ALLAN HANCOCK COLLEGE

Student Services Program Review

Semester & Year: Spring 2016

Service Area: Financial Aid, Scholarship and Veterans

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This section should contain an objective, descriptive overview of the current program. Provisions are made for the identification of the mission statement, program purpose, and connection to college Strategic, Educational, and Facilities Plans for the service area under review. When applicable, connections to other relevant college plans, such as the Student Success and Support Plan and Student Equity Plan, are also encouraged in the program description.

It is suggested you first review the College Mission and what is contained in the college's plans, as a portion of your program description includes a narrative regarding how your student service program connects to these plans.

Mission: The mission of the Financial Aid office is to support student success by educating students on availability of financial aid resources and providing accessibility to those resources through guidance and support to promote self-sufficiency.

The Financial Aid, Scholarship and Veterans office shares the values stated in the Strategic Plan 2014-2020, such as Student Success, Mutual Respect, Lifelong Learning, Diversity, Innovation and Excellence. The office supports these values by practicing the factors for student success – Directed, Focused, Valued, Nurtured, Connected and Engaged.

Program Purpose: The Financial Aid office provides students and potential students information regarding financial aid resources for funding their educational objectives. The office provides written materials in both online and hard copy modes, personal advising and group presentations. The office is involved with outreach to on campus groups such as classroom presentations and to off campus groups such as local area high schools and agencies. The office is responsible for processing federal and state financial aid applications, Veterans certifications and Allan Hancock College Foundation Scholarships. The office is responsible for determining student eligibility, awarding and disbursing of funds and accounting of funds

through various federal, state and institutional reports. This responsibility includes ensuring that all functions relating to financial aid processing are in compliance with stringent federal and state regulations, and institutional policy. The office is also responsible for ensuring that the college meet federal Title IV regulations regarding disclosure requirements (Gainful Employment, Title IX, Clery Act, etc), enrollment reporting for the California Student Aid Commission and other compliance regulations.

Please articulate the program's connection to College Mission, Educational Master Plan, Strategic Plan, Facilities Master Plan, and other applicable college plans:

The Financial Aid, Scholarships and Veterans office supports student success by providing students with direct financial resources to fund their educational goals. The office also provides workshops for students to learn how to maintain their financial aid eligibility. The office does this in alignment with the college's vision of providing services in an environment of mutual respect while promoting student success, innovation, diversity, lifelong learning, shared governance and excellence. The financial aid, scholarship and veteran programs and services support the Strategic Plan as follows:

Strategic Direction: Institutional Effectiveness
Goal IE2: Financial aid, veterans and scholarships procedures are reviewed annually by the Dean, Student Services and staff through the annual program review process, annual set-up of the financial aid processes in Banner and through annual District audits by outside auditing firms.

Strategic Direction: Student Learning & Success

Goal SLS1: To ensure continuous improvement based on Student Learning Outcomes assessment data.	SLO 1 & 2 – The office developed workshops on completing the FAFSA. SLO's were developed for the workshops and the assessment data resulted in changes to the workshop formats. Financial Aid FAFSA workshops evolved from being completed individually in offices with staff, to a group setting in an open lab area, to using computers in the Financial Aid area on a drop in as needed basis. Surveys were administered to students after they completed the annual spring FAFSA workshops. Results indicated the need to improve workshop surveys to better collect feedback from students for improvement to workshops. Survey results and further explanation can be found in the Student Outcomes section on page 13.
	SLO 3 – the percentage of students who met the standard increased significantly after the method for presenting the workshop and administering the survey changed.
	SLO 4 – demonstrated that the Financial Aid peer advisors are very effective in assisting students with the FAFSA. No changes are planned.
Goal SLS2: To support student access, achievement, and success.	The AHC Foundation student scholarship program has grown dramatically due to the economic

	recovery following the recession and continued community support for annual scholarships. In 2013, the financial aid office and Foundation processed and awarded 282 scholarships at a total of $307,405. In 2014, 344 scholarships were awarded for a total of just over $475,000. Financial Aid office awarded $21.2 million in student aid to 9,702 students to help students overcome the financial barrier to accessing college. The Financial Aid office has developed workshops to assist students in completing the FAFSA. Workshops on maintaining academic eligibility for financial aid are offered regularly. Financial Aid information is available on the AHC web portal 24/7.
Goal SLS3: Ensure students are directed: Help students clarify their aspirations, develop an educational focus they perceive as meaningful and develop a plan that moves them from enrollment to achievement of their goal.	To be eligible for federal financial aid funding a student must declare a program of study. Students who indicate "undeclared" are directed to other student services programs such as the counseling department, EOPS, CAN/TRIO, MESA and STEM for assistance in focusing on a goal. Student educational plans (SEPs) are required from students filing financial aid appeals and from certain high risk student loan borrowers in order for students to understand how to achieve their academic goals in a timely manner. Students are given a warning when they are not meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP). The office has developed workshops to assist students in understanding SAP standards and the effect on their eligibility.
Goal SLS4: Ensure students are focused: Foster students' motivation and help them develop the skills needed to achieve their goals	The Financial Aid Appeals Committee directs students to other student services so they may develop skills to meet satisfactory academic standards. SAP workshops are provided to assist students in evaluating how to get back on track and stay focused. FTSSG grant to motivate Cal Grant recipients to be full-time.
Goal SLS5: Nurture Students: Convey a sense of caring where students' success is important and expected. Understand that a broad definition of	Customer service training is provided to all staff on an ongoing basis to impart a caring service mentality to students and staff. Financial Aid staff participates

diversity supports students and values experiences arising from race/ethnicity, socioeconomic background, age, religion, sexual orientation, gender, nationality, and veteran status.	in annual retreats to focus on improving the customer's experience. Income appeals, Homeless Youth, Foster Youth and dependency overrides are done in a caring, compassionate and respectful manner. Financial Aid appeals are handled in the same manner to approve as many as possible within federal guidelines.
Goal SLS6: Engage students: Actively involve students in meaningful and authentic educational experiences and activities inside and outside of the classroom.	The FAFSA requires that almost all students and parents file a federal income form. This helps students prepare for life outside the classroom when they will be working adults. Workshops on financial literacy are offered. Classroom presentations are conducted on and off campus by staff. Peer advisors assist students one on one to access their financial aid, and to navigate myHancock, the FAFSA and IRS website.
Goal SLS7: Ensure students are connected: Create connections between students and the institution and cultivate relationships that underscore how students' involvement with the college community can contribute to their academic and personal success.	Phone calls are made to students with incomplete files. Information disseminated via emails, implement RAVE for text and voice messages, and newsletters to students. Assigned VA students to a technician, use of business cards for follow-up with students.
Goal SLS8: Value student contributions: Provide students with opportunities to contribute to and enrich the college culture and community.	The office conducts financial aid surveys of their financial aid customers and incorporates those results into their annual review process.

Strategic Direction: Institutional Resources
Goal IR3: Since the last comprehensive program review in 2009, the Financial Aid office has migrated to an integrated enterprise system call Ellucian-Banner. This new system now allows 24/7 access for students to their individual information, necessary forms and general financial aid forms. This has improved student access to timely information and greatly improved the proficiency of the office. The office will be moving to Banner XE in the fall of 2017, which will be yet another improvement for student usage and improvement in staff's ability to process financial aid. The office continuously updates and improves the Banner system on an almost weekly basis.

Follow Up: Previous Program Review Plan of Action

During the previous program review in 2009 academic year, the self-study and validation teams developed a final plan of action based on information in the self-study and the recommendations of the validation team. For each plan, indicate the action taken, the results of that action, and the current status of the plan, if it is incomplete. If any plan was made and action not taken, please state the rationale for not pursuing that particular item.

PLAN OF ACTION	ACTION TAKEN/RESULT AND STATUS
Criteria 1.4 "Faculty and staff developed innovative service or instructional strategies to meet student needs." Staff will be proficient in Banner Customer Service Training for off-campus programs (OCP) staff	In Spring 2010 Banner went live for the financial aid office. All staff received formal hands on training to achieve proficiency. The office is now engaged in yearly review of the financial aid processes and continuous improvement of the Banner system. All staff attended customer service workshops, including the off-campus programs (OCP) staff member. The shared Financial Aid/EOPS position at the Lompoc Valley Center (LVC) has been vacated and a restructure proposal has been forwarded to provide a 100% Financial Aid Technician to improve customer services at the LVC, including basic Veteran's education information.
Criteria 2.2 "The service area provides all prospective and currently enrolled students with current and accurate information about its program and services." Implement Banner Self Portal	The Banner Student Self Service portal has been fully implemented. It is in a continuous improvement process. A Financial Aid staff person is a member of the Web Service Committee to ensure the office is aware of any changes that may impact financial aid use of the portal and to ensure changes needed by financial aid are addressed in a timely manner.
Criteria 5.1 "Facilities are appropriate for effective delivery of program services." Criteria 5.3 "Program support space is adequate to ensure the effective operation of the program and related support activities." Move to Student Services One-Stop building	The Financial Aid office moved into the new Student Services building A in 2013. Currently space needs for current staff are being met. There are also workrooms and a secured file room available to assist with storage needs.
Criteria 6.2 "Current and Anticipated funding is adequate to maintain high quality programs and services." Decrease in state funding could impact staffing, training, and services to students	The state budget in 2009 was in a decline which threatened categorical funding for the financial aid program. Categorical funding has been legislated over the years to protect the program from any major decreases that could impact financial aid programs and services.
Criteria 7.1 "Efforts have been made to create links between the program under review and the community."	A shared 50/50% position between Financial Aid/EOPS was created to assist with OCP outreach. This position has been vacated and a restructure

Outreach to Off Campus Programs (OCP)	proposal has been forwarded to provide a 100% Financial Aid Technician to improve customer services to OCP.

Student Services Program Review Self Study Responses

Program review is intended to be a reflective process that builds on the extensive qualitative and quantitative data gathered from not only program reviews and annual updates but also the office of the Institutional Research and Planning. The process lays out the program's major directions for the future and is the foundation for institutional planning and resource allocation. Eight individual criteria to be evaluated are presented along with major topics to address for each criteria. (Place your responses in the expandable text boxes below).

1. Services and Curriculum

    A. Courses taught by program address student needs, support the educational objectives of the program, and when appropriate, address issues related to diversity and/or multicultural perspective.
    B. Program services are coordinated with local high schools and institutions of higher education.
    C. Faculty and staff have developed innovative services to meet student needs.
    D. Faculty and staff work collaboratively with other student services in program development and student referral, as well as with instructional programs and support services.
    E. Recent developments in technology have been incorporated into student support services.

Methods/Evidence:

The office provides workshops for students related to completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and related to maintaining Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) for financial aid eligibility. These workshops address the student need for help in completing the FAFSA and assists students in understanding the academic requirements for maintaining their financial aid eligibility.

The office has a staff member who is assigned to the Outreach Committee which is responsible for coordinating campus wide outreach activities. This allows the office to coordinate activities with other student services programs such as EOPS, STEM, CAN, Counseling, and high schools and outside agencies. The office participates in all major activities such as Bull-Dog Bow WOW, University Transfer Day, College Night, Athletic Orientation and Career Expo Day. The staff also works with the Cal-SOAP program to conduct financial aid outreach at the high schools.

The Financial Aid office recorded the following outreach information:

NO	Year	Type	Sessions	Total #	Contacts	Total #	Language	Contacts	Total #
		inreach	28		2017		English	717	
1	2010-2011	outreach	4	32	320	2337	Spanish	1620	2337
		inreach	65		2105		English	2385	
2	2011-2012	outreach	13	78	1659	3764	Spanish	1379	3764
		inreach	66		1415		English	1192	
3	2012-2013	outreach	9	75	914	2329	Spanish	1137	2329
		inreach	90		2244		English	2335	
4	2013-2014	outreach	10	100	1379	3623	Spanish	1288	3623
		inreach	37		1241		English	791	
5	2014-2015	outreach	6	43	443	1684	Spanish	893	1684
		inreach	77		1108		English	2686	
6	2015-2016	outreach	35	112	2896	4004	Spanish	1318	4004

The office has developed innovative programs such as the Peer Advisor program. This allows students and parents needing help with the financial aid process to have individualized assistance on a drop-in basis. The office has also implemented an online Financial Aid TV (FATV) program that consists of very brief informative videos to answer students frequently asked questions about financial aid. This has been a very useful learning tool for those students who are visual and auditory learners. The office has entered into a three year contract for student loan default prevention services with Navient to reduce student loan defaults. The office recreated a student referral form given to students to include the staff members name so the referred office will know who sent the student if they need further information on the student's needs.

The Financial Aid office works collaboratively with many other student services on campus. The Financial Aid front office staff and the Counseling department staff meet to discuss ways to improve the referral of students between the offices. They are currently collaborating on revising the steps to enrollment information given out to students. The Financial Aid office requires all students who are filing financial aid appeals and applying for veterans benefits and student loans to complete a Student Educational Plan (SEP) with the Counseling Department. In order to complete a SEP, students are required to complete the matriculation processes of testing, orientation and advising. Students applying for federal loans are required to meet with the Career Center staff or to complete a class offering career counseling.

Extended Opportunities Program and Services (EOPS) and CAN/TRIO require all applicants to have their financial aid eligibility for the program determined by the Financial Aid office. Designated staff within the programs are allowed access to the Banner financial aid system to view student's aid status and to determine eligibility for their program.
The financial aid office collaborates with EOPS staff to provide FAFSA training to peer advisors in both programs and collaborates to offer a large scholarship workshop for students every fall. The Financial Aid office has provided EOPS approximately $15,000 per year in funding for peer advisors. In summer 2012, the Financial Aid office and EOPS/CARE & CalWORKs department worked collaboratively to pilot the Pell Advance Program which enabled EOPS/CARE & CalWORKs students to obtain their textbooks and course materials before the first day of class, rather than waiting weeks for their financial aid disbursement. A charge account was established for the student at the AHC Bookstore. This process saved students money by allowing them to purchase textbooks before the used and rental textbooks were depleted.
Students who do not meet the "Satisfactory Academic Progress" standards for receiving federal financial aid may appeal their cancellation from receiving federal aid. Appeals are reviewed by a Financial Aid Appeals Committee, which includes the Financial Aid Coordinator and a faculty member currently from the EOPS/CARE & CalWORKs department. The Appeals Committee has referred students to other student services on campus including the University Transfer Center, Career Center, LAP/DSP&S, MESA, Counseling and Mental Health Services.

The Financial Aid office is responsible for determining fee waiver eligibility under the Board of Governors and the Veterans Affairs programs. This requires the office to interact with the Admissions and Records Office and District Cashier closely during periods of registration. The office also works closely with the Admissions and Records office for enrollment reporting purposes through the National Student Clearinghouse. Finally, with the implementation of the new academic standards for the BOG program, the office staff worked closely with the Director of Admissions and Records and the counseling department in developing the required appeals process for BOG eligibility.

The Financial Aid office works in a very highly automated environment in order to serve students in an expedient manner and to meet federal and state compliance requirements. Banner (Ellucian) is the system used by the office to process financial aid since spring 2010. The Banner financial aid modules will be updated to Banner Extensible Ecosystem (Banner XE) in the fall 2016 semester. This will require the office to implement, test and then train all staff to navigate in the new environment. Financial aid staff also utilizes the National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS), federal Central Processing System (CPS), federal Common Origination and Disbursement (COD), California Student Aid Commission Web Grants and VA Once for processing. A document imaging system (Extender) is used to electronically store student records. FA staff uses online training modules, webinars and federal informational websites such as the Information for Financial Aid Professionals (IFAP) to stay current with financial aid regulatory changes. On a local level, the dean over this office serves

as co-chair for the Banner Steering Committee which ensures the office is involved with many of the new initiatives on campus including RAVE, Degree Works and Recruiter. A staff member serves on the Web Services committee to make sure the financial aid webpages are in compliance and updated. The office utilizes electronic bulletin boards in the Student Services Building to display financial aid information to students. All of this technology and more is used by the office to make sure students are informed, applications are processed and funds are disbursed as quickly and efficiently as possible, the office is in compliance with changing federal and state regulations and an ongoing assessment is in place to evaluate programs and services.

Plan of Action: Update to Banner Extensible Ecosystem (Banner XE) in the fall 2016 semester.

2. Student Support and Development

A. The service area/program provides all prospective and currently enrolled students with current and accurate information about its program and services, conduct standards, complaint and grievance procedures; publishes policies consistent with its mission and follows practices consistent with those policies.
B. Explain the various methods used by the service area to identify the educational support needs of its student population & the appropriate services provided to address those needs.
C. Describe the procedures that are in place to identify and reduce bias and how they are evaluated to assure effectiveness.
D. Identify and evaluate the various service locations and delivery methods used by the service area. Explain how program and services are providing equitable access to services regardless of location and means of delivery.
E. Describe how the service area is involved in the maintenance of a healthy campus climate and supports a co-curricular environment that fosters intellectual, ethical, and personal development for the diverse student population it most frequently serves.
F. Describe the methods used for maintaining student records permanently, securely, and confidentially.

The program's mission is included in the student learning outcomes and was approved by the college. The college has several practices in place to ensure that the program is following its mission and has policies and procedures in alignment. These include regular staff meetings held approximately every two weeks to review procedures and policy for any adjustments. Suggestions and complaints are reviewed individually with staff and in staff meetings. If a student complaint relates to an office policy or procedure, the office may change procedures if allowed within federal, state and institutional guidelines. Student workers are utilized in reviewing documents and forms to determine if forms are student user friendly. Their suggestions have resulted in some form and processing changes. The office staff annually reviews all processes during the "start-up" building of the new financial aid year with an outside consultant for improvement and compliance. The office is audited annually by District auditors for compliance with federal, state and institutional regulations. The office is also audited regularly by program reviewers from various state and federal agencies for compliance. These audits always include a review of the department's policy and procedures manual.

Financial aid, scholarship and veterans information is provided in the class schedule, catalogue, college website, social media, FATV multimedia and electronic communications. Federal and state bilingual brochures in English and Spanish are readily available for students to access. The office provides bilingual outreach and in-reach financial aid workshops to inform students about financial aid programs. The office uses electronic bulletin boards throughout the Student Services Building to provide information to students. The office makes use of email blasts to inform students of important information, and posts flyers around campus for the scholarships workshops. Banner financial aid allows for easier student portal access to all financial aid information. The office has established Gainful Employment webpages, a link to the Chancellor's Office "Net Price Calculator" and is developing one web page to meet all of the federal disclosure requirements. The office occasionally participates in radio broadcasts regarding the availability of programs and services. All of this serves to show how the office makes information available to all sites and all methods of delivery.

Services are equitably provided to off-campus programs and distance learning students. The Off Campus Program (OCP) was staffed with a 50% staff position for financial aid. This position became vacant in fall 2015. The Financial Aid office used that vacancy time to assess the true need for services at the Lompoc Valley Center. This evaluation helped to determine the staffing level appropriate for the LVC. A full-time Financial Aid Technician was hired in the spring 2016 to staff the LVC based upon this assessment and other contributing factors. For online students the office has a robust online portal with access to information available 24/7 along with a responsive email system and phone support for any questions online students may have regarding services. The Banner system has a student services portal for

students to upload and download forms for the office, and to check their financial aid status online.

The office maintains a healthy campus environment by referring students to various services on campus. The program requires all students applying for veterans educational benefits to complete a Student Educational Plan (SEP) with the Counseling Department. In order to complete the SEP these students are required to complete the matriculation processes of testing, orientation and advising. Students who do not meet the "Satisfactory Academic Progress" standards for receiving federal financial aid may appeal their cancellation from receiving federal aid. This appeal is reviewed by the Appeals Committee, which includes one faculty member from EOPS. The Appeals committee has referred students to other services on campus including the University Transfer Center, Career Center, Learning Assistance Programs and Mental Health Services.

The office makes extensive use of Extender, a document imaging system. Scanned documents from document imaging are kept on a secure server with another secure server as back-up. Student electronic files are kept on the financial aid server with files backed up on another secure server. Paper documents are kept in locked file cabinets. The office has a secured file room in the A-Annex which requires a pass code to enter the room and a code to access the file rows allocated to the office. Staff can access electronic files and document imaging from their computer workstations using secured passwords. Staff has ongoing training in FERPA guidelines to protect student confidentiality.

Plan of Action: None

3. Student Outcomes

A.   Describe the enrollment & demographic trends over the past three to five years of students served by the program.
B.   Identify student outcomes and, where relevant, compare students who received services to non-recipients on the following measures: successful course completion, course retention, fall to spring persistence, GPA, goal attainment, etc...
C.   Provide evidence from students (and staff where appropriate) that demonstrates the success/effectiveness of the program. Describe methods used for systematic evaluation and summarize the results.
D.   Describe the process within the program for developing & assessing student learning outcomes. Did you assess all the SLOs on the 6 year assessment plan? If not, please explain why. Conduct a summary analysis of the data collected and compare outcomes in the current program review to outcomes in the last review. Describe any changes made to the program based on the data (attach 6 year assessment plan in appendix).
E.   Identify any gaps or inequities among the students served by the program.
F.   Discuss your upcoming 6 year assessment Schedule (**please attach with appendix**).

The demographics of the financial aid program are reflective of the college's population. The Board of Governor's Fee Waiver (BOG) program is the largest student financial aid assistance program with 9,519 recipients. The next largest program is the federal Pell Grant program with 3,371 students. A 2014/15 comparison of the major gender and ethnicity categories from the general student population to financial aid recipients shows the following:

Allan Hancock	Student count	Student %	FA student %	BOG student %	Pell student %
Female	10,483	52%	57%	57%	57%
Male	9,699	48%	43%	43%	43%
Hispanic	10,574	52%	64%	63%	64%
White Non-Hispanic	7,281	36%	24%	25%	24%
Total FA students				9,519 students	3,371 students

Management Information Systems Data Mart (5/9/2016)

The numbers show the Hispanic student population comprises 52% of the general population but comprises 64% of the student financial aid recipients. Conversely, the numbers show the White Non-Hispanic student population comprises 36% of the general population but comprises 24% of the student financial aid recipients.

A comparison by semester over the last four years indicates the same demographic trend. The percentage of female students receiving financial aid is consistently higher than males. The percentage of Hispanic students receiving financial aid is consistently higher than all other ethnic groups including White Non-Hispanics. Although the gender distribution over the semesters is relatively flat, the Hispanic group has shown a slight increase in percentages as financial aid recipients increasing from 60.3% in fall 2011 to 63.2% in fall 2014. Conversely, the White Non-Hispanics group decreased from 27.5% in fall 2011 to 25.9% in fall 2014. The following charts derived from the Allan Hancock College Fact Book illustrate this trend.

Financial Aid Students

Gender	Fall 2011		Fall 2012		Fall 2013		Fall 2014	
	#	% of total	#	% of total	#	% of total	#	% of total
Female	2308	60.3%	2253	58.6%	2364	58.0%	2450	56.3%
Male	1516	39.6%	1591	41.4%	1709	41.9%	1900	43.7%
Unknown	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.0%	1	0.0%
Total	3825	100.0%	3844	100.0%	4075	100.0%	4351	100.0%

Credit FTR – Fall Enrollment AHC District

Gender	Fall 2011		Fall 2012		Fall 2013		Fall 2014	
	#	% of total	#	% of total	#	% of total	#	% of total
Female	5467	52.3%	5250	51.1%	5389	51.9%	5388	51.2%
Male	4977	47.6%	5020	48.9%	4985	48.0%	5132	48.8%
Unknown	9	0.1%	3	0.0%	2	0.0%	2	0.0%
Total	10453	100.0%	10273	100.0%	10376	100.0%	10522	100.0%

Financial Aid Students

Ethnicity	Fall 2011		Fall 2012		Fall 2013		Fall 2014	
	#	% of total	#	% of total	#	% of total	#	% of total
Asian	108	2.8%	110	2.9%	104	2.6%	113	2.6%
Black	153	4.0%	139	3.6%	147	3.6%	139	3.2%
Filipino	123	3.2%	125	3.3%	120	2.9%	135	3.1%
Nat American	58	1.5%	50	1.3%	50	1.2%	62	1.4%
Other Non-White	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.0%
Pacific Islander	17	0.4%	23	0.6%	24	0.6%	25	0.6%
Unknown	8	0.2%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Decline to State	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Hispanic	2308	60.3%	2335	60.7%	2526	62.0%	2748	63.2%
White	1050	27.5%	1061	27.6%	1104	27.1%	1127	25.9%
Total	3825	100.0%	3844	100.0%	4075	100.0%	4351	100.0%

Credit FTR – Fall Enrollment AHC District

Ethnicity	Fall 2011		Fall 2012		Fall 2013		Fall 2014	
	#	% of total	#	% of total	#	% of total	#	% of total
Asian	308	2.9%	317	3.1%	313	3.0%	302	2.9%
Black	377	3.6%	356	3.5%	379	3.7%	365	3.5%
Filipino	307	2.9%	299	2.9%	280	2.7%	307	2.9%
Nat American	170	1.6%	163	1.6%	151	1.5%	171	1.6%
Other	4	0.0%	1	0.0%	1	0.0%	4	0.0%
Pac Islander	59	0.6%	67	0.7%	67	0.6%	74	0.7%
N/A or Decline	36	0.3%	1	0.0%	1	0.0%	3	0.0%
Hispanic	4881	46.7%	4992	48.6%	5222	50.3%	5528	52.5%
White	4311	41.2%	4077	39.7%	3962	38.2%	3768	35.8%
Total	10453	100.0%	10273	100.0%	10376	100.0%	10522	100.0%

The Financial Aid office conducted a survey of all financial aid applicants in the spring 2016. An online survey was sent to 9,704 applicants via an email notification to their myHancock address. Paper surveys were also handed out to students utilizing the front counter at the Santa Maria campus and the Lompoc Valley Center. Students who had not already completed an online survey were encouraged to complete the paper survey while in the office area and return the anonymous survey to a survey box. The office received 268 survey responses. In response to the question, "Overall, financial aid services are helpful to me," 82.6% of students agreed or strongly agreed with that statement. When looked at by campus site, the response to this statement was 85.8% for the Santa Maria campus and 83.9% for the Lompoc campus. The comments for the Lompoc Center indicated the need for a full-time financial aid person so the office would be open more days and hours. A full-time Financial Aid Technician was hired May 2016 for the Lompoc Valley Center so ratings in services should improve in the next survey.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and corresponding assessments for the 2010-2016 6 year cycle were developed through use of the various SLO Coordinators, regular staff meetings and SLO retreats. Not all SLOs were assessed during the 2010-2016 assessment cycle. Data was collected for SLOs 1, 2, 3, and 4. No data was collected for SLO 5, SLO 6 and SLO 7. Primarily, the reason this occurred is because seven SLOs were determined to be too many to assess during a 6 year cycle. Secondly, assessment methods were not devised for SLOs 5 and 7 at the beginning of the 6 year cycle.

SLO data revealed room for improvement for SLO 1 and SLO 2. SLO 1 was assessed during spring 2014 and spring 2015. The assessment was delivered to students who attended the Financial Aid Department's annual spring FAFSA workshop. Upon completion of the FAFSA online, attendees were asked if they could complete the FAFSA independently in the future. Of the 66 total respondents in spring 2014, 53.03% said 'yes,' and 69.05% of 42 respondents in spring 2015 said 'yes.' Students who responded 'yes' met the standard. The percentage of respondents who felt like they could complete the FAFSA independently did rise in 2015.

SLO 2 was also assessed during spring 2014 and spring 2015 also and the assessment was given to students who attended the annual spring FAFSA workshop. Upon completion of the FAFSA, attendees were presented with a survey question to ascertain if they knew the next step in the financial aid process. Of the 69 respondents in spring 2014, 60.87% met the standard and of 42 respondents in spring 2015, 52.38% met the standard. In order to meet the standard of understanding the next step, respondents had to select "all of the above." All of the above included checking the financial aid status in myHancock, turning in additional paperwork, and checking for an award letter online. One of the problems with the assessment for this SLO was that it relied upon a multiple choice question, where the correct response was "all of the above," for respondents to demonstrate they understood what the next steps after submitting the FAFSA were. Many students responded with partially correct answers but were not give credit as meeting the standard unless they selected "all of the above."

SLO 3 was assessed during the spring and fall of 2013 and 2014 and the fall of 2015. This SLO was assessed by means of a survey given to students at the end of a Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) workshop. The number of students who met the standard by demonstrating that they understood the basic components of the financial aid SAP policy varied during 2013 and 2014. The percentage of students who met the standard never exceeded 65% during any given semester. However, during fall 2015 the number of students who met the standard jumped to 97.92%. This jump may be due to the change in the way the SAP workshop is delivered and the way the workshop survey is administered. The workshop is now delivered via PowerPoint presentation and the survey is completed electronically rather than on paper. Also, partial credit started to be granted to students who responded partially correct to multiple choice questions. Further assessment for this SLO is needed to determine if the percentage of students who meet the standard remains high.

SLO 4 was assessed during spring 2014 and fall of 2014. After meeting with a financial aid peer advisor, students were asked if they felt they received the assistance they needed and could independently accomplish the same task in the future. Respondents who replied "yes" never fell below 84.09% for either of the two semesters this SLO was assessed. This confirmed the strength of our peer advisor program.

SLO's 1, 2, 3 and 4 will be retired after the 2010-2016 assessment cycle but will continue on as financial aid services. They will be on a regular continuous improvement cycle as they are useful services for our students. For the upcoming 6 year cycle, the financial aid office developed SLOs and corresponding assessments at a department SLO retreat held on March 4, 2016. To develop these SLOs, staff reviewed the previous cycle's SLOs and determined which SLOs were to be kept, revised, or retired. Staff looked at current assessment tools for the SLOs to make sure that they were appropriate for the data intended to be gathered. Revisions were made when determined to be necessary. The newly complete 6 Year Plan for 2016-2022 shows the new Student Learning Outcomes and respective assessment cycle.

Methods/Evidence:
SLO Six year plan – Appendix A
Survey results – Appendix B

Plan of Action: It is noted that the "White" ethnicity category comprises 35.8% of the total student credit population but only comprises 25.9% of the financial aid population. It is recommended that the financial aid office work with the Institutional Research office to review this disparity between financial aid and the overall student credit population.

4. Personnel and Support Services

A. There is adequate staff and a sufficient full-time to part-time faculty ratio to meet student and program needs.
B. Briefly describe the professional development of faculty and staff during the period under review, including opportunities and improvements. Does it support program innovations?
C. Evaluation of staff is systematic and the process is effective and encourages improvement.
D. Full-time faculty are actively involved in the process of hiring and evaluating faculty.

The Financial Aid, Veterans and Scholarship office is currently in the process of a staff restructuring. The financial aid programs have grown from $11.1 million in 2009/2010 to $21.2 million in the 2014/15 academic year according to the Chancellor's Office Data Mart. The program has grown in student headcount from 6,930 students to 9,702 during this same time period. In conjunction with the program growth so has the federal and state regulations governing these programs grown in number and in complexity. The emphasis on compliance and accountability has especially increased in regulations. The restructure is constructed to deal with this increase in an efficient manner, while maintaining a high level of customer service. It is anticipated that a final decision on the restructure will be rendered by July 1, 2016. In the meantime, the office has implemented one change within the restructure proposal. The part-time Financial Aid Technician position at the Lompoc Valley Center is now a full-time position. This new position was filled in the spring 2016. This person is currently in training and will be assigned to an office in the LVC campus's Student Success Center.

The complexity of the financial aid programs as mentioned previously require the staff to attend ongoing training including conferences, workshops and webinars. Staff attended 9 conferences and other various workshops in 2015/16. This was in addition to the many webinars on federal and state updates and implementation of the Full-Time Student Success Grant (FTSSG) program in 2015/16. The staff also attends on campus professional development activities which have included workshops on diversity and customer service. All staff now attends "All Staff Day" as the office is now allowed to close for that event. For other professional development activities the dean encourages attendance while ensuring that office coverage is maintained.

The evaluation of staff is conducted according to the Human Resources department matrix. The current classified evaluation form rates effectiveness, assesses the previous year's goals, and provides an area to set new goals. The staffs' evaluations are on file with the Human Resources department. The director encourages attendance and ensures that office coverage is available for staff to attend professional development activities.

Methods/Evidence:
Staff organizational charts

Plan of Action: Develop a plan for ongoing, comprehensive training for all staff, especially for new staff.

5. Facilities

    A.   Facilities are appropriate for effective delivery of program services.
    B.   Equipment and technology is appropriate for effective delivery of program services.
    C.   Program support space is adequate to ensure the effective operation of the program and related support activities.
    D.   The safety of the facilities, equipment, and technology are reasonable and adequate.

The office moved into the new Student Services Building in the fall 2013. The office shares an open area with the Admissions and Records office which has been a very positive experience for staff and improved communication between the offices when assisting students. The office space meets the needs of the current staff. Veteran students also appear to feel more comfortable in the open offices with larger windows. However, if the program is to expand the number of staff, a reconfiguration of the open area will be needed as no more individual offices are available. The dean of student services currently resides in the director of financial aid office. When the director position is filled an assessment of office space will definitely need to be reviewed. As mentioned earlier, the LVC Financial Aid Technician will have an office in the new LVC Student Success Center which will help provide a one-stop shop venue for students.

The Financial Aid office works in a highly automated environment in order to serve students in an expedient manner and to meet federal and state compliance requirements. Banner (Ellucian), the system used to process financial aid, was implemented in spring 2010. The office makes extensive use of Banner's capabilities. The office brings in a consultant every spring to review the systems set up for the upcoming processing year. These consultants work with numerous colleges throughout the country who utilize Banner Financial Aid. They have all highly commended us on how advanced our office is in the utilization of Banner. This has been confirmed by the staff's recent attendance at the Ellucian conference (eLive). Many workshops demonstrated best practices and innovations that our office had already implemented. In addition to Banner, the staff also accesses the National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS), federal Central Processing System (CPS), federal Common Origination and Disbursement (COD), California Student Aid Commission Web Grants and VA ONCE for processing. VA ONCE has proven to be effective in transmitting enrollment certification to Veterans Affairs. The office utilizes a document imaging system (Extender) for student records. The staff uses online training modules, webinars and federal informational websites such as the Information for Financial Aid Professionals (IFAP) to stay current with financial aid regulatory changes. On a local level, the dean over this office serves as co-chair for the Banner Steering Committee which ensures the office is involved with many of the new initiatives on campus including RAVE, Degree Works and Recruiter. A staff member serves on the Web Services committee to make sure the financial aid webpages are in compliance and updated. The office utilizes electronic bulletin boards in the Student Services Building to display financial aid information to students. All of this technology and more is used by the office to make sure students are informed, application are processed and funds are disbursed as quickly and efficiently as possible, the office is in compliance with changing federal and state regulations and an ongoing assessment is in place to evaluate programs and services.

The safety of the facilities, equipment, and technology are reasonable and adequate. The office area can only be accessed with an individually assigned door code. The office also has a solid metal roll down door that secures the area at night. The office was recently reviewed by campus police who advised that during an active shooter or other such emergency the office utilize their supply room, which has no windows and has an automatically locking door, to secure employee safety.

Plan of Action: None

6. Financial Resources

A. During the period under review, resources have been used effectively to support programs and services.
B. Current and anticipated funding is adequate to maintain high quality programs and services.
C. Anticipated funding is adequate for the development of revised and new programs.
D. Resources have been prioritized based on assessment of student learning outcomes and other supporting data.

The financial aid office is supported by District funds and Board Financial Assistance Programs- Student Financial Aid (BFAP) state categorical funds. The primary purpose of the BFAP categorical fund is to support staffing, training, hardware and software with dedicated use in the financial aid office and outreach materials. The BFAP expenditures have followed these guidelines as required. The combination of district and categorical funding has been effectively used to support programs and services. These funds will be reallocated primarily to staffing when the restructure is approved and implemented in the 2016/17 year.

The BFAP funding is based primarily upon the number of Board of Governor's Fee Waivers (BOG) processed by the office. This number has slightly increased over the years even though the enrollment at the college has shown a decline. The number of BOG's processed in 2010/11 was 9,085. The number of BOG's processed in 2014/15 was 9,702. Correspondingly, the total enrollment in 2010/11 was 24,558 and total enrollment in 2014/15 was 20,213 according to the Data Mart. The college enrollment is expected to decline for the next few years. Hopefully, the BOG numbers will remain constant so the BFAP categorical funds remain relatively unchanged.

Resources have been prioritized based on assessment of student learning outcomes and other supporting data. The Peer Advisor program was funded based upon the SLO indication that students needed assistance in completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Rather than relying on a once a year workshop to assist students, a service was created to help students on a daily basis. These peers are available at the front counter of the Santa Maria campus. The financial aid survey has confirmed the importance of this service. The financial aid survey indicated that 85.8% of the respondents using the services at the Santa Maria campus "agree" to "strongly agree" that "Overall, Financial Aid services are helpful to me."

Plan of Action: None

7. Community Outreach and Program Awareness

A. Efforts have been made to create links between the program under review and the community.
B. Efforts are made to inform students about the program and facilitate student participation in the program.
C. Efforts are made to use documented assessment of student learning and achievement to communicate program and service quality to current and prospective students and the public.
D. An advisory committee with appropriate representation has been established and meets regularly to support the development of programs and services.

The office has a staff member who is assigned to the Outreach Committee which is responsible for coordinating campus wide outreach activities. This allows the office to coordinate activities with other student services programs such as EOPS, STEM, CAN, Counseling, and high schools and outside agencies. The office participates in all major activities such as Bull-Dog Bow WOW, University Transfer Day, College Night, Athletic Orientation and Career Expo Day. The staff also works with the Cal-SOAP program to conduct financial aid outreach at the high schools.

The office has recorded the following outreach information:

NO	Year	Type	Sessions	Total #	Contacts	Total #	Language	Contacts	Total #
1	2010-2011	inreach	28	32	2017	2337	English	717	2337
		outreach	4		320		Spanish	1620	
2	2011-2012	inreach	65	78	2105	3764	English	2385	3764
		outreach	13		1659		Spanish	1379	
3	2012-2013	inreach	66	75	1415	2329	English	1192	2329
		outreach	9		914		Spanish	1137	
4	2013-2014	inreach	90	100	2244	3623	English	2335	3623
		outreach	10		1379		Spanish	1288	
5	2014-2015	inreach	37	43	1241	1684	English	791	1684
		outreach	6		443		Spanish	893	
6	2015-2016	inreach	77	112	1108	4004	English	2686	4004
		outreach	35		2896		Spanish	1318	

The office also conducted outreach events to veteran students by participating in events such as the Veteran Stand Down, VAFB Education Fair, VA Resource Fair and other Veteran information events in Santa Maria and Lompoc areas. The staff made visits to the San Luis Obispo Veteran Center, and participated in the Veteran Collaborative which is a monthly meeting of local agencies serving veterans. The staff also participated in events held by the Veteran Success Center and attended the Student Veteran Club of America meetings.

Plan of Action: None

8. State and Federal Compliance

A. The program adheres to all appropriate state and federal guidelines.
B. The program adheres to all relevant college policies and procedures (attach copies of relevant policies).

The Financial Aid, Scholarships and Veterans program must be in compliance with many complex ever changing federal, state and institutional rules and regulations. The Financial Aid program usually has a comprehensive federal program review every six years. The US Department of Education has been focusing on for-profit institutions over the last several years so this college has not been subject to their program review for over six years. The California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) usually conducts a program review of the Cal Grants program every two years. This has also not occurred in the last six years. The primary trigger for a Federal Direct Loan program review is a high federal Cohort Default Rate. The CSAC had the contract to conduct these reviews on behalf of the US Department of Education. The college had a review of the federal loan program in May 2013. The only corrective action necessary was the need to provide timely "Exit Counseling" to students who withdrew, reenrolled and withdrew again. The financial aid office undergoes an annual District audit by an outside contracted firm. This audit reviews the federal and state programs for compliance. These audits are sent to the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office and to the US Department of Education for their review. There have been no major findings in these district audits. Finally, the financial aid programs must be recertified every six years for participation in the federal financial aid programs. The current Program Participation Agreement and Eligible Certification and Eligibility Report (PPA/ECAR) expired in March 2016. A new PPA/ECAR is currently under review by the US Department of Education. The Department is heavily scrutinizing "gainful employment" programs due to findings at other California community colleges regarding these programs. The PPA/ECAR was initially submitted in December 2015.

The California Bureau of Post -Secondary Education as the state approving agency for veterans programs audits the veterans program every year. The federal Department of Veterans Affairs audits the college's certification process for the Veterans education benefits program every three years. The VA auditor has remarked on how well the files are organized and has never been cited for noncompliance.

The office also completes, as required by the District, an annual Program Review which reviews the goals, objectives and student learning outcomes for the year. The office reviews the Student Learning Outcomes assessment process every year. The program adjusts SLO's as necessary based upon these assessments.

Plan of Action: None

Major Program Strengths

List the major strengths of the program organized numerically by criteria

Criteria 1. Services and Curriculum
1. The financial aid office provided financial aid information through outreach events to 4,004 student in both English and Spanish in the 2015/16 academic year.
2. The office uses multimedia such as printed media and online resources such as web pages, email notifications and Financial Aid Television (FATV) in presenting information.
3. The office demonstrated its innovation in implementation of Financial Aid Television (FATV) for those students who are audio-visual learners.
4. Staff are active in various committees to make the campus aware of financial aid issues impacting students and staff.
5. Financial aid office is highly automated and efficient in the processing of all student financial aid applications including those for federal and state aid, veteran education benefits and Allan Hancock College Scholarships.
6. The office works collaboratively across campus with academic departments and student services departments in meeting student needs.

Criteria 2. Student Support and Development
1. Financial aid staff took the initiative to directly assess the need for services at the Lompoc Valley Center by staffing that office during the fall 2015 semester. The office will be providing a full-time Financial Aid Technician for the Lompoc Valley Center and off-campus programs based on this review.
2. The financial aid team is very supportive of improving customer service for students, parents, staff and community members.

Criteria 3. Student Outcomes
1. The office staff is proficient in the Student Learning Outcome process and uses the outcomes for program improvement for its services and workshops.

Criteria 4. Personnel and Support Services
1. The staff invested time and energy in proposing a restructure of the office to better support financial aid and veteran services for students.

Criteria 5. Facilities
1. The Santa Maria office is now in a very student friendly open area as of fall 2013. It is more professional and has adequate office space.

Criteria 8. State and Federal Compliance
1. The financial aid and veterans programs' audits continue to demonstrate that the office is following the very complex rules and regulations for all of its programs.

Major Program Challenges and Opportunities

List major challenges and related opportunities organized numerically by criteria

<u>Criteria 1 – Services and Technology</u>
1. Banner Financial Aid 8.0 must be upgraded to Banner XE by December 2016 as Banner 8.0 will no longer be supported by Ellucian.

<u>Criteria 4 - Personnel and Support Services</u>
2. Staff is not able to attend financial aid and veterans trainings due to budget constraints and the requirement to keep the office open.
3. Information gathered from conferences and workshops needs to be communicated more widely to all department staff.
4. All staff is not able to attend department meetings as the office needs to remain open.
5. All staff needs to be trained in understanding the programs offered by Department of Veteran Affairs.
6. The Financial Aid office will be hiring another new staff person for the 2016/17 year. The office needs to review the training needs for this person in order to expedite their learning and "hitting the ground running."
7. All staff needs to be trained and proficient in Banner Extensible Ecosystem (Banner XE).
8. Financial Aid Analysts need to be trained to process Department of Veteran Affairs educational benefits utilizing VA-ONCE.

Plans of Action (POA) for Service Improvement

Action & Criterion #	Expected Outcome	Person(s) responsible	Target Date	Resources Needed	Linked to College Plans* & SLOs
Criteria 1 Services and Curriculum - Implement Banner XE and provide training for staff.	Banner XE implemented and staff trained.	Rob Parisi, Dean Student Services Lori Doty, Financial Aid Coordinator	Spring 2017	IT support and time dedicated for staff training and system testing.	Goal SLS 2- To support student access, achievement and success.
Criteria 3 Student Outcomes - "White" ethnicity category comprises 35.8% of the total student credit population but only comprises 25.9% of the financial aid population. Financial aid office work with IR to review this disparity between them.	Determine possible reason for the disparity between "White" category's participation in financial aid programs compared to student credit population.	Rob Parisi, Dean Student Services IRP Office	Spring 2018	Time to meet with IR staff to review data.	Goal SLS 2- To support student access, achievement and success.
Criteria 4 Personnel and Support Services - Annually identify conferences, trainings, and associated costs.	Staff will be able to attend needed trainings for continuous learning and updates in the area of financial aid, veterans and scholarships.	Rob Parisi, Dean Student Services	Beginning of each fiscal year	Campus-wide funds identified to support training.	Goal SLS 2- To support student access, achievement and success.

Criteria 4 Personnel and Support Services - Investigate the feasibility of closing the office for weekly staff meetings focused on special projects, updates and trainings so all staff can attend.	Staff maintains currency of knowledge related to federal, state and institutional policy and procedures, and up to date on other campus process changes.	Rob Parisi, Dean Student Services	Spring 2017	Time to close office for all staff to attend meetings on an ongoing and regular basis.	Goal SLS 2- To support student access, achievement and success.
Criteria 4 Personnel and Support Services - Review current training program for new hires.	Explore and develop a more expedient training process for new hires.	Rob Parisi, Dean Student Services Lori Doty, Financial Aid Coordinator	Fall 2016	Time to assess and implement training plan.	Goal SLS 2- To support student access, achievement and success.
Criteria 4 Personnel and Support Services - Financial Aid Analysts need to be trained in VA-ONCE.	Financial Aid Analysts trained to use VA-ONCE.	Rob Parisi, Dean Student Services Joyce Cole, Financial Aid Technician	Spring 2017	Time dedicated for staff training.	Goal SLS 2- To support student access, achievement and success.

*Identify specific objective or goal number in College plans include the Strategic Plan, Educational Master Plan, Facilities Plan, etc.

PROGRAM REVIEW -- VALIDATION TEAM MEMBERS

TO: Will Bruce, EOPS/CARE/CAFYES & CalWORKs Director   Date: __6-20-16__

From: __Robert Parisi_____

We recommend the following persons for consideration for the validation team:

DEPARTMENT___Financial Aid_____PROGRAM Financial Aid, Scholarships and Veterans

Board Policy <u>requires</u> that the validation team be comprised of the dean of the area, one faculty/staff member from a related discipline/program, and two faculty/staff members from unrelated disciplines.

| ___Will Bruce_____ | EOPS/CARE/CAFYES & CalWORKs Director   (Chair)_____ |
| (Name) | (Related Discipline/Program) |

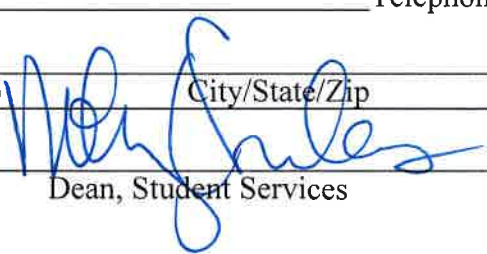| ___Yvonne Teniente_____ | Dean, Student Services_____ |
| (Name) | (Unrelated Discipline/Program) |

| ___Ashley Brackett_____ | Transfer Center Counselor_____ |
| (Name) | (Unrelated Discipline/Program) |

At the option of the self-study team, the validation team <u>may</u> also include one or more of the following: a. someone from a four-year institution in the same discipline; someone from another community college in the same discipline; a high school instructor in the same discipline; a member of an advisory committee for the program. Please complete the following as relevant to your program review.

(Name)	(Title)
Affiliation:_____	Telephone Contact Number:_____
Address_____
(Mailing)	City/State/Zip	email address

(Name)	(Title)
Affiliation:_____	Telephone Contact Number:_____
Address_____
(Mailing)	City/State/Zip	email address

(Name)	(Title)
Affiliation:_____	Telephone Contact Number:_____
Address_____
(Mailing)	City/State/Zip	email address

APPROVED:_____   6/30/16
          Dean, Student Services   Date

1

VALIDATION TEAM DUTIES

A program review involves the visitation, observation and analysis of a program/discipline by a team with the purpose of providing suggestions for improvement.

Duties of a Team Member

Previsit Responsibilities

1.   Study the self-study report prepared by the faculty.

Visit Responsibilities

1.   Meet with program/discipline faculty.

2.   Examine teaching materials, supplies and equipment presently being used in the program.

Post visit Responsibilities

1.   Develop an executive summary of team findings and recommendations.

The Role of the Validation Team

The validation team has been selected to include professionals who can assist the program by reviewing the self-study and plan of action, then making comments and suggestions that will lead to program improvement. In addition to reviewing the materials included in the written packet, team members are asked to visit the facility which houses the program, talk with instructors and students in the program, and request any further information or materials which would be helpful in preparing the executive summary.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
(Validation Team Report)

1. **MAJOR FINDINGS**

   The Financial Aid staff is knowledgeable about financial aid, veteran's programs and services and scholarships. and have adjusted well to their new space in the Student Services building A.

   The Financial Aid staff stays current with State and Federal compliance with many complex and ever changing rules and regulation by attending trainings via webinars, workshops and mandatory conferences.

   The department has continued to use Student Learning Outcomes to make program improvements and changes throughout the year.

   The office supports the mission of the program while focusing on the factors of student success- Directed, Focused, Nurtured, Valued, Connected and Engaged.

   The self-study for the Financial Aid program is found to be very thorough in its review of programs and services.

   The Validation Team finds the self-study's methods, evidence, plan of action and strengths and challenges to be in alignment and sufficiently substantiated.

2. **STRENGTHS OF THE PROGRAM/DISCIPLINE**

   The Financial Aid office usage of technology is recognized by the institution which has a positive reputation for their automated environment they have created to better serve students in an expedient manner to meet the federal and state compliance requirements. They have been commended on their advanced knowledge in the utilization of the Banner information system. The dean over the office serves as the co-chair for the Banner Steering committee which insures the department ability to stay current with all new technology initiative on campus.

   The Financial Aid office makes extensive use of a document imaging system, scanned documents are kept on a secure server with back up redundancy. The office is completely paperless which helps expedite service to the students.

   The financial aid office has increased resources for students by utilizing multimedia, email, online services and outreach to reach students.

   The financial aid program made a successful move to its new office area in 2013.

   The program has added needed services at the Lompoc Valley Center with a full-time technician.

The financial aid staff are professional and knowledgeable when serving students and very helpful to faculty and staff when questions relating to financial aid are asked.

The Financial Aid office implemented an online Financial Aid TV program that consists of informative videos to answer students frequently asked questions about financial aid. This is a very useful tool for those students who are visual and auditory learners.

The Financial Aid office works collaboratively with many other student services on campus. For example, the office collaborates with EOPS staff to provide FAFSA training to peer advisers in both programs and collaborates to offer a large scholarship workshop for students every fall semester. The office also works collaboratively with the EOPS/CARE/CAFYES and CalWORKs departments to pilot the Pell advance Program which enables students within each program to obtain their textbook and course materials before the first day of class, rather than waiting weeks for their financial aid disbursement. This process saved students money by allowing them to purchase textbooks before the used and rental books were all depleted at the bookstore.

The office provides specific workshops for students. These workshops are related to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid and Satisfactory Academic Progress to assist students to continue financial aid eligibility.

The office coordinates activities with student services programs such as EOPS, STEM, CAN, Counseling, Cal-SOAP, high schools and outside agencies for activities such as the Bull Dog Bow Wow, University Transfer Day, College Night, Athletic Orientation, Career Expo Day and many Cash for College events at all the local feeder high schools.

The Financial Aid Programs have grown from 11.1 million to 21.2 according to the Chancellors Office DataMart. The program has grown in student headcount from 6,930 students to 9,702 this past school year. Currently, to meet the increase and complexity of compliance and accountability, a department restructure has been initiated which is anticipated to be complete by July 2016 if approved by the district.

3   CONCERNS

Banner Financial Aid 8.0 must be upgraded to Banner XE by December 2016 as Banner 8.0 will no longer be supported by Ellucian.

Staff is not able to attend financial aid and veterans' trainings due to budget constraints and the requirement to keep the office open.

All staff is not able to attend department meetings as the office needs to remain open.

FAPSLO 1 assessment shows that between Spring 2013 and Fall 2015 more than 20% of students fall below institutional standards. FAPSLO 2 also shows 37.2% assessment below institutional standards. Lompoc survey showed that students need more individual help with paperwork.

4 . RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff will be able to attend needed trainings for continuous learning and updates in the area of financial aid, veterans and scholarships.

Develop a plan for ongoing, comprehensive training for all staff for continuous learning and updates in the area of financial aid, veterans and scholarships, especially for new staff.

It is recommended that the financial aid office work with the Institutional Research office to review the disparity between financial aid and the overall student credit population.

Update to Banner Extensible Ecosystem (Banner XE) in the fall 2016 semester.

It is recommended that all staff be trained in understanding the programs offered by the Department of Veteran Affairs and to be proficiently trained in Banner Extensible Ecosystem (Banner XE)

It is recommended that the department staff participate in ongoing trainings to stay current of knowledge related to federal, state and institution policy, customer service training, attend cultural competency conferences, and attend annual mandatory conferences.

It is recommended that the office close during staff meetings so all staff can attend.

Hire student workers that will accompany high school liaisons at feeder high schools, help manage the front counter and to assist students with verification process.

While the Financial Aid Television is an innovative idea, it will be helpful for the staff to initiate different ways to engage and improve communication to students about financial resources and with the content that is being shared on the TV.

Lompoc students have indicated that they have a need for financial aid services to be available beyond the current hours of 8:00 am-4:30 pm.

Provide opportunities of professional development for staff to attend trainings on issues of poverty, race, gender and disabilities.

It is recommended for the department to explore additional staffing such as a financial aid counselor to meet the needs of the growing student population served by financial aid, veterans and scholarships.

VALIDATION TEAM SIGNATURE PAGE

Will Bruce   Director, EOPS/CARE/CAFYES & CalWORKs   7-6-16   Date

Yvonne Teniente   Dean, Student Services   7/7/16   Date

Ashley Brackett   Transfer Counselor   7/11/16   Date