

# 1. Assessment Plan - Three Column



## PIE - Student Services: Financial Aid Unit

### 2. Where We Are Now: Year at a Glance

#### 2020-21

**Contact Person:** Manuel Cerda

**Email/Extension:** mcerda918@gmail.com X5970

**Summary of Notable Achievements:** Continued the high level of support for students given the instability caused by the pandemic

1. Mobilize entire financial aid operation to an remote work from home environment:
  - Reviewed remote work logistical needs and provided all staff equipment needed to do remote work.
  - Evaluated staff workload and provided cross-training opportunities (increased level of remote services and available resources to students).

-Analyzed technology options to determine best fit business flow for each project (successfully enhanced electronic forms & DocuSign electronic signature feature).

-Continued monitoring of compliance adherence as well as staff remote work performance as related to financial aid processing. Implemented various federal and state regulatory flexibilities caused by the COVID pandemic.
  
2. Implementation State Disaster Relief funds and HEERF II Emergency funds distribution model:
  - Analyzed student population to determine most effective and equitable funds distribution model
  - Collaborated with other campus departments to include Basic Needs in order to create a HEERF Emergency Aid referral process.
  - Develop multiple financial aid fund codes in order to best disaggregate and analyze different tiers of student eligibility
  
3. Developed and enhanced technology to adapt for effective remote student financial aid support service. Maintained all timeframes related to verification, awarding and disbursement of financial aid to students
  
3. Due to spike in statewide Federal Financial Aid Fraud – developed an effective fraud identification process to put a hold and stop over 1,234 potential fraudulent financial aid disbursements.
  - With the assistance of a campus-wide fraudulent application committee developed a formal process to identify, report and mitigate fraudulent financial aid activity.

**Program Planning for Retention and Success:** - Continue to review policies and procedures to ensure compliance and best practice. The area of focus will be the Return of Title IV procedures as it is highly regulated and more likely to be included in audit findings.

- Review and analyze to determine what's working effectively and areas of improvement with the implemented FA Success lab and FA On the Go.
- Collaborated with the Engage and Reconnect efforts in order to best assist students that may have ceased enrollment due to COVID related reasons
- Ongoing discussions on internal/external conditions that may impact our student population and explore ways to better serve our students and their families.
- Continue to cross-train and develop staff so that they have the resources needed to perform their job duties and confidently assist students and campus community.

**External and Internal Conditions Analysis:** Continued changes in federal and state regulations specifically related to flexibilities and around continued COVID Pandemic; Executive Orders from the Community College Chancellors Office and Governors Office; Continued state budget cuts specifically to the BFAP SFAA annual budget for 2020-2021. Federal and state emergency COVID Pandemic continues creating an unstable environment effective the ability to plan accordingly. Internal Conditions- Work from home order for the entire 2020-2021 academic year. Slowly transitioning back to in person towards the end of the year. No in person student support. Increase levels of Federal Fraudulent student financial aid applications causing the department to monitor data and student behavior to determine and limit funding fraudulent students

**Critical Decisions Made by Unit:** Managers and staff participate in committees, meetings, conferences, and training to be appraised of latest regulatory changes and monitor conditions and trends. Continue open dialogues and discussions of information sharing to strengthen staff members' knowledge base and comfort level.

- Developed an effective fraud prevention process without creating hurdles for students to access the financial resources needed.
- Once staff slowly began to work back on campus- financial aid management in collaboration with the staff made the decision to proceed with support in person over the counter and continue to host student appointments remotely using Zoom.

**Contributors to the Report:** Manuel Cerda

Desiree Marquez  
 Rosario Esparza  
 David Tran  
 Sandy Miranda  
 Heather Zhang  
 Justin Barber  
 Marlene Sandoval  
 Windy Lozano  
 Sandra Bollier  
 Serina Gutierrez  
 Terrence Pratt  
 Christine Santiago  
 Roman Cardona  
 Rudy Sanchez  
 Teresa Pham  
 Jazmin Vargas  
 Naomi Spinella  
 Erika Diaz  
 Xochilt Vallarta  
 Desiree Landeros  
 Eric Lopez-Blount

<i>Unit Goals</i>	<i>Resources Needed</i>	<i>1. Where We Make an Impact: Closing the Loop on Goals and Resources</i>
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<i>Unit Goals</i>	<i>Resources Needed</i>	<i>1. Where We Make an Impact: Closing the Loop on Goals and Resources</i>
<p><b>Increase Applications</b> - Continue to increase number of Financial Aid/Veterans applications from completion of FAFSA, CA Dream Act, California College Promise Grant (BOG Fee Waiver), and Veterans Benefits (VA) that will essentially result in more federal and state funds disbursed to students and will positively impact the Student Funding Formula.</p> <p><b>Status:</b> Active</p> <p><b>Goal Year(s):</b> 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22</p> <p><b>Goal Entered:</b> 06/21/2017</p>	<p><b>Report directly on Goal</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Request - Full Funding Requested -</b> Physical space, furniture and technology equipment: computers/tablets, etc.</p> <p><b>Describe Plans &amp; Activities Supported (Justification of Need):</b> Computer Lab to provide hands-on, one-on-one assistance to guide students through the process of applying and receiving financial aid. Students not only receive one-on-one assistance from a staff member but they will gain the necessary knowledge to navigate their FA portal and have the confidence to be self-reliant with the financial aid process.</p> <p><b>Lead:</b> Jenny Phu</p> <p><b>What would success look like and how would you measure it?:</b> Increase in number of applications and reduction in the number of phone calls and students waiting in line. The idea is to teach students how to navigate the financial aid and student portal to be self sufficient. This will essentially translate to higher volume of federal and state financial aid funds being processed and disbursed to students for educational assistance.</p> <p><b>Type of Request:</b> FACILITIES: This section includes minor building improvement projects and alterations</p>	<p><b>Reporting Year:</b> 2020-21</p> <p><b>% Completed:</b> 50</p> <p>We have a increased FAFSA applications from 40,000 to 55,000</p> <p>Continuous effort to increase application to 100% (03/27/2019)</p>

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to specific rooms or operational areas.  
**Planning Unit Priority:** High  
**One-Time Funding Requested (if applicable):** 25000  
**On-Going Funding Requested (if applicable):** 5000  
**Total Funding Requested:** 30000  
**Related Documents:**  
[FASL Survey Results.pdf](#)  
[FA\\_Success\\_Lab\\_Log\\_1920.docx](#)

<p><b>Inreach/Outreach</b> - Continue inreach/outreach efforts with other departments to reach out to students on campus and in surrounding community.  <b>Status:</b> Active  <b>Goal Year(s):</b> 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21  <b>Goal Entered:</b> 06/21/2017</p>	<p><b>Report directly on Goal</b></p>	<p><b>Reporting Year:</b> 2020-21  <b>% Completed:</b> 75            During the 20-21 school year, all outreach and inreach activities were conducted remotely via Zoom, Webex, Google Classroom, etc. While we did see a decrease in inreach and outreach activities due to the pandemic as many departments, offices, and local high schools were navigating logistically how to effectively conduct distance learning, the Outreach/Inreach Unit maintained a presence on- and off-campus. For 2020-2021, we served 4,780 students in 390 workshops/presentations on-campus and 4,870 community members in 43 workshops/presentations off-campus. That is a total of 433 FA Inreach/Outreach Workshops serving 9,650 students/individuals.            (06/07/2021)  <b>Related Documents:</b>  <a href="#">20-21 Outreach Inreach Tracking.xlsx</a></p>
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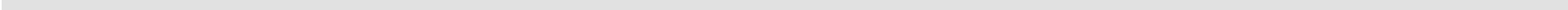
**Request - Full Funding Requested -** Student Services Program Specialist, Financial Literacy  
**Describe Plans & Activities Supported (Justification of Need):** Prior year piece meal approach to Financial Literacy surveys tell us that students find these financial literacy workshops to be very useful and needed. Research also shows that

**Reporting Year:** 2020-21  
**% Completed:** 75  
 Participated in California Community College Chancellor's Office's Financial Literacy Pilot. For Fall 2020 partnered with Counseling Office to conduct 5 Financial Literacy workshops to Counseling 2 and Counseling 5 classes. Throughout semester communicated to participating students Financial Literacy educational emails each week.  
 For winter, 2021, partnered with Counseling to conduct 2

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	<p>financial wellness is not a too common topic among low SES communities, especially those who are on financial aid.</p> <p><b>Lead:</b> Rosario Esparza</p> <p><b>What would success look like and how would you measure it?:</b> Success will include evidence of 1000 students PLUS students participating in our bi-annual Financial Literacy hands-on events. Success will also be measured with minimal students traffic in the FA office inquiring about emergency funds.</p> <p><b>Type of Request:</b> STAFFING: Requests for permanent employee positions or temporary/hourly employees.</p> <p><b>Planning Unit Priority:</b> High</p> <p><b>One-Time Funding Requested (if applicable):</b> 60000</p> <p><b>Total Funding Requested:</b> 60000</p> <p><b>Request - No Funding Requested -</b> Rehire 1 FA Specialist Position to support FA Inreach/Outreach. This is a vacant position due to Erica Morales resignation in March 2020.</p> <p><b>Describe Plans &amp; Activities Supported (Justification of Need):</b> This is an essential position as demonstrated in our student survey and increase in our inreach/outreach activities and events in a short period of time.</p> <p><b>Lead:</b> Rosario Esparza</p> <p><b>What would success look like and how would you measure it?:</b> Increase in Inreach/Outreach events on and off campus. Increase in community events and high school workshops to promote financial aid programs and</p>	<p>Financial Literacy workshops to Counseling 5 classes. Partnered with Title V Financial Literacy Faculty Coordinator, Lisa Amos, to support the financial literacy efforts assigned through the Title V grant.</p> <p>Need for a permanent employee or temporary/hour employee Student Services Program Specialist to dedicate to Financial Literacy initiatives and expand the program on campus and work with the assigned Title V Financial Literacy Faculty Coordinator. (06/07/2021)</p> <p><b>Reporting Year:</b> 2020-21</p> <p><b>% Completed:</b> 100</p> <p>We have successfully rehired 1 FA Specialist-Community Engagement position to support FA Inreach/Outreach efforts. (06/07/2021)</p>

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applications.  
**Type of Request:** STAFFING: Requests for permanent employee positions or temporary/hourly employees.  
**Planning Unit Priority:** High  
**Total Funding Requested:** N/A



**Compliance/Efficiency** - Maintain efficiency and service to financial aid/Veterans recipients with adherence to Federal, State, and District regulations and policies.  
**Status:** Active  
**Goal Year(s):** 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19, 2020-21, 2021-22  
**Goal Entered:** 06/21/2017

**Request - Full Funding Requested -** Transfer Cash for College Budget from BFAP to Student Equity/District Funding  
**Describe Plans & Activities Supported (Justification of Need):** Required hands-on financial aid assistance for families through BFAP funding. Due to COLA, health benefit and salary increases, BFAP is completely used to cover salaries and benefits; the District needs to ensure that Cash for College operational costs are cover in order to ensure compliance with CO's BFAP categorical funding.  
**Lead:** Jenny Phu  
**What would success look like and how would you measure it?:** We will be in compliance with CO's BFAP categorical funding requirements. We will also be able to benefit from the increase of inreach/outreach activities and support our students and community.  
**Type of Request:** OTHER OPERATING EXPENSES AND SERVICES: Requests for contracted, legal/ audit, personal/ consultant, rent/ leases, repairs/ maintenance, and other misc. services. May also include request for travel and conference that does not require the assistance of POD.

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**Planning Unit Priority:** High  
**One-Time Funding Requested (if applicable):** 50000  
**Total Funding Requested:** 50000

**Completed** - Financial Aid Systems Technician

**Describe Plans & Activities**

**Supported (Justification of Need):**  
Financial Aid work is very technical in nature being very dependent on systems; a systems technician assigned specifically in financial aid can ensure upkeep of systems setup and adhoc reporting for compliance and efficiency.

**Lead:** Chau Dao

**What would success look like and how would you measure it?:** Hiring of a qualified staff member who can assist with systems needs of the financial aid office.

**Type of Request:** STAFFING: Requests for permanent employee positions or temporary/hourly employees.

**Planning Unit Priority:** High  
**One-Time Funding Requested (if applicable):** 90000  
**Total Funding Requested:** 90000

**Completed** - Funding has already been secured with the Chancellor's Office for Program Coordinator, Veterans position. Added notation here to ensure documentation for archive purposes.

**Describe Plans & Activities**

**Supported (Justification of Need):**  
Programming - academic/social support for student Veterans on campus

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Continuous rapport with campus community and Veterans Resource Center

Assistance with VA certifications to reduce wait time

**Lead:** Chau Dao, Director, Financial Aid, Scholarships, and Veterans

**What would success look like and how would you measure it?:** Increase programming for student Veterans with increased engagement from Veterans community on campus. Also, assistance with VA certifications so that student Veterans do not experience any wait time to receive notification of their benefits; more timely reporting of all things VA.

**Type of Request:** STAFFING: Requests for permanent employee positions or temporary/hourly employees.

**Planning Unit Priority:** High

**Total Funding Requested:** 0

**Request - Full Funding Requested -** Salary and benefits difference to change current Manager, Financial Aid and Special Programs to Director, Scholarships and Veterans

**Describe Plans & Activities Supported (Justification of Need):** Growth of both programs, scholarships and Veterans, requires an upgrade of current management position overseeing these two programs. Both programs have distinct rules and regulations that are tied to federal, state and district policies.

**Lead:** Jenny Phu

**What would success look like and how would you measure it?:** Increase



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oversight in the Veterans Resource Center with Director office located in VRC. Increase engagement of both programs in terms of programming, applications, and center usage.  
**Type of Request:** STAFFING: Requests for permanent employee positions or temporary/hourly employees.  
**Planning Unit Priority:** High  
**On-Going Funding Requested (if applicable):** 30000  
**Total Funding Requested:** 30000

**Informed Staff** - Ensure Financial Aid, Scholarship, and Veterans staff members are trained and stay informed with current and new processes and regulatory requirements.  
**Status:** Active  
**Goal Year(s):** 2015-16, 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22  
**Goal Entered:** 06/21/2017

**Mitigate Potential fraud** - Ongoing review/enhancement of policy and procedures to mitigate fraud - internally/externally check and balance.  
**Status:** Active  
**Goal Year(s):** 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22  
**Goal Entered:** 06/05/2018

**Request - Partial Funding Requested**  
 - Support from administration with ethics training for department staff; support with changes to policy and procedures in processing of financial aid applications. Also support from IT to enhance security to ensure tighter control.  
**Describe Plans & Activities Supported (Justification of Need):**  
 Ethics training for all financial aid staff and other department who work closely with financial aid such as Student Services departments and Athletics. Institute this type of training on an annual basis.

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Continue to review and enhance policy and procedures to mitigate potential fraud.

Institute a quality control review process where percentage of staff work are checked for accuracy.

Institute a policy that all FA staff must provide all possible conflict of interest in writing for each aid year.

**Lead:** Jenny Phu

**What would success look like and how would you measure it?:** Staff members will gain the necessary knowledge and confidence to support all students and the Mt. SAC community without any ill-defined situations. Continuous training and information sharing will provide staff clear understanding of regulatory requirements to prevent any potential fraud.

**Type of Request:** PROFESSIONAL & ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT (POD): Requests that provide professional learning opportunities for Mt. SAC employees.

**Planning Unit Priority:** High  
**One-Time Funding Requested (if applicable):** 10000

**Total Funding Requested:** 10000