc. to facilitate communication with students and their application, verification and awarding process.

b. Describe plans for future changes to support technology or equipment.
Our new equipment has the potential to revolutionize the department's traditional processes and procedures by eliminating barriers and maximizing the students' financial aid resources. With the help of our technology equipment the Financial Aid department will be able to assist students in a face-to-face, remote, and in-between class setting.

9. Financial Resources
a. Provide an appropriate financial report for program, area or unit during reporting period. Explain any significant deviations from previous reporting period.

2021-2022	Budgeted	Expended
_Revenue (Financial Aid)	$5,447,986.00	$0.00
_Revenue (Categorical)	$32,175.00	$32,121.00
Advertising	-$300.70	-$300.70
Benefits	$155,934.38	$155,934.38
Communications	$556.48	$556.48
Conferences	$1,967.86	$1,967.86
Consultants	-$3,360.00	-$1,080.00
Copying/Printing	$202.94	$202.94
Memberships	$1,986.00	$1,986.00
Postage	$400.30	$400.30
Reimbursable Categorical	$164,921.00	$152,907.00
Salaries	$292,013.21	$292,013.21
Supplies	$1,321.70	$1,321.70
Travel	$989.85	$989.85

b. Describe whether the current budget is adequate to carry out the responsibilities of the program, area or unit or operation.
Additional funds are needed for the Financial Aid team to attend conferences, trainings, and regional meetings. Additional funding is also needed to pay for technician II

c. Describe plans for future budget changes, if any.
For the Department to be able to function properly, meet Federal and State deadlines and requirements, and address the issues detailed in 9b budgetary changes need to be made.

10. Four-year plan
a. Place future request for resources (human, facilities, technology & equipment, and financial) in a four-year matrix to facilitate future planning.

			2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Future Area Needs	**Human Resources**			Additional Tech II Position		
	Fiscal Resources		Financial Aid annual setup support and consulting with ellucian to update our processes and procedures.	Follow up on Colleague and Self-Service, Campus Logic, Ocelot Signal Vine	Follow up on Colleague and Self-Service, Campus Logic, Ocelot Signal Vine	Follow up on Colleague and Self-Service, Campus Logic, Ocelot Signal Vine
	Physical Resources		VariDesks have been installed to accommodate staff.			
	Technology Resources		Monitors, Power Station, Laptops, Tablets and All-In-One computers are in the process of getting installed.	Continue contracts with SignalVine, Ocelot, and Campus Logic	Continue contracts with SignalVine, Ocelot, and Campus Logic	Continue contracts with SignalVine, Ocelot, and Campus Logic

Board Reports

2020-08-Financial Aid

- Approx. 150 students have completed their files and will receive either a CCPG/Pell or both
- We will be interviewing students to hire for the Federal Work Study program
- As of today, we have received well over 3,000 CCPG applications and we are diligently working to input all the applications into Colleague
- We participated in Outreach events held by CalWorks at the DPSS office and assisted students with their applications and questions
- Continue to assist students the completion of their FAFSA applications
- Summer Pell was awarded to nineteen students
- The first check disbursement day is scheduled August 20
- We are working on closing out the 2019-2020 year
- We continue to work on student files getting them ready for the next check disbursement
- The staff participated in the summer bridge program in Blythe and Needles
- The staff had an Outreach Event at Palo Verde High School during graduation rehearsal
- Working on the Policy and Procedure handbook which will be submitted to the Department of Education to ensure that the F.A. Department meets the required standards
- Assisting and Collecting CHOICE applications (assisting students with the completion of the application) The PPA agreement has been updated with the names of all of the current Board members

2020-09-Financial Aid

- The Financial Aid Department met with Campus Logic representative. They are a company that will assisting the department to streamline financial aid verification and to enable our department to process state and federal financial aid grants more efficiently.
- The first check disbursement was August 26, 2020, and there are no issues to report on this. Students are required to bring in a valid picture ID and their social security card when picking up a disbursement.
- All of the student's GPA's submitted to CSAC (California Student Aid Commission) this included student that do not have a SSN.
- The Department participated in the Outreach Event that CalWORKs organized.
- Working on cancelling checks and adjusting student's disbursements to reflect the correct award amount based on the degree applicable units (students cannot get paid for courses that do not apply towards their degree).
- Attending Region IX meeting. The U.S. Department of Education Office of Inspector General will have a representative there to provide us with information and tips on fraud.
- We are working on awarding students FSEOG (Federal Student Educational Opportunity Grant) and Cal Grants.
- We have balanced and closed out the 2020-2021 year with the Department of Education.
- We have a Cal-Vet representative on campus. She was here to meet with our Veteran students and answer any questions pertaining to additional assistance students can receive outside of educational help.
- We participated in the interview process for new student workers and then the new student worker orientation.
- We continue to assist students with the completion of their files.
- Assist students with the completion of their FAFSA and Dream Act applications.
- Certifying Veteran students for the current semester (courses students take must apply toward the degree on file, the VA will not pay for other courses).

2020-11-Financial Aid

- The staff continues to work on student files so that they can be ready to award.
- Working on the final check order for the Fall term.
- The staff continues to assist students in completing their FAFSA's for the 2020-2021 and the 2021-2022 year.

- The SSCG (Student Success Completion Grant) report has been submitted.
- Cancelled checks for students that have completely withdrawn from PVC.
- Received the adjustment checks for students that had to have checks cancelled due to dropping courses or not enrolled in courses that apply to the degree they are working on

2020-12-Financial Aid
- The final check disbursement for the Fall term were ordered and disbursed.
- Final check adjustments for the Fall term have been done. The checks have been ordered and should be disbursed prior to the staff being out for winter break.

2021-01-Financial Aid
- Cancelling Pell grant and Cal Grant checks.
- Reviewing files for new students that will be attending in the Spring.
- Working on the R2T4 (return to Title 4).
- Assisting students with the completion of their FAFSA application.
- Getting ready to start working on the IPEDS report.
- Running SAP on new and returning students.
- Planning virtual Outreach Event with the High School and Twin Palms.
- Working with the Consultant to get the Financial Aid year set up for 2021-2022.

2021-02- Financial Aid
- **Students 1st Disbursement Feb. 4, 2021**
  Disbursed $53,059.00
- **Completed enrollment applications**
  IFAP (E-App), WebGrants, SAIG
- Finalizing enrollment on federal and state ends to continue with R2T4, adjustments, and check orders to students who applied late and have not been disbursed their first check.
- **CARES ACT.**
  Updated CARES Act Application (New Criteria)
  New Application was uploaded and available to students on February 12, 2021
  Spring 2021 Budgeted amount $194,466
  As of Feb. 26, 2021 94 Students were awarded
  Awarded amount $74,250 with a remaining amount of 120,216 to spend within the next couple years.

2021-03-Financial Aid

- 2nd Pell Disbursement went out to students on March 22, 2021. We have disbursed a total of $122,218 dollars counting first and second disbursement.
- CARES Act Disbursement to students who applied after February 26 will be April 12, 2021. $74,250 dollars have been disbursed for CARES Act.
- Disbursed CALGRANT B to 37 Students were awarded a total of $31,275 dollars. CALGRANT C 5 recipients were awarded $2,731 dollars.
- 10 students were $8,912 dollars for the Student Success Completion Grant.
- All Non-SSN and SSN GPA Were successfully submitted to CSAC in early March before the CSAC Deadline.
- CCPG Application Updated for incarcerated students attending 2021-22 School Year.
- We had only one Return to Title IV student for the month of March.

2021-04-Financial Aid

- Pell Grant disbursement to 85 students a total of $134,692.27
- Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity grant (FSEOG) disbursed $23,800 to 72 students
- Federal Work Study has paid $4,349 remaining $26,419 will be used to continue paying for FWS until the end of the fiscal year remaining balance will be moved to FSEOG to award other students in need.
- CalGrant disbursed $34,006

- Student Success Completion Grant disbursed $40,700
- The department is also getting two other grants ready to disburse before the end of the semester, and
- Working together with IT to implement the Campus Logic Platform to assist students when submitting required documentation to complete their files.

2021-05-Financial Aid
Year to date disbursements:

PELL	Total Spent
	331,482.39

FSEOG	Total Spent
	62,026

FWD	Total Spent
	6,226

Cal Grant	Total Spent
	37,422

SSCG	Total Spent
	44,017

CARES Act	Total Spent
	96,000

The Financial Aid Department is still working in the implementation of the following platforms:

- CampusLogic
- Ocelot
- Signal Vine (pending access, platform is already in use)

We also had our first visit to CVSP offering services to 150+ students.