

AY 2017-2018 Assessment

Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships

Prepared by: Lauren Jackson

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Approved by: Frances Conine

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The Student Experience Mission Statement

The Student Experience provides the University community with programs and services to support the academic mission of creating, disseminating and acquiring knowledge through teaching, research and service while empowering a diverse student population to achieve their highest educational potential. The Student Experience creates a stimulating and inclusive educational environment that is conducive to holistic personal growth. The commitment to students initiates prior to entrance, sustains throughout the college experience and continues beyond graduation. Enrollment Services provides equal access to education for potential students throughout the state and region and promotes economic stability and financial access to citizens. Student Affairs enhances student development and broadens intellectual, social, cultural, ethical, and occupational growth. The Student Experience works closely with faculty, staff, students, and the community to ensure graduates have the capability to promote economic development and improvements in the region.

Enrollment Management:

The Office of Enrollment Management is a student-centered division that is future focused providing educational access to students in our region in order to improve the lives of our citizens. High School Relations, Financial Aid and Scholarships, and Admissions work collaboratively with University faculty and staff to provide services and programming that are innovative and surpasses state and federal guidelines. Enrollment Management fulfills the university's mission and commitment to academic quality, diversity, equity, and inclusion

Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships Mission:

Our mission is to find the best possible aid package for a diverse student body to enable each of our students the financial ability to achieve their educational goal. Our office offers a wide variety of programs that are available from federal, state and institutional funds under the general headings of loans, grants, third party funds and work opportunities. The Office of Financial Aid will keep students informed of all current federal regulations and changes in those regulations. We are dedicated in providing all students and their families with counseling and the services necessary to gain access to educational funds by promoting financial aid awareness, ensuring compliance with federal, state and institutional regulations and guidelines, while committing to honesty, fairness, equality and integrity in all aid awarded to all students of our university. We will be a leader among our campus community for high quality and innovative student

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services, which includes a more effective use of technology for both our processing and communication with students.

Methodology: The assessment process includes:

- (1) Data from assessment tools (both direct – indirect, quantitative and qualitative) are collected and returned to the director;
- (2) The director will analyze the data to determine whether the applicable outcomes are met:
- (3) Results from the assessment will be discussed with the appropriate staff;
- (4) Individual meetings will be held with staff as required (show cause);
- (5) The director, in consultation with the staff, will determine and propose changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period and, where needed, service changes.

Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships Effectiveness
Service Outcomes:

Service Outcomes:

SO 1. *Achieve 100% satisfaction rate with students*

Measure 1.1.

Our office strives to, not only accomplish our duties accurately and efficiently, but to achieve complete satisfaction with each student that we assist. A student survey was used to determine a base satisfaction rate, so that we can determine what areas of service in need of improvement. We will give the students a chance to provide feedback on ways they feel our office could improve. This data will help us to strengthen areas of weakness within our procedures, so that we may better serve each one of our students and improve our satisfaction rate beyond just an acceptable rate of 75%, until we meet our target of 100% satisfaction.

Finding: Target not met.

Analysis. In 2016-2017, the target was met/not met. Survey results showed that 69 % of those surveyed were satisfied. Based on the analysis of the results from last year, Financial Aid decided to use specific data from surveys to conduct in service and customer training. As a result, in 2017-2018, the data showed that out of 331 students who responded, 80.06% stated that they feel confident in the assistance they receive at the Financial Aid office. 19.94% stated that they do not feel confident in the assistance

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received. Of the 331 students who responded, 79% agreed or strongly agreed that the Financial Aid office processed their aid in a timely manner. 21% of students disagreed or strongly disagreed that their financial aid was processed in a timely manner. Although in 2016-2017, our total response rate decreased, we did see improvements with an 11% increase for students who felt confident with the assistance they had received, and a 5% increase with students who agreed that the Financial Aid office processed their aid in a timely manner.

With only an average of 331 students responding out of 6946 students that received federal aid through our office, it is evident that we are only receiving satisfaction feedback from a small portion of students. Although the survey gives us an idea on what some students are having issues with and what they would like to see improved with our office, a response rate of less than 5% does not represent all federal aid recipients.

Action – Decision or Recommendation: Based on the analysis of the 2017-2018 results our office will use the information received on the survey to continue to improve on customer satisfaction within the office interactions with potential and incoming students, current and transferring students, and parents. We will continue to strive to reach our goal of 100% satisfaction. We will explore options to add additional surveys for the 2018-2019 academic year by providing surveys during all Financial Aid events and include links within individual emails and not just group email request. Survey data will be used to determine areas of customer service interactions that may need additional training for staff members through various in-service programs throughout Enrollment Management areas.

Measure 1.2.

In order to better assist students and help them understand the rules and regulations of what is required of our office, we aim to improve job performance of all of our financial aid administrators. To accomplish this, our officer administrators will receive continued training and education through the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators Credentialing. Currently, eight (8) out of the fifteen (15) employees in the Financial Aid Office have two or more credentials through the NASFAA Credentialing Service. Our target is to have 100% of Financial Aid Administrators credentialed in all areas of financial aid services. This will increase the satisfaction rate by ensuring that our employees are able to offer the most current and accurate information to students and parents.

Finding: Target not met.

Analysis: In 2016-17, our credentialing rate was 11% with 17 out of the possible credentials 153 earned. At this time, we planned to have 34 credentials at the end of 2017-18. At the end of the 2017-18 award year, credentialing completion rate is 0%. Only 17 out of the 153 credentials have been earned, but none during the 2017-18 academic year. The lack of local trainings offered during the 2017-18 academic year

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contributes to not meeting our anticipated target. All 17 credentials were completed during the 2016-2017 award year.

Action – Decision or Recommendation: Based the analysis of the 2017-2018 results we will have Financial Aid Administrators complete credentialing classes until we achieve credentials for all employees. Once complete, we will begin focusing on online courses and credentialing, rather than face to face courses due to limited local opportunities. There are 9 Financial Aid employees who will pursue a total of 17 separate credential titles each for a total of 153 credentials in the Financial Aid Office. These credentialing tests consist of attending National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators classes and completing the credential test for each topic.

SO 2. *Increase Financial Aid Requirements Awareness to students by increasing workshops, presentations and notifications.*

Measure 2.1.

Increase the number of students receiving Financial Aid information to a broader populace of the student body. Present and host informational opportunities for students to inform them of the financial aid process. The target is to conduct four session, two per semester.

Finding: Target met.

Analysis: Even though the target was achieved, our office did not meet, or exceed the 5 presentations that were held during the 2016-2017 academic year. The Financial Aid Office conducted 4 informational sessions during the fall and spring semesters. In the 2017-2018 year, the Financial Aid Office attended Graduate/Transfer Day, Nursing Night in Shreveport, New Comer's mixer, and N-side view to allow students opportunities to get information on the Financial Aid process and ask any questions.

Action – Decision or Recommendation: We will continue to increase informational opportunities giving students every possibility to learn the importance of the financial aid requirements and responsibilities. For the 2018-2019 academic year we would like to increase our presentations to 6 per year by attending additional University wide activities held throughout each semester.

Measure 2.2

Create a more tangible awareness of the Financial Aid Requirements, Federal Regulations and School policy to the student body through presentations, workshops and student notifications. Our target is to increase presentations, workshops and student notifications each year, until we reach a minimum of 75% of student organizations and athletic groups.

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Finding: Target not met.

Analysis: In 2016-17 this target was met by attending receptions and grad/career Day activities. Staff decided to continue this path and increase the numbers of events by presenting to student organizations. However, in 2017-18 only 10 of the 107 active campus organizations were presented with Financial Aid Information. Although there was an increase of organizations that were provided with information compared to 2016-2017 (one out of 106 groups), the increase for 2017-18 below a 1% increase.

During the 2017-2018 year, our office provided Financial Aid requirements and policies to 20 orientation classes, including Shreveport and Leesville campuses. Information was also provided at Scholars day, Freshman Connections, International students, transfer students, high school students at schools throughout Natchitoches, Grant, Winn, Sabine and Vernon Parishes. We also created an event, "FASFA Bingo", that was held in various facilities around campus. During this event we were able to provide financial aid knowledge to over 100 students.

Action – Decision or Recommendation: Beginning in the 2018-2019 we will host multiple "FAFSA Bingo" events throughout campus, including all residence halls, to increase student involvement in a fun learning environment.

Measure 2.3

A Financial Aid knowledge questionnaire for students to complete each academic year to use the data, from year to year, to track the improvement of Financial Aid knowledge and awareness. We can also use the information to determine what areas need to focus on in the presentations and workshops mentioned in Measure 2.1 Our target is to have students score 85% or higher on accurate responses received through the questionnaire.

Finding: Target not met.

Analysis: In 2016-17, 72% of students showed an average correct response on Financial Aid knowledge. In 2017-18, the Financial Aid knowledge survey was not completed during the year. The "FAFSA Bingo" event mentioned in Measure 2.2 was held at the end of the semester. This event will be used in the future to determine questions that should be included in future surveys.

Action – Decision or Recommendation: The effect of adding workshop opportunities is anticipated to reflect on the next financial aid knowledge survey, as we strive to reach and exceed our goal of 85% accurate response rate. To achieve a greater student response, our office will provide the survey after future "FAFSA Bingo" events. This will provide additional data that will allow our office to determine information that needs to be provided to students.

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SO 3. *Decrease Cohort Default Rate*

Measure 3.1.

Increase contact and notifications with students who have either graduated or ceased half-time enrollment. Our goal is to increase the number of completed exit counseling sessions to a minimum of 75% completion. We will do this by reaching out to all students who have graduated or ceased half-time enrollment and have not completed the exit counseling.

Finding: Target not met.

Analysis: For the 2016-2017 year, only 397 out of the 1,847 students that fell below half-time status completed the required exit counseling with the Department of Education. Our goal of 75% was not met in 2016-17 with a rate of 21%. As a result, for 2017-18, staff decided to add exit counseling as an “action required” item in FA communications to students. In 2017-2018 year, only 317 out of the 1,647 students that fell below half-time status completed the required exit counseling with the Department of Education. A 19% completion rate falls drastically below our minimum goal of 75% and is a lower completion rate compared to 21% from the 2016-2017 academic year.

Currently, our office contacts students who have ceased half-time enrollment by computer generated emails. These notifications are instructing students on what is required of them now that their loans are no longer in school deferment. This analysis reveals that students are disregarding the notifications received by our office regarding the exit-counseling requirement. By doing so, students are not fully aware of what is required of them, now that their loans are no longer in default status. This can cause the student to unknowingly miss payments and fall into loan default with their loan servicers.

Action – Decision or Recommendation: Our office will begin notifying students at the time it is determined a student needs to complete exit requirements by sending individualized emails as opposed to computer generated notices.

Comprehensive summary of key evidence of improvements based on analysis of results: *Based on the analysis of 2016-2017 results the following represents evidence of improvement based on those results in 2017-2018.*

- Based on the analysis of the results from last year’s customer service survey, Financial Aid used specific data from the surveys in 2017-2018 to conduct in service and customer training.
- The Financial Aid Office conducted 4 informational sessions during the fall and spring semesters.
- The Financial Aid Office attended Graduate/Transfer Day, Nursing Night in

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Shreveport, New Comer's mixer, and N-side view to allow students opportunities to get information on the Financial Aid process and ask any questions.

- During the 2017-2018 year, our office provided Financial Aid requirements and policies to 20 orientation classes, including Shreveport and Leesville campuses. Information was also provided at Scholars day, Freshman Connections, International students, transfer students, high school students at schools throughout Natchitoches, Grant, Winn, Sabine and Vernon Parishes.
- We also created an event, "FASFA Bingo", that was held in various facilities around campus. During this event we were able to provide financial aid knowledge to over 100 students.
- Added exit counseling as an "action required" item in FA communications to students

Plan of action of action:

The Office of Student Financial Aid will focus on encouraging students to complete survey data and participation in events that is needed for enhancement. We will work with areas that have constant student interaction to direct students to our various surveys and all Financial Aid events. Increases in student interactions will promote financial aid knowledge and increase satisfactory rates for employees. Increased trainings and credentialing for all staff through additional avenues, including online training, should also increase student confidence with the information they are receiving from our office. We will begin contacting departments throughout campus regarding student events that would allow our office to present financial aid topics. We will provide financial aid questionnaires and satisfaction surveys during all events that we attend. Information Systems involvement will be requested to help determine processes for individualized emails and not generic computer-generated emails. To meet each goal set for the 2018-19 academic year we will begin outreach programs early on in each semester. A check list with timeframes will be implemented each semester to ensure that all surveys, programs and credentialing courses are completed.