STUDENT SUCCESS & SUPPORT PROGRAMS, COLLEGE CENTERS COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM PLANNING & REVIEW (CPPR) FOR 2022

Only to be completed by those programs scheduled for the year according to the institutional comprehensive planning cycle (i.e. every two or five years).

Program: Financial Aid   **Planning Year:** 2022-2023   **Last Year CPPR Completed:** 2017-18

Unit: Financial Aid   **Cluster:** Student Services

NARRATIVE: STUDENT SUCCESS & SUPPORT PROGRAMS, COLLEGE CENTERS CPPR

Please use the following narrative outline:

I. **GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION**

Program mission (optional).

The Financial Aid Office- serves individuals and their families with financial need by promoting funding programs, awarding financial aid, and advocating on their behalf within the Cuesta community.

Brief history of the program.

Cuesta College prides itself with the humble beginnings of the Financial Aid Office and how the continued growth of the program offers a plethora of financial resources to a diverse student population. From the inception of the college, merit scholarships were awarded in coordination with the Office of Student Services and the Counseling Department. Prior to the Basic Grant Program implemented in the 1970's, there was the Grant and loan administration that offered financial resources. The Financial Aid Office was created in 1974 and throughout its forty-eight years has continued to grow in services. Currently, there are seven employees that are committed to serving this department and community, administering over $17 million in financial assistance each year.

The administration of these resources requires collaboration with other campus departments. Here is a list of programs:

- Pell Grants
- Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants
- Direct Loans (federal student loans)
- Cal Grants
- Chafee Grants

- Student Success Completion Grant
- California College Promise Grant (CCPG)
- Cuesta College Promise
- AB-19
- AB-2
- CASE
- BOOST
- HEERF Emergency Funds
- External Scholarships

Include the broad history of the program and significant changes/improvements since the last Program Review.

COVID-19 has significantly impacted the Financial Aid Office since the last program review. As a result, adjustments and changes have been made to policies and procedures within the department. Innovative resources were used to offer continued exceptional customer service to students using our information system. We continued to meet the needs of students by eliminating barriers in our procedures that would hinder students from receiving financial aid and aligning our policies to what the student experience is at Cuesta College.

Regulations and Policy

AB 19 created the California College Promise that provides funds to districts to advance the goals of the legislation. One specific use of funds in the law allows colleges to, if a district chooses to use the funds in this way, cover the fees for first time, full-time students. This is how Cuesta has decided to utilize the funding, along with other initiatives if funding was available. Offering this opportunity allows students to have their enrollment fees waived for up to two years if eligible.

Executive Order 2020-02 was issued pursuant to Resolution of the California Community Colleges Board of Governors No. 2020-21 and title, 5 section 52020, of the California Code of Regulations allowing for the continued education of students during the declared pandemic and the temporary suspension of specified grade-related regulations.

AP 5040 Student records FERPA regulations language was updated that provides the definition of Student Education Records.

AP 4235 Credit for Prior Learning Initiative is for students through approved alternative methods that demonstrate proficiency in a course may be eligible to earn credit. If eligible it will be annotated on the academic record. This may include students who served in the military or possess industry recognized credentials. $1 million was

awarded by the Lumina Foundation to the Success Center at the Foundation for California Community Colleges to develop an infrastructure to support this program. The ultimate goal is for students to achieve academic and educational success within a shorter timeframe. The Guidance and system-wide Policy Advisory for the approved California Code of Regulations, title 5 section 55050, Credit for Prior Learning (CPL), effective March 20, 2020, is to provide policy guidance and comprehensive recommendations to support the institutional implementation of the CPL policy. The college has established a committee to pilot the program supporting the CCCCO's goal to offer credit by fall 2022

Cal Grant reporting has been updated and streamlined using Ethos and was developed by Ellucian and support from California Community Colleges. This will assist with accurate reporting of students receiving Cal Grants.

CPOS Course Program of Study (CPOS) is a Federal Regulation that requires Federal Aid to be paid for courses that count in a student's program. The financial aid office audits courses a student is enrolled in for the current term against what a student has to complete in their program as shown on the myCuesta pathway. This promotes persistence and completion and a worksheet for their specific degree. Cuesta Financial Aid implemented this functionality in Fall 2021.

Verification due to the ongoing pandemic was waived with the exception of conflicting information for the 2021-2022 year. Waiving the verification requirement enabled students to receive their financial aid timely and reduced the need to submit additional documentation.

Selective Service was eliminated for the purposes of federal and state aid starting with the 2021-2022 academic year.

Isakson and Roe on January 5, 2021, the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe Veterans Heath Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020 was enacted. The law is to provide access to and timely delivery of education benefits to Veterans, Service member, and their families. This purpose is to empower beneficiaries to achieve their educational goals.

SAP at Cuesta we calculate an average number of units that it takes a student to complete their degree. In 17-18 that was 88 units and that is the number we base our 150% on. This information is updated with new unit averages in July prior to the new academic year. So far, this average has remained consistence with our student experience each year.

Title 5, Section 55022 the proposed changes to title 5, section 55022, originated from Executive Order 2020-02. This temporarily suspended various grade-related regulations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. System stakeholders began questioning the purpose, function and benefit of the Pass-No Pass grading option after reviewing the Spring 2020 enrollment, persistence, and completion data, and the reasons utilized to support student retention. Stakeholders questioned why student would not choose to drop a course if grading flexibility was not an option. Therefore, the proposed change is to extend the allowable time for students to select the Pass-No Pass option to support persistence. This proposed regulation could impact the calculation of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) and financial aid eligibility for students. The proposed regulation is pending.

Additionally, there was a temporary suspension of student withdrawal regulations during the COVID-19 pandemic in relation to the use of the "EW" grading symbol. Discrepancies were discovered between regulations detailing two distinct types of emergency scenarios, "extraordinary conditions" and "extenuating circumstances." Situations that relate to both the student and the institution are considered extraordinary conditions. This type of withdrawal involves a fee refund and allows for students to repeat the course and the institution to claim apportionment limitlessly. Conversely, this does not apply to "Extenuating circumstances". This proposed regulation is pending. This proposed regulation could impact the calculation of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) and financial aid eligibility for students. The proposed regulation is pending.

Technology

Ocelot- The Financial Aid Office uses the Chatbot which also has live chat to communicate with students. It is an easy way for students to access financial aid information 24 hours a day and to chat in real time with a financial aid specialist during our Monday-Friday service hours.

ISE- Over the last year, the Financial Aid Office has implemented multiple automation projects that greatly reduce the time it takes a Specialist to manually run a series of jobs to accomplish a task. This change has been phenomenal; many of the jobs that Specialists would run are now ran on their own outside of our business hours or with the touch of a bottom. Specialist can then review the output of the jobs in a series of sorted emails. Jobs that have been automated are:
- AB 19 Processing
- Batch Packaging
- Cal Dream Act Data Loads and emails
- CPOS audits and emails

- Cuesta Promise
- Federal Data Loads and emails
- FWS emails
- Importing and Extracting data with the Federal Government
- Multiple Quality Control Processes
- SAP runs and emails

MiCollab- District updated phone system. More streamlined than the standard old phone system.

Banner 9- District implemented change to Banner 9 for Financial Aid. This came with a new look and feel to system that made it easier to use and easier for students to understand.

Teams- When the pandemic began, and we went remote the district deployed Microsoft Teams which allowed staff and colleagues to collaborate and meet in a virtual space and feel connected while working from home.

Zoom- When the pandemic began, we started using Zoom to have meetings/trainings since in person was not allowed.

Dynamic Forms- We used dynamic forms to update many of our paper processes such as:

- Direct Loan Request forms
- Federal Work Study Forms and Timecards
- Emergency Applications
- FERPA

Staffing

Since the last program review there have been three permanent vacancies within the Financial Aid Office. Two within the last few months. In 2020, an Associate Director of Financial Aid position was created, and the director position has been absorbed into the Associate Dean of Financial Aid and Records. The Department Assistant is now dividing time between the Financial Aid Office and Records. With nine positions, this leaves six permanent positions and three vacancies.

The impact on the department has been significant. With only three full-time Financial Aid Specialists, covering virtual lobbies, live chats, phones, in person meetings, and in and outreach events is daunting.

The staffing model may have to be changed to accommodate the hours of operation

and internal and external activities. Considering having support staff such as Financial Aid Clerks to assist with accepting and processing documents, office coverage and clerically support the staff would greatly lift the load off the Financial Aid Specialists. This would allow more efficient processing of financial aid files.

As the office becomes more reliant on automated processes to ensure accurate, efficient and timely processing of financial aid is crucial to comply with state and federal regulations. Having a dedicated financial aid IT analyst could further streamline our processes and problem solve glitches and other technical disruptions. This could avoid delays or errors in day to day tasks and delivery of financial aid. In addition to building reports for compiling data used for annual compliance reports and APPW and CPPRs. This position could be cost effective allowing the department to forgo hiring a consultant firm when performing the annual parameters roll for the upcoming award year. This task allows the financial aid office to set parameters to begin processing files for the subsequent year.

Describe how the Program Review was conducted and who was involved.

This review discussion was conducted during a staff meeting held on Friday, February 4, 2021, as well as through verbal and written communication with Financial Aid Staff and other Student Services department leads. Banner student information system using population selections and Argos reports were used to extract data. Additional information from other databases was used in the administration of financial aid.

Here is a list of Financial Aid Staff that participated in the creation of this review:

Zhrinna McDonald, Financial Aid Director

Michelle Evans, Associate Financial Aid Director

Alejandra Aguirre, Financial Aid Specialist (no longer working for the department)

Martha Davis, Financial Aid Specialist

Griffin Mitchell, Financial Aid Specialist

Julie Salgado, Financial Aid Specialist

II.   **PROGRAM SUPPORT OF DISTRICT'S <u>MISSION STATEMENT</u>, <u>INSTITUTIONAL GOALS</u>, <u>INSTITUTIONAL OBJECTIVES</u>, AND/OR <u>INSTITUTIONAL LEARNING OUTCOMES</u>**

Identify how your program addresses or helps to achieve the <u>District's Mission Statement</u>.

Cuesta Colleges Mission Statement

Cuesta College is an inclusive institution that inspires a diverse student population to achieve their educational goals.

We effectively support students in their efforts to improve foundational skills, transfer to four-year institutions, earn certificates or associate degrees, and advance in the workforce.

Through dynamic and challenging learning opportunities, Cuesta College improves lives by promoting cultural, intellectual, and professional growth. We prepare students to become engaged citizens in our increasingly complex communities and world.

The Financial Aid Office and VRC helps achieve the District's Mission Statement through the following activities:

1. Inspire diverse student population to achieve their educational goals.

- Outreach to all segments of our community, particularly underrepresented groups and military personnel, Veterans and their families. By visiting high schools and speaking to potential students and parents at different events such as Cash for College, Cougar Welcome Days and Promise Day. We have
- Participation with VRC partners with the San Luis Obispo Veterans Service Collaborative (SVSC) and other county programs to provide resources and support, such as the SVSC Veterans and Family Resource Fair held in November 2021, offering information on employment, housing, health and education to all participants.
- We have established a physical presence at Camp Roberts; providing support and offering financial resources and educational opportunities for military personnel.
- Providing financial aid to support students as they work towards their educational goals.
- Invest in robust advertising campaigns using the website, flyers, social media, radio, and television platforms to promote financial resources, including translations in Spanish
- Staff serve as liaisons to various campus departments and services, including the Black Student Union, Monarch Center, local high schools and community to serve as a contact and host in and outreach presentations. This ensures information pertaining to financial resources is being disseminated to a diverse population

2. Promote cultural, intellectual, and professional growth.

- Financial Aid staff participate in professional growth by attending staff meetings, campus events, and attend Statewide and national conferences designed to provide relevant, current, and updated information regarding regulatory and legislative issues.

This year's conferences, trainings and webinars included:

Financial Aid

- Banner – Luminis
- Beyond Onboarding: CCC MyPath Customizations for Student Completion
- BlackBaud
- California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Updates (CCCCO)
- CASFAA (California Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators
- CSSO Virtual State Student Services Conference
- Cuesta Cluster Retreat
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Training (DEI)
- Ellucian Live
- FSA (Federal Student Aid) Conference- virtual
- Guided Pathways
- Leadership Academy
- Management Training Series
- Military Summit Credit for Prior Learning (MilCPL)
- National Clearinghouse
- Ocelot
- NASFAA
- New Directors provided by CCCCO
- Targeted Outreach Training: Effectively Reaching Undocumented Students

Veterans
- WAVES (Western Association of Veterans Education Specialists)

Identify how your program addresses or helps the District to achieve its Institutional Goals and Objectives, and/or operational planning initiatives.

Institutional Goal 1: Increase student access to higher education

Institutional Objective 1C: Expand financial support and aid opportunities for students.

Financial Aid is crucial for students accessing higher education. There has been significant research from the District and nationwide indicating a direct correlation between financial aid recipients and multiple success-related metrics, including retention, persistence, credit accumulation, full-time enrollment, and graduation.

In their report "State Financial Aid for college: What to Know"(available at https://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/paying-for-college/articles/state-financial-aid-for-college-what-to-know. US News & World Report emphasizes the importance of utilizing financial aid resources:

"In 2018-2019, states awarded an average of $930 per full-time-equivalent undergraduate student in the U.S., according to the College Board's Trends in College Pricing and Student Aid 2020 report. This continues a seven-year trend of rising state grant aid. But as state budgets see significant cuts in response to the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic, experts say the trend may pause or reverse.

Still, state financial aid programs can play a crucial role in increasing college accessibility for students with financial need, supporting student groups such as adult learners and providing merit aid for students with strong academic backgrounds."

Our office uses an array of standard financial aid programs and VRC grants (e.g. state/federal grants, student loans, and work-study) and institutional innovations (e.g. AB-2, AB-19, BOOST, CASE, CCPG, Cuesta Promise, CASE emergency grants, emergency funding for re-entry students, student equity book vouchers, Veteran's school supplies, lending Chrome laptops, and ASCC book loans) to maximize the support that Cuesta students receive. We can't provide full support for every student, but we can improve our approach to target those who need the support the most and allocate our limited resources accordingly.

Each year, staff members participate in events intended to increase enrollment and financial support for new and continuing students. In 2020, financial aid staff members virtually attended 50 events that reached approximately 1181 prospective and continuing students.

We will continue to increase the number of new FAFSA or CADA applications completed, and Veteran's certifications. The activities that we will use to support this outcome are paid advertising, in reach and outreach events. By continuing to communicate to students, Veterans and their dependents, who have not applied or are not aware of Veterans grants, and those that have received aid in the past and have not applied in a subsequent year. We will also continue our outreach in the high schools via Cash for College events, Parent

nights, Financial Aid and Veterans workshops, we can assist new students in applying for various types of aid.

Institutional Goal 2: Completion

Measure 1: Percent of student persistence in courses

The Financial Aid Office and the VRC support persistence in courses for all students but especially those receiving financial aid such as the CCPG fee waiver, AB19 fee waiver, Cuesta Promise, G.I. Bill® or other aid. Most financial aid opportunities are tied to a course program of student (CPoS), which is tied to a comprehensive student educational plan (CSEP), and Satisfactory Academic Progress, timeframe, or completion. Especially with the fee waivers. Students can lose their waiver if they are not completing the units they have attempted. Students may not be eligible for disbursement if enrolled in courses not applicable to their program of study or on the CSEP. It is imperative that students are well informed and meet with a counselor regularly to ensure they understand the magnitude of adhering to these requirements. This will help support persistence and successful completion of academic and educational goals.

How**:** Timely communications to students, efficient processing with appeals. Regular communications with the Counseling department regarding regulatory updates and policy changes.

Outreach Virtual and In-person Examples

- Cash for College
- High School Counselor Workshops
- FAFSA Workshops at Local High Schools
- Scholarship Workshops
- Camp Roberts
- ELAC Meeting

In-reach Virtual and In-person Examples

- Cougar Welcome Days
- Cougar Voices
- Educate
- Home Away From Home
- Veterans Workshops

- Loan Workshops

- Psych Tech Orientation

- LVN Orientations

- Paramedic Orientations

- In-reach Tabling

Institutional Goal 3: Transfer

Institutional Objective 3A: Increase the annual number of students transferring to a CSU or UC.

Informing students prior to transfer that the Pell, Cal Grants and scholarships may be available at their preferred institution. This can possibly motivate students to consider transferring to a 4-year institution and pursue more ambitious goals than previously considered.

The Financial Aid Office supports transfer when it comes to the Cal Grant Transfer Entitlement award. We need to educate students on the benefit it could have when transferring to a 4-year institution. The Cal Grant Transfer Entitlement Award is for students who were not awarded a High School Entitlement Award but are now transferring from a California Community College to an eligible bachelor's degree granting institution in California.

The VRC supports transfer by ensuring a comprehensive student educational plan (CSEP) is on file, regular counseling visits throughout the term and meeting with the VRC Coordinator regarding benefits, eligibility and other financial resources.

The Financial Aid Office and the VRC can research and offer contact information for similar departments at the transfer institutions; therefore, making the transition to a new institution more seamless and less intimidating.

How: In the next year, we will look to partner with the transfer center and career center to deliver workshops to students educating them on financial aid and transfer.

Institutional Goal 4: Unit Accumulation

Institutional Objective 4A: Decrease the average number of units accumulated by Cuesta

College students.

The Financial Aid Office supports this by matching the number of units required to complete a degree and adjusting our SAP policy to align with this objective. The goal is to be clearer, concise, and consistent for students.

The VRC supports decreasing the number of accumulated units by requiring a current CSEP is on file, regular counseling visits throughout the term and meeting with the VRC Coordinator regarding benefits and eligibility.

How: The SAP policy was adjusted to 132 units from 90 to minimize SAP appeals; however, with the implementation of CPOS and the CSEP requirement, unit accumulation is predicted to decrease. We intend to review the SAP units annually to determine the impact of the new policy.

Veterans must have an CSEP on file and complete the program of study listed to remain eligible for benefits. This ensures students are completing their educational goal and transferring timely.

Institutional Goal 5: Workforce

Institutional Objective 5C: Increase proportion of all students with a job closely related to their field of study.

The Financial Aid Office supports this goal by utilizing Federal Work Study and Veteran's Work Study Funds to recommend that students work in their field of study on campus. This benefits the student as they will receive hands on experience directly related to the career they want.

Continue working closely with the Cuesta Foundation to develop working relationships with community donors.

Institutional Goal 6: Facilities and Technology

The Financial Aid Office and VRC supports this goal by continuing to improve technology for our students as it relates to the application of financial aid, Veteran certification, completing the process to receive aid, and how to keep the aid. We are almost entirely paperless in our office.

Utilizing Live Chat along with a Virtual Lobby to assist financial aid students and veterans via Zoom for quick question, drop-in and 30-minute appointments

The VRC at NCC has added a monitor to display important dates, deadlines and resources. New furniture at the SLO and NCC locations to update the spaces and make them welcoming and inviting.

Institutional Goal 7: Fiscal

The Financial Aid Office supports this goal continuing to increase the number of Pell, AB540 and CCPG recipients. We understand how important that is in the Student-Centered Funding Formula. We want students to complete the financial aid process early so they can receive aid and stay in school.

Veterans Resource Center is striving to continue increasing the number of certified veterans and their families served by providing benefits, support and resources. Early completion for required paperwork is the key to ensuring maximum benefits are applied to assist with retention and persistence.

Identify how your program helps students achieve Institutional Learning Outcomes, if applicable.

N/A

III. **PROGRAM DATA ANALYSIS AND PROGRAM-SPECIFIC MEASUREMENTS**
This should be an update on the data analysis from the last CPPR

Program data is available on the [SLOCCCD Institutional Research website.](#)

[Enrollment](#)

Since 2015-16 the APPW now requires all Student Services clusters to report on a common set of data elements in order to monitor the progress of goals listed in the Educational Master Plan.

Definitions for Financial Aid Data

- Students Served (FAFSA): All students that have completed a FAFSA for the academic year and who were enrolled in at least one course for at the Fall census date.
- Students Served (Dream): All student who completed the CA Dream Act application and who were enrolled in at least one course of the Fall census date.
- 1st year Persistence: First time students who were enrolled in at least one course at census, who received any financial aid, and who were enrolled in at least one course at census in the subsequent Fall.
- Units Completed/Units Attempted: The percentage of units attempted that were completed by student wo received any financial aid in the academic year.

1. Students Served

In Figure 1, this data represents the number of enrolled students that have completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the California Dream Act Application (CADAA) both district-wide and by campus location. Each year the numbers continue to increase, which may be due the Districts robust advertising social and mass media campaigns. The collaboration with local high school counselors and the community at large could reflect their efforts. With continued in reach and outreach efforts the expectation is to propel forward on an upward trajectory.

However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the campus abruptly closed in March 2020. This caused the district and all students to abruptly pivot and quickly adapt to working and learning in a virtual environment. As a result, there has been a significant drop in post-secondary enrollment locally and nationwide. Therefore, ramping up in reach and outreach efforts will be vital to ensure students are aware of the financial aid resources available to help them achieve their educational and academic goals.

		Figure 1. Total Students Served			
Category		**2017/2018**	**2018/2019**	**2019/2020**	**2020/2021**
Enrolled students who filled out a financial aid and DREAM application	District-wide FAFSA	5803	5957	6319	5722
	District-wide DREAM	154	138	208	160
	SLO FAFSA	4301	4358	4683	2027
	SLO DREAM	104	168	126	45
	North County FAFSA	1400	1395	1308	363
	North County Dream	44	57	69	13
	South County FAFSA	112	94	70	9
	South County Dream	2	2	2	0

14 S a n   L u i s   O b i s p o   C o u n t y   C o m m u n i t y   C o l l e g e   D i s t r i c t
Student Success & Support Programs, College Centers Comprehensive Program Planning & Review
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2. 1st Year Persistence

    First time students who were enrolled in at least one course at census, who received any financial aid, and who were enrolled in at least one course at census in the subsequent Fall.

Figure 2

| Persistence Year: | Disaggregate By: | Definitions |
| First Year Persistence | Financial Aid Status | |

First Year Persistence: Overall

- 2014 - 2015: 67.8%
- 2015 - 2016: 70.3%
- 2016 - 2017: 71.5%
- 2017 - 2018: 72.7%
- 2018 - 2019: 74.3%
- 2019 - 2020: 75.4%
- 2020 - 2021: 74.0%

Figure 2 compares the persistence of first-year students receiving financial aid with the overall population of first-year students. Students with financial aid in place continue to be more likely to persist than the general student population. We attribute this trend to the recent student success initiatives that have been implemented campus-wide over the last few years. This development offers us the opportunity to capitalize on this success by actively promoting support systems to financial aid recipients.
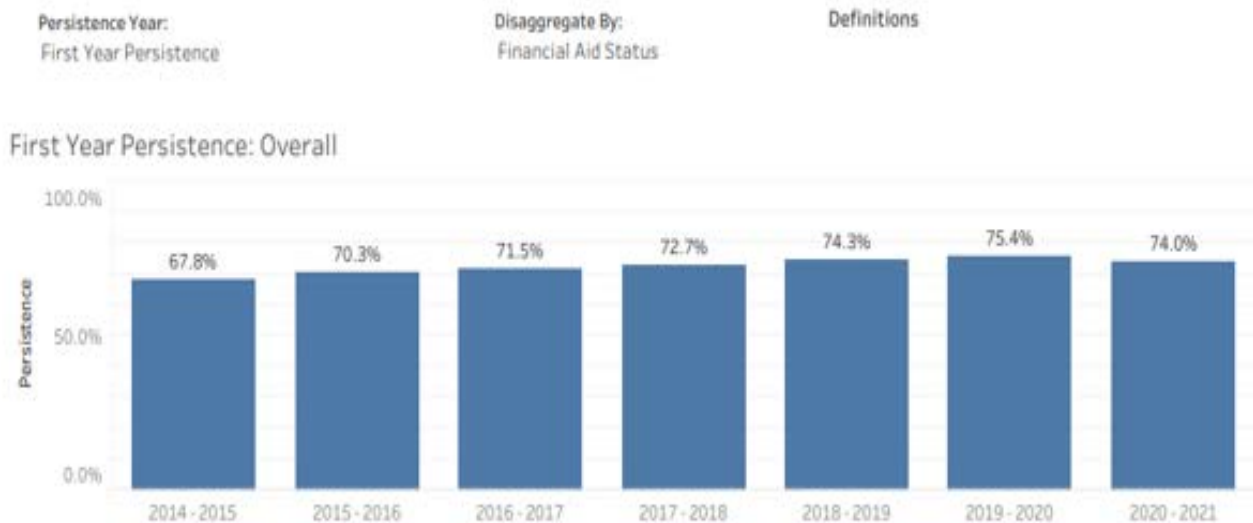
Figure 3

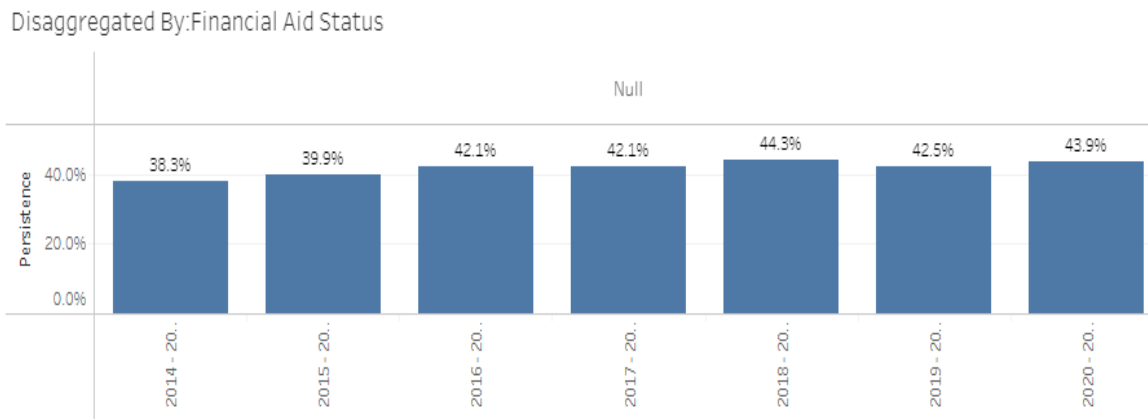Disaggregated By:Financial Aid Status

Null

Figure 3 compares the persistence of second-year students receiving financial aid with the overall population of second-year students. Once again indicating that students receiving financial aid are more likely to persist than the general student population. We attribute this trend to the recent student success initiatives that have been implemented campus-wide over the last few years. This development offers us the opportunity to capitalize on this success by actively promoting support systems to financial aid recipients.

3. Units Completed /Units Attempted: The percentage of units attempted that were completed by students who received any financial aid in the academic year.

Figure 4

All Success Percent by Financial Aid Status

Performance Gaps

Note: Successful Course Completion is the ratio of enrollments resulting in a final grade of A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, CR or P to all valid grades.

16 S a n   L u i s   O b i s p o   C o u n t y   C o m m u n i t y   C o l l e g e   D i s t r i c t
S t u d e n t   S u c c e s s   &   S u p p o r t   P r o g r a m s ,   C o l l e g e   C e n t e r s   C o m p r e h e n s i v e   P r o g r a m
P l a n n i n g   &   R e v i e w
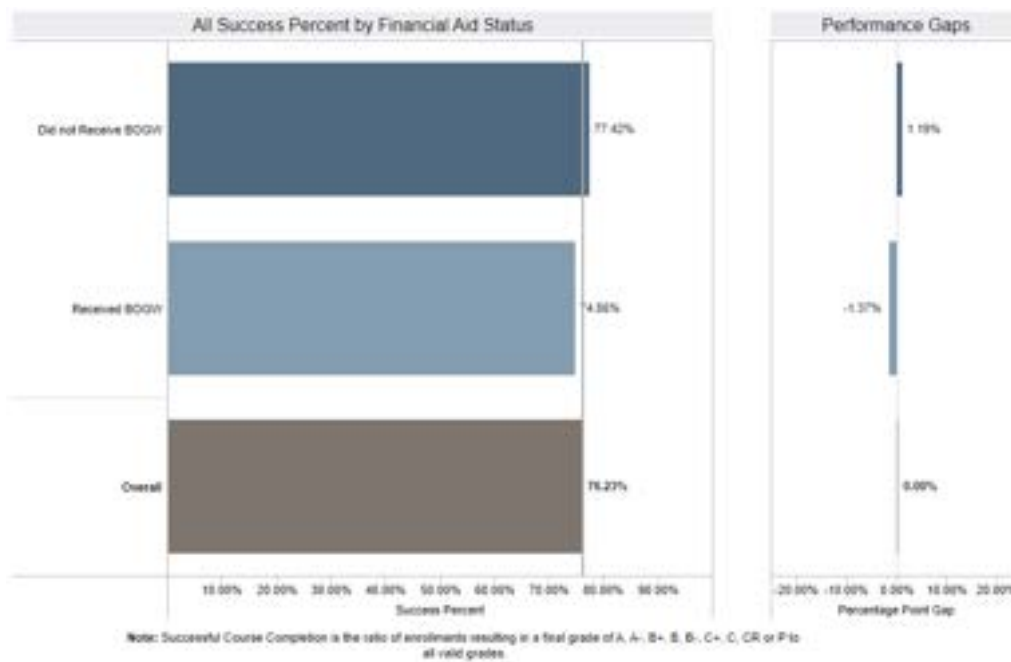Approved Document to be Used for Submission Spring, March 7, 2022

Figure 4, shows that student who receive financial aid are just as motivated to achieve course completion as compared to the overall student population. The data points do not punctuate the importance of persistence; even though low-income students are more likely to be under prepared for post-secondary education, having access to financial aid affords them a greater opportunity at achieving academic and educational success.

Looking back at the last program review, the Financial Aid Office has increased the annual disbursement of aid (Figure 5 & Figure 6). Unfortunately, due to the impact of the global pandemic, the aid disbursed decrease is attributed to the reduction of enrollment (Figure 7), students receiving aid (Figure 9) and completion of the FAFSA and CADAA application (Figure 8). Thanks to the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF I, II & III), introduced in spring 2020, many students persisted and completed the semester and subsequent terms because of emergency aid disbursed to assist them with their basic needs. Otherwise, the impact on enrollment and financial aid applications may have been severely significant.

Figure 5

Pell Grant Disbursement

Year	Amount
2020-21	$7,550,355
2019-20	$8,900,840
2018-19	$8,730,966
2017-18	$8,426,035
2016-17	$7,582,049

Figure 6

Financial Aid Award Amounts
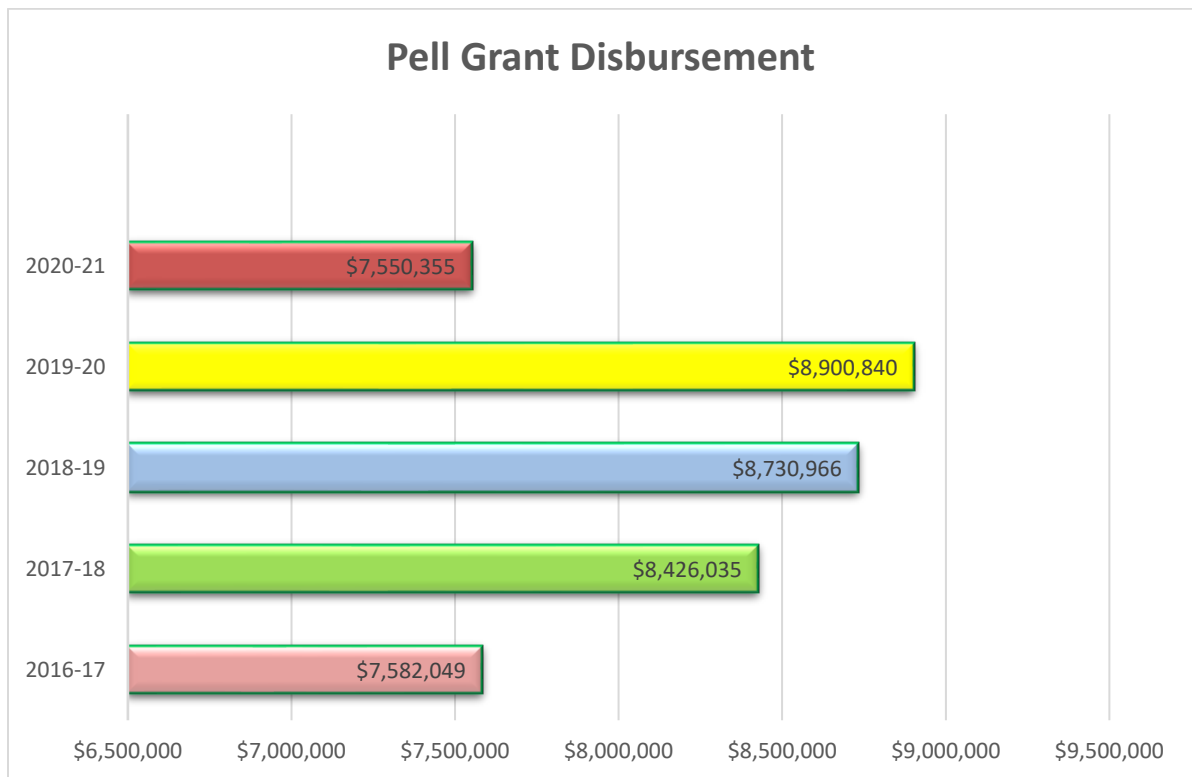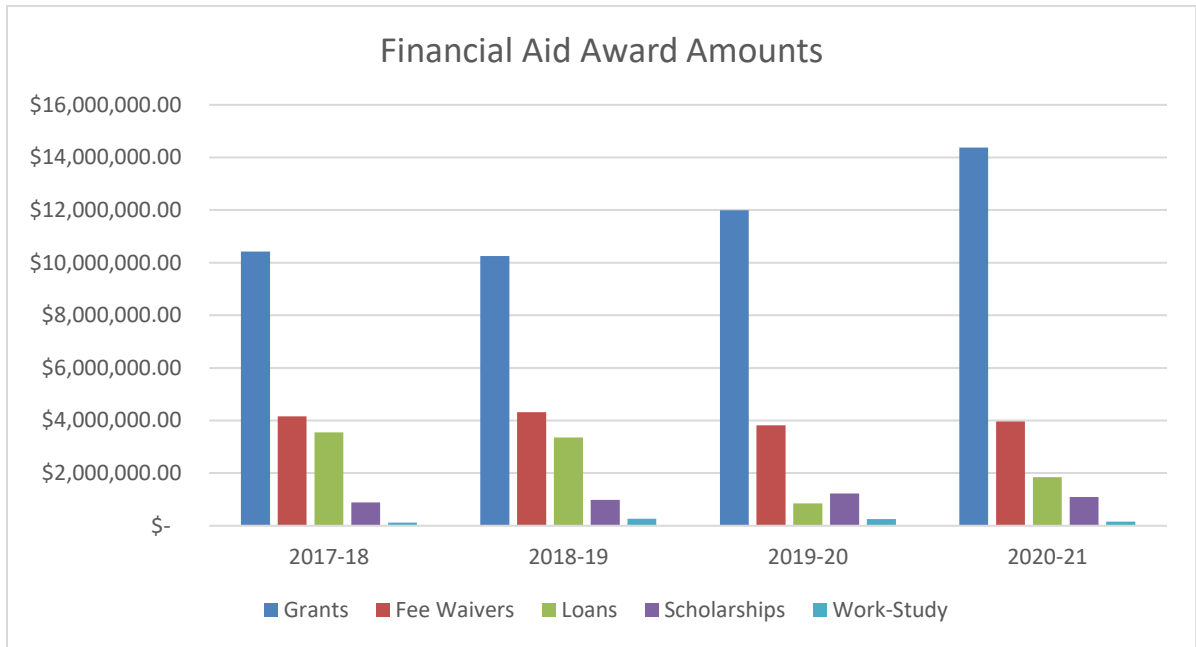
Figure 7

HEADCOUNT TARGETS		2021	2020	N CHANGE	% CHANGE
Target Headcount[1]	N	11932	13010	-1078	-8.3%
Headcount to Date	N	10835	10947	-112	-1.0%
N from Target	N	-1097	-2063		
Percent of Target	%	90.8%	84.1%		

Student Success & Support Programs, College Centers Comprehensive Program Planning & Review
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IV.   PROGRAM OUTCOMES, ASSESSMENT AND IMPROVEMENTS: NARRATIVE

Since the outcomes have been revisited and changed from a student learning outcome to a student serving outcome, the student services cluster is now using common data elements to measure their findings. This decision has made it easier to be objective and consistent for relevance and measurability.

Here is a summary of assessment results and improvements planned for each Student Services Outcome.

Student Services Outcome 1: Increase the number of new FAFSA/CADA applications that are completed (start tracking program specific stats).

Student Services Outcome 2: Early completion of continuing student applications

Assessment and Improvement:

The Financial Aid Office has used Cuesta College's Institutional Research annual head count reports to determine the number of students enrolled. This enrollment data has been used to as a consistent resource for the last three years. Argos reports were used to determine how many students successfully completed their FAFSA and CADA files. This is done by checking for a FAFSA cone on the RRAAREQ or RORSTAT table.

Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has impaired the departments' ability to perform in-person in and outreach activities, thus, curtailing efforts. Meeting with student via a virtual platform has been both beneficial and challenging. Although, students can be assisted virtually, in most cases with little to no wait time, the challenge is for students that need hands on assistance. Lack of in person contact can cause frustration and confusion, rendering the student to feel helpless and ultimately deciding not to complete financial aid applications. There has been a 6.2% decrease in completed FAFSA applications and a 5.7% decrease in CADA applications between 2019-20 and 2020-21.

With the health guidelines relaxing in spring 2021, in the state of California and nationally, the Financial Aid Office is reinvigorated to connect with the local community and high schools to disseminate the availability of financial aid resources, promoting early completion. The goal is to use a tracking system to monitor the number of attendees and use the quantified data to mindfully prepare for future events logistically and have adequate staff to support the event by advance preparation.
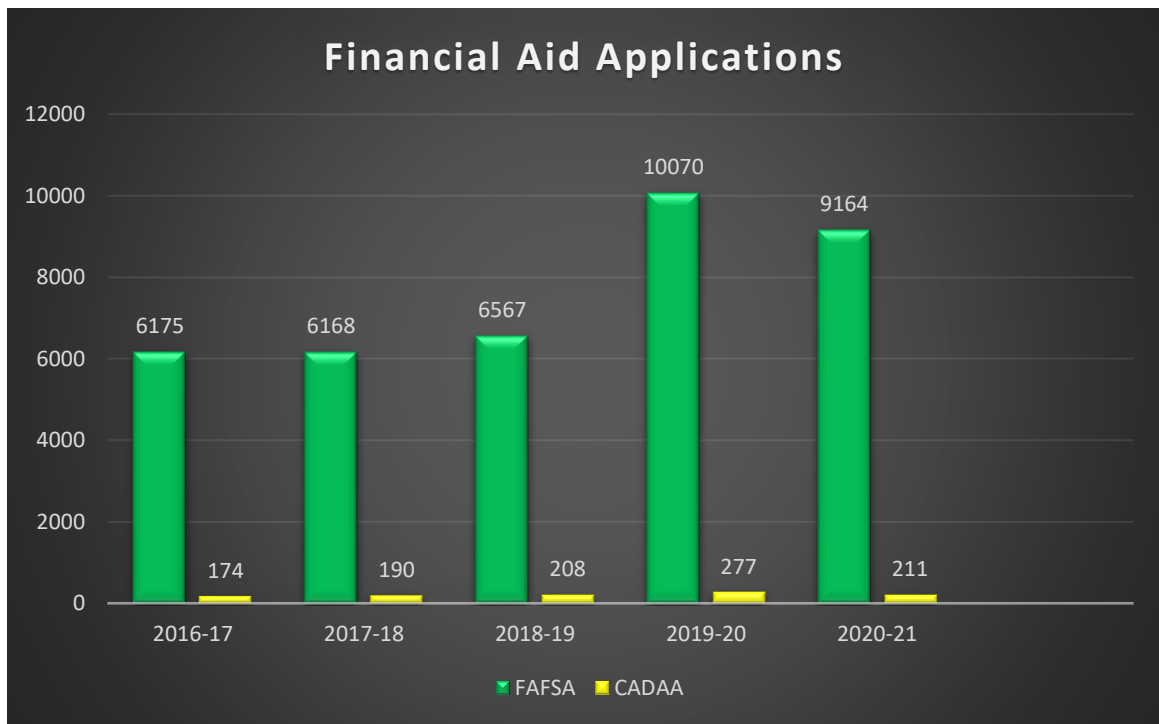
Summary

Here is data for Student Services Outcome 1 & 2 that illustrate the number of FAFSA and CADA applications received by Cuesta College (FAFSA's rejected by the Department of Education are not included). This chart shows the data over the last five years (Figure 9).

Figure 8

					Financial Aid Awards		
Applications	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Differences Between 2019-20 and 2020-21	Differences Between 2020-21 and 2021-22	Differences Between 2021-22 and 2022-23
FAFSA	10,070	9,445	8,435	3,889	-6.2%	-10.7%	-53.9%
CADAA	227	214	177	32	-5.7%	-17.3%	-81.9%

Figure 9

Financial Aid Applications

FAFSA / CADAA by year:
- 2016-17: FAFSA 6175, CADAA 174
- 2017-18: FAFSA 6168, CADAA 190
- 2018-19: FAFSA 6567, CADAA 208
- 2019-20: FAFSA 10070, CADAA 277
- 2020-21: FAFSA 9164, CADAA 211

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Student Services Outcome 3: Reduce the number of student appeals, and students that are not meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress (including when CPOS is online and degree completion).

Assessment and Improvement:

Through outreach efforts the Financial Aid Office will emphasize the importance of maintaining good academic standing and a 2.0 GPA in order to remain eligible for aid. Students will be encouraged to utilize campus resources (e.g. counseling, tutoring, mental health services, etc.) to support their academic goals. Meeting with campus programs and utilizing resources regularly will allow students to connect with the campus. There is nationwide research that shows the correlation between campus involvement and completion.

Engaging with and establishing interdepartmental relationships with CAFÉ, Counseling and faculty will allow for creative processes to emerge to support students from a holistic approach. Collegial behavior

will help achieve a common goal for the student to remain in school, persist and ultimately complete their educational goal. This outcome will ensure Cuesta is honoring their mission statement, Master Plan and the student.

The Financial Aid staff will practice timely follow with students and use reports to reach out to students in danger of falling below good academic standing.

Student Services Outcome 4: Partner with campus departments and join existing workshops/events to promote Financial Aid.

Assessment and Improvement:

The Financial Aid Office has made it a priority to partner with campus departments to promote financial resources and establish positive working relationships. The pandemic has made it difficult for the college community to reconnect and rebuild professional relationships. Building a welcoming campus community is vital to student support. This allows students to feel a sense of belonging and connection employees and the college. Working collaboratively with other departments can reduce redundant efforts and demonstrate a common goal of being student centered and student focused. Students will see the college is united in supporting their efforts to achieving their academic and educational goals.

Other Relevant Program Data:

Veterans Resource Center (VRC) – works diligently to serve military connected students in accessing military education benefits and continuous support in achieving academic success. The goal is to provide the highest quality of service through local, regional and state-wide community partnerships to expand available resources and accessible tools that serve the unique needs of student veteran's well-being and success.

Personnel

Currently, the department is recruiting to fill the Veterans Service Coordinator position, which was vacated in January 2022. Incumbents require specialization in a variety of complex technical duties, veterans and their dependents, advising and regulatory knowledge of federal and state Veterans Administration laws. Filling this position will be vital in maintaining relationships with the veterans attending Cuesta College, local veterans' community organizations and Camp Roberts.

Veterans Served

Figure 10, shows the number of students enrolled at the census date from Fall 2020 through Spring 2022. Figure 11, illustrates the number of certifications received from 2017 through 2021. Figure 12, reflects the decline in drop-in appointments. Each year the number continued to increase until 2019, since then there has been a steady decline in the number of veterans enrolled. In recent years, this may be due to the pandemic, however, this does not explain what occurred in 2019. In spring 2021 Veteran have slowly begun to return to campus.

With continued in reach and outreach efforts the priority is to increase the presence of veterans on our campuses.

Figure 10

Veterans Registration Statistics

	Fall 2020	Spring 2021	Fall 2021	Spring 2022
	214	197	112	129
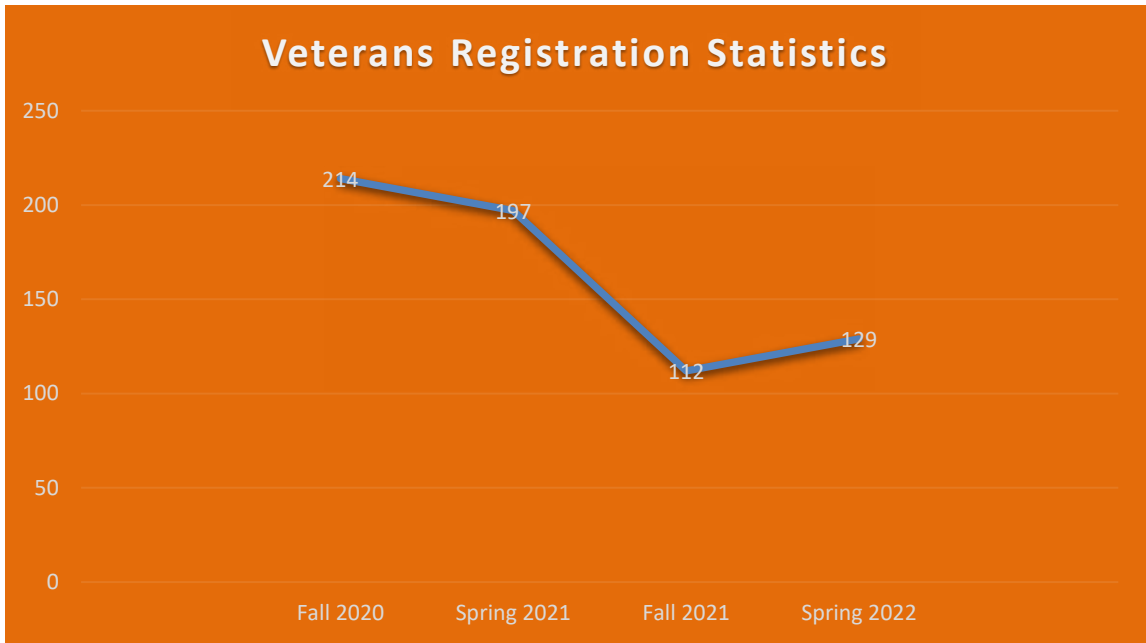
Figure 11

Figure 11. VRC Certifications	
2018 Certifications	304
2019 Certifications	214
2020 Certifications	219
2021 Certifications	112

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Figure 12
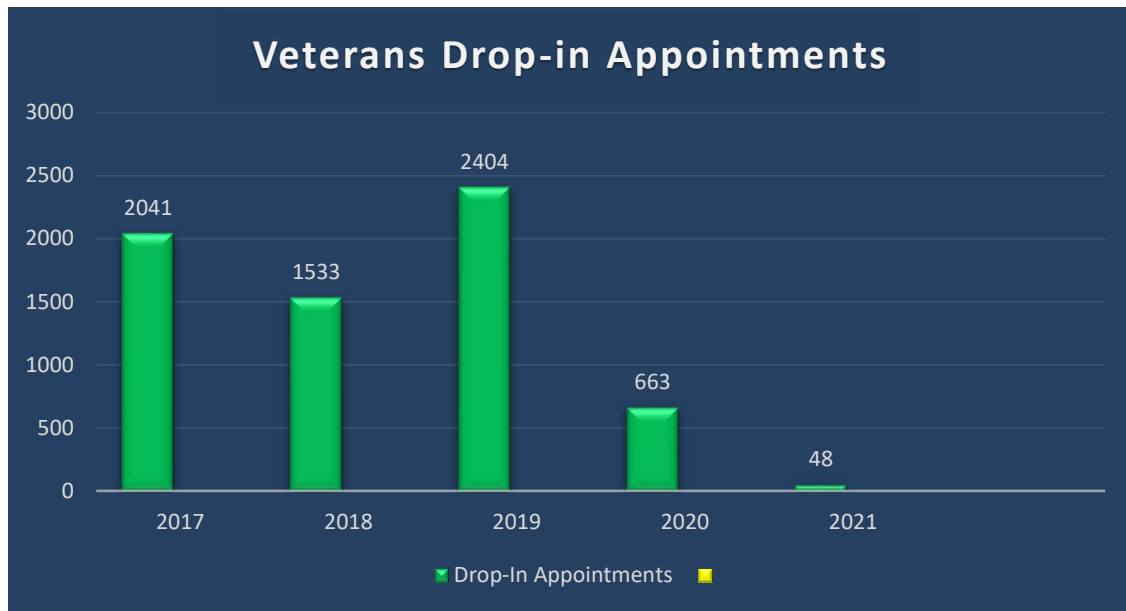
In-reach and outreach efforts continue in spite of the pandemic. The VRC partners with the San Luis Obispo Veterans Service Collaborative (SVSC) and other county programs to provide resources and support, such as the SVSC Veterans and Family Resource Fair held in November 2021, offering information on employment, housing, health and education.

In 2020, Cuesta College entered into a partnership with Camp Roberts to provide in person enrollment and student services to military personnel and their families. Since 2010, Camp Roberts has trained approximately 250,000 military and civilian personnel. The Camp is conveniently located near the North County Campus, which is a short commute to attend college.

C. Recommend additional improvements to the program based on assessment of outcomes and progress towards Institutional Goals and Objectives and/or Institutional Learning Outcomes.

Although, there has been a decrease in some of the outcomes as demonstrated by the data and the assessment process, with the relaxing of pandemic guidelines, there is hope that we will begin to see improvements in these areas. Filling vacant positions and possibly adding new ones will help stabilize the department. The best practice would be to have staff that are knowledgeable in regulations and can implement them in the daily

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operations. As noted in the previous CPPR, there are two main factors that impact the success of the Financial Aid Office and offering exceptions customer service to students – regulatory compliance and staff retention.

Regulatory compliance is the foundation of the Financial Aid Office. It is imperative staff receive adequate training on-site and attend conferences and workshops to stay abreast of the current trends and upcoming legislation. There are many opportunities to participate and receive training, however, due to the nature of financial aid and assiduous demands it can be difficult to carve out time to commit. Regulations are not always binary and can on occasion, be contradictory, which may require autonomous investigation to decipher. Understanding how to navigate thorough the seemingly endless sea of educational codes can be both overwhelming and rewarding.

Staff turnover can complicate the lack of regulatory knowledge. According to the last program review, staff retention has been on ongoing issue for the past thirteen years. Typically, it takes a year to train staff to feel comfortable administering aid, which is why it is vital to retain them. Maintaining skilled employees is one key to departmental success. Unfortunately, with financial aid being a specialized field, it can make it challenging for employees to advance within the office. Employees have continuously expressed concern during retreats and one-on-one meetings that they desperately want the opportunity to advance in their careers.

Recently, two employees have secured positions outside of the Financial Aid Office. They are being lured by higher salaries and advancement opportunities. This creates an environment for high turnover and constant recruitment and training. Living in San Luis Obispo County can be expensive and residents need to earn a living wage to afford this lifestyle. Increasing the salary or at least comparable to the local community college may help with the retention of quality employees.

D. Recommend changes and updates to program funding based on assessment of program outcomes.

- For elements that require funding, complete Section D – Resource Plan Funding Requests.

- For faculty hiring needs, see Section H – Faculty Prioritization Process.

During the Financial Aid staff meeting in February 2021, all employees actively participated in brainstorming department priorities and resources. Although there were many suggestions, it was narrowed down to these five areas:

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S t u d e n t   S u c c e s s   &   S u p p o r t   P r o g r a m s ,   C o l l e g e   C e n t e r s   C o m p r e h e n s i v e   P r o g r a m
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1. A facility that will enhance the college;
2. Supplies to increase financial aid awareness and FAFSA/CADA completion;
3. Equipment to increase productivity and confidentiality;
4. Technology to support academic success for students;
5. Hiring an IT support staff for financial aid tasks

The proposed top ten requests are listed in the Resource Plan, and below accompanied with a brief narrative.

E. Identify and describe any budget requests that are related to student learning outcomes assessment results or institutional/programmatic objectives.

Here is a list of top ten items that will be included in the Resource Plan and are presented in order of priority as determined by the Financial Aid staff during a staff meeting on Friday, February 4, 2022. Although financial aid funding is limited to a District match with categorical funding contingent to that match. The Financial Aid Office has a healthy budget and therefore may require little to no outside funding. The intent is only to provide context for campus discussions and budget priorities.

Financial Aid Specialist

Filling these two vacancies would improve the administration of financial aid for all students and reduce the financial aid risk caused by Title IV compliance expectations.

Financial Aid IT Position

An additional programmer/analyst position working primarily out of and with the Financial Aid Office. In addition to normal IT duties, the would assist with the new year roll, managing algorithms and rules, creating automated jobs, and any other technical financial aid functions beyond the scope of Financial Aid specific positions.

CPOS Specialist

Implementation of Federal regulations would give the opportunity for this position to impact students with additional support and give full attention to process.

Veterans Program Clerk

Work the "Front" desk, answer and return phone calls, outreach to veterans, host events, help with social media, support with policy and procedures, and provide clerical assistance for the VRC Coordinator.

KVM Switch

Would allow us to have a desktop set up on one of the SLO windows, using one set of keyboard/mice/monitors with both the laptop dock and desktop, as appropriate.

FA Outreach and Marketing Assistant (full-time/bilingual preferred)

This position would be solely dedicated to creating and implementing marketing campaigns on behalf of the Financial Aid/Records and Veterans Services. This would include print, digital, video, radio and social media. Advertising and outreach would also include engaging with the HS Counselors, parents, students, and perspective Cuesta College Students, military bases/veteran populations. Cuesta Promise, Cuesta Scholarships, FAFSA/CADA completion, and March 2nd deadlines would be a few major annual campaigns that would be implemented.

Laptop Docking for Home Use

This would allow connecting additional USB cords and a larger monitor. Supports ergonomic work space.

Computer Chrome Books for Student Lending

Allowing the students, the opportunity to fill out the necessary financial aid applications independently. Can assist with inquiries on the spot while the application is being completed.

Text to Student Abilities

Gives the ability to communicate with students specifically regarding financial aid. Concise messaging and is more effective than email.

Cuesta Promise Application

Students can track progress and fulfill their steps through an application. Can streamline the process and make more accessible for students. Can potentially increase Promise scholarship enrollment.

V. ANTICIPATED SERVICE CHALLENGES/CHANGES

Suggested Elements:

A. Regulatory changes

Regulations can change on a dime, especially with the economic and global impacts currently rippling through this country. As with most laws and regulations, it is difficult to know what will be enacted. The federal government is known to move swiftly and execute and Executive Order or slowly and nothing changes. There are proposed increases to the Pell Grant and consolidating the Cal Grant. Only time will tell. We have been consumed with the talk of inflation, which may impact future funding levels. This may impact the restrictions imposed by the district regarding matching funds.

Ongoing training is the best option to remain current on all regulatory changes.

B. Internal and external organizational changes

Transitioning from a virtual to an in-person learning environment may be challenging. Staff are expected to cover campus sites, participate in in-reach and out reach events and still maintain the level of customer service using virtual technology before the pandemic. This can place a strain on staff to try to "do it all" with staff vacancies.

C. Anticipated staffing changes/retirements

With the recent vacancies and a history of staff turnover, hopefully, the Financial Aid Office will remain stable for several years. Continuing the search for an ideal staffing model will be a priority to attract and retain quality staff.

VI. PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT FORECAST

New service coordination and collaboration – internal and external programs

The Financial Aid Department will continue collaborating with the California Men's Colony to expand knowledge about financial aid awareness and resources.

VII. OVERALL BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Will be reflected in District planning and budget process

Elements:

A. Personnel

With the rising costs to live in San Luis Obispo County, and the looming continued rise in inflation, there is an expectation that both salary and benefits could rise significantly

over the next few years. Staff are choosing to remain in positions and reap the benefits of longevity and increased salary schedules. The Financial Aid budget will continue to be modified to accommodate these changes.

Beyond our control is the reduction of annual budget allocations (e.g. categorical funding or state-mandated reductions that will impact our District match). If this occurs, we have two vacant positions and may forgo fulfilling one.

B. Equipment/furniture (other than technology)
As a result of COVID-19, the department has been showered with emergency funding. There is not a need for large purposes. The previous CPPR indicated there may be a consideration once the new Campus Center has been constructed in 2023. Plans have delayed due to the impact of the pandemic and the supply chain.

C. Technology
With the recent major purchases of Ocelot for live chats and ISE to automate many financial aid processes, only minor technology requests are proposed at this time. There will continue to be gradual technology updates. Usually, these purchases are finalized at the end of the fiscal year once all department and district expenditures have been accounted for. The Financial Aid Office did fulfill its goal of moving towards a green, paperless office environment. Most documentation is completed and reviewed digitally.

D. Facilities

As indicated in the 2017-18 CPPR, with the passage of Measure L and the adoption of the 2016-2026 Facilities Master Plan, these costs will not impact the Financial Aid budget, with the exception of usage fees for parking facilities during special events.

SIGNATURE PAGE

Faculty, Director(s), Manager(s), and/or Staff Associated with the Program

Instructional Programs: All full-time faculty in the program must sign this form. If needed, provide an extra signature line for each additional full-time faculty member in the program. If there is no full-time faculty associated with the program, then the part-time faculty in the program should sign. If applicable, please indicate lead faculty member for program after printing his/her name.

Student Success and Support Programs, College Centers and Administrative Services Programs: All full-time director(s), managers, faculty and/or classified staff in the program must sign this form.

Associate Dean of Financial Aid and Records	Signature	Date
Associate Director of Financial Aid	Signature	Date
Financial Aid Specialist	Signature	Date
Financial Aid Specialist	Signature	Date
Financial Aid Specialist	Signature	Date
Department Assistant	Signature	Date
Name	Signature	Date

DEAN'S/MANAGER'S ANALYSIS OF COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM PLANNING & REVIEW (CPPR)

Program: **Planning Year:**   **Last Year CPPR Completed:**

Unit: **Cluster:**

A. CPPR Pre-Meeting

It is strongly recommended that the Vice President and/or Dean meet with Division Chair/Director/designee and the program faculty and/or staff involved in preparing the CPPR prior to the completion of the review documents. The discussion should include an overview of the CPPR document and expectations of what should be considered and focused on when developing the CPPR.

If a Pre-CPPR meeting occurred, please list those in attendance, when the meeting occurred and a summary of what was discussed.

B. Narrative Analysis of CPPR Sections

Please provide an analysis and comments of programmatic information for each of the CPPR sections below.

- **General Information and Program Outcomes (Required for Instruction/Student Success and Support Programs, College Centers/Administrative Services):**

- **Program Support of Institutional Goals and Objectives, and/or Institutional Learning Outcomes (Required for Instruction/Student Success and Support Programs, College Centers/Administrative Services):**

- **Program Data Analysis and Program-Specific Measurements (Required for Instruction/Student Success and Support Programs, College Centers/Administrative Services):**

- **Curriculum Review (Required for Instruction and may be Applicable to Student Success and Support Programs, College Centers):**

- **Program Support of Institutional Goals and Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes (Required for Instruction/Student Success and Support Programs, College Centers/Administrative Services):**

- **Program Data Analysis, Assessment and Improvements (Required for Student Success and Support Programs, College Centers/Administrative Services):**

- **Program Outcomes, Assessments and Improvements (Required for Instruction/Student Success and Support Programs, College Centers/Administrative Services):**

- **Anticipated Service Challenges/Changes (Required for Student Success and Support Programs, College Centers/Administrative Services):**

- **Program Development Forecast (Required for Instruction/Student Success and Support Programs, College Centers/Administrative Services):**

- **Overall Budget Implications (Required for Student Success and Support Programs, College Centers/Administrative Services):**

- **End Notes/Additional Comments (Required for Instruction/Student Success and Support Programs, College Centers/Administrative Services):**

C. **Commendations/Considerations:**

Please provide a list of commendations and considerations based on the CPPR.

Commendations:

Comments in this area summarize how the program has demonstrated its effectiveness.

Considerations:

Comments in this area constitute advice to help the program meet or surpass expectations for effectiveness.

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S t u d e n t   S u c c e s s   &   S u p p o r t   P r o g r a m s ,   C o l l e g e   C e n t e r s   C o m p r e h e n s i v e   P r o g r a m
P l a n n i n g   &   R e v i e w
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D. Applicable Signatures:

Vice President/Dean	**Date**

Division Chair/Director/Designee	**Date**

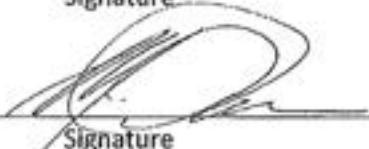|	
Other (when applicable)	**Date**
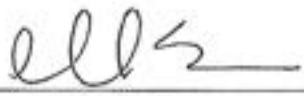
The above-signed individuals have read and discussed this review. The Director/Coordinator, Faculty, and staff in the program involved in the preparation of the CPPR acknowledge the receipt of a copy of the Vice President/ Dean's narrative analysis. The signatures do not necessarily signify agreement.

SIGNATURE PAGE

Faculty, Director(s), Manager(s), and/or Staff Associated with the Program

Instructional Programs: All full-time faculty in the program must sign this form. If needed, provide an extra signature line for each additional full-time faculty member in the program. If there is no full-time faculty associated with the program, then the part-time faculty in the program should sign. If applicable, please indicate lead faculty member for program after printing his/her name.

Student Success and Support Programs, College Centers and Administrative Services Programs: All full-time director(s), managers, faculty and/or classified staff in the program must sign this form.

| Zhrinna McDonald | _signature_ | 3/7/22 |
| Associate Dean of Financial Aid and Records | Signature | Date |

| Michelle Evans | _signature_ | 3/8/2022 |
| Associate Director of Financial Aid | Signature | Date |

| Martha M Davis | _signature_ | 3/8/22 |
| Financial Aid Specialist | Signature | Date |

| Julie Salgado | _signature_ | 3/8/22 |
| Financial Aid Specialist | Signature | Date |

| GRIFFIN MITCHELL | _signature_ | 3/9/2022 |
| Financial Aid Specialist | Signature | Date |

| Darlene Azevedo | _signature_ | 3/08/22 |
| Department Assistant | Signature | Date |

| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Name | Signature | Date |