SAN DIEGO MESA COLLEGE

Program Review

Summary and Reflections with Unit Goals, Action Plans, and Updates

Student Services - Financial Aid

Executive Summary

Describe the successes and challenges your unit has faced since the last comprehensive review.
For the last year, the Financial Aid Office has been stressed beyond its capabilities holding on to any possible source of internal positive encouragement and motivation while providing services to students, staff, faculty and the community in accordance with our office and San Diego Mesa College's mission.

The effects of the pandemic continue to affect the office operation. Flexibilities granted by the U.S. Department of Education trickled down throughout the first year followed by a series of updates to the same document which was hard to follow given that the document's date was never updated. The guidelines provided expiration dates by either per required process, or by aid program, or by flexibility to a regulatory mandate. At the same time, aid processing is completed through Campus Solutions, the student's pillar from Oracle's PeopleSoft ERP. We are highly dependent on Oracle's programmer's ability to quickly analyze, understand and apply these changes for system implementation. Because the flexibilities granted under COVID-19 were temporary changes and not statutory or regulatory changes, it was left up to colleges and universities to make up "fixes" or temporary procedures. The lack of technical support on a highly regulated office added even more stress to the office staff as well as District staff assigned to work with us.

High levels of stress is felt and physically manifested in the staff when responding to leadership mandates to address the daily emails which continued to be in the hundreds especially when the same student sends multiple emails in a short period of time if the staff does not immediately replies to the initial request adds an unnecessary trying to be everything to all students, SDCCD and Mesa's leadership in a vain attempt to resolve unrealistic expectations and demands have not faded away upon the full return to campus. The combination of all these stressors has unfortunately, affected the staff by creating a heavy burden to bear with many leaving the college, the district and/or the field. In all my years at Mesa, the Financial Aid Office has never experienced such a high employee turnover with the inability to attract qualified personnel.

Staffing, since June 2020 our office has systematically been losing staff by attrition and is currently severely understaff with only half of the classified contract staff available to serve students pre-COVID. The reasons for leaving are as diverse as we are. Some people left due to retirement, a couple found other jobs that were less stressful and more fulfilling, others left because they completed grad school and found jobs in their field and two left because they felt betrayed, abused, and their rights trampled by SDCCD policies that pushed back employees over students.

Work Environment, for the Financial Aid Office is a hazardous, hostile working environment where the level students and parent's attitudes, sense of self-entitlement, high levels of pervasive demands combined with unnecessary, unwarranted verbal abuse, intimidation and threats makes working in our office a dreadful action. Sadly, in addition to the abuse sustained from students and parents, three office staff members were also victims of the same level of abuse from a co-worker that is no longer with us. The experiences were never reported due to fear of increased antagonism.

It will be difficult for our office to overcome many of the challenges we face. The reality is that we are experiencing a reflection of the lack of knowledge and understanding by the individuals entrusted with the responsibility to assert the truthful equality amongst job classifications. We are part of a higher education organization that fails the most basic concepts of a "learning organization" (Peter Senge, The Fifth Discipline). We cannot accept in confidence, the current "status quo", the belief that the broad volume of knowledge and expertise required by each and every one of our staff, per classification, is the same to the requirements and expectations for any other staff in the same or similar classification with similar pay rate in other departments. This deceptive perception is as illogical as to say that all fruits are apples.

Despite the significance of things worthy of celebration, they are not enough to mitigate the cost associated with

doing more with less in uncertain times and with no benchmark and sense of support to guide us.

If applicable, describe any major curricular or service changes your unit has engaged in and the impact of those changes since the last comprehensive review.
Our office continued following federal guidance with regards with flexibilities granted by operating both in-person and remotely for students who could not otherwise complete processes in person per location.

Our office was also extra careful in analyzing course of action for students whom had physically relocated to other states (without notification and/or updating their physical address in the student's portal to keep their CA Resident designation), as well as into states in which the SDCCD cannot enroll students due to regulations under "State Authorization" (34 CFR 600.9). After disclosing their physical location requesting the school to forward federal financial aid checks, the vast majority of students became verbally combatant when federal regulations were explained.

If applicable, describe the impact of any new resources (human, fiscal, etc) on the unit and/or action plan implementation.
The high level of turnover positions has been detrimental to the office morale as we train new staff only to lose them within one or two years forcing us to start the process all over again. Historically, it takes one (1) to two (2) years for an entry level staff to be fully capable of working with little or no supervision and up to three (3) years for an SAT-FA to achieve the same level on independent work. The working rules, environment, supervision and hours were violently changed by the Declaration of the National Emergency and World Pandemic. COVID changed society's way of working in ways never expected. Our office staff is mentally and physically exhausted seeing help being hired, hoping for a reprieve, welcoming and training the new staff only to see the same people leaving perpetuating a vicious cycle. Even under these circumstances, the staff's integrity and sense of responsibility makes them hesitant to take a leave of absence. This is exemplified by the care and cautiousness demonstrated when requesting a leave, by the understanding that someone else will be taking up additional duties to avoid student complaints against the office for taking care of ourselves. In recognition of having a limited staff, recognition of human frailty and as an effort to mitigate the hopelessness and burn-down, our office opted to have "windows of operation". We are here open from 8:00 am – 6:00 pm. Because we are not omnipresent, we answer phones from 10:00am - 12:00 pm and from 2:00pm to 4:00pm, staff at the counter rotates every two hours which is a shorter period of time when compared to pre-COVID times. It was also agreed that we must take hold of old truths and take care of ourselves first before we can help anyone else. Until the office is fully staff in accordance to federal regulations found and biding under 34 CFR 668.16, we will continue to exercise sound judgement and not over-extended ourselves just to reduce complaints when we are not working fast enough or the processes are not happening immediately.

Effective November 7, 2022 and upon full return to campus, most of the flexibilities granted under the National Emergency Declaration, began to fade. These flexibilities, for the most part ended once the President of the United States signed on 4/11/2023 that the end of the national emergency with an effective date of 5/11/23. There are a few exceptions to the flexibilities for the Federal Work Study that will remain in place past 05/11/2023.

If you assess OUTCOMES, please confirm that the outcomes have been reviewed for accuracy. If you do not assess Outcomes, skip this question.
Reviewed & Accurate

Related Documents for Charts and Graphs

Executive Summary Complete
Yes

Data Reflection

Trends observed in program/service area's data.
Our office is seeing an increase in the time needed to walk through recent high school graduates or continuing college students experiencing financial hardship due to the economy climate. The student demand for one to one assistance completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the CA Dream Act Application (CADAA), asking for guidance on additional resources available, or for information on professional judgements on adjustments to the EFC formula known as Request for Income Reductions has also increased. Unfortunately, the results or possible assistance with students requesting Income Reductions is not as positive as we would like to see as in many cases the financial hardship is not the result of loss of income but rather a result of high cost of living in San Diego outpacing middle class, wages and salaries and to some degree business owners net gains. According to the 2022-2023 EFC formula, for a student to receive an “automatic 0 EFC” (maximum aid eligibility) the parents of a dependent student or a married independent student, their income threshold is set at $27,000 or less to qualify. To receive a “Simplified EFC formula” analysis and calculation, a dependent student and their parents or an independent student, married with both, the student and spouse working, cannot have a combined income above $49,999 and not have filed a Schedule 1 with their Income Tax Return. Both income thresholds cause students earning wages above these numbers financial stress while in school as they attempt to complete programs that may allow them to earning living wages for the area and properly provide for their families causing students to either distrust the information received or perceive the office as one that has no interest in providing students with the so much needed assistance when nothing could be further from the truth. Nevertheless, with no internal funds allocated to the office, or the allocation of State aid funds not associated with eligibility, awarding and disbursement of other state aid programs, our ability to assist is nullified and we refer students to other service areas for plausible financial assistance.

Describe any equity gaps in the data. Are there differences and/or patterns observed by demographics (e.g.race/ethnicity, gender, age, etc.)
Data collected by the Financial Aid Office is not segregated by ethnicity, gender or other demographic traits. The Financial Aid Office data to a certain degree reflects the economic status of aid applicants. San Diego like many other cities in California and a few around the country has a high cost of living. According to The Bureau of Economic Analysis, the average cost of living index for the US is 100. Cities and areas with higher costs have an index above 100. San Diego’s Index is 116. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the median income in 2021 was $69,021. The middle-class range in San Diego, Chula Vista and Carlsbad is $61,000 to $182,000. San Diego’s poverty income level is $28,950 and Pell Grant and other “need based” programs designed by Congress in the 1960’s fail to account for the disparities on cost of living, income and the EFC formula. Consequently, many San Diego area students struggle to make meets end are not “eligible” by definition to may of the grant programs.

Related Documents for Charts and Graphs

Describe the discussion(s) that took place about the unit's learning outcomes assessment data.
We had none other than to confirm the need to carry forward the same SLOs due to the “open enrollment” policy and transient nature of students.

Data Reflection Complete
Yes

Practice Reflection

Describe current practices your program/service area has engaged in that you believe impact the above data trends and equity gaps.
For the last 3 years, our office has highly depended on the Outreach Ambassadors, Peer Navigators, and EOPS staff for assistance with guiding students through the FAFSA and CADAA application process as well as referring students to the Financial Aid TV pages on our website. Unfortunately, our office’s current staffing level, that even at its peak was insufficient, do not give room have any practice in place that can enable our office to meet the student’s demand in services and traffic evidence demonstrates that watching the videos on Financial Aid TV on how to apply for aid is a not well received.

Summary and Reflection

What other factors (internal or external) might also impact the above data trends and equity gaps?
This is too early to correlate. The process landscape for financial aid offices across US colleges and universities will drastically change with the road to implementation of the provisions incorporated into the 2022 FAFSA Simplification Act and the 2022 FUTURE Act. These Acts make significant changes to students and families applying for aid while behind the scenes schools will be working with two completely different methodologies, applying principles of estimating and awarding aid to student records.

Related Documents for Charts and Graphs

Practice Reflection Complete
Yes

Mid-Cycle Updates

YEAR 2 Updates (2023 - 2024)

Provide any edits or updates to the prompts originally documented in the Executive Summary section for Year 2.
In our first aid year post-pandemic, the Financial Aid Office has been able to return to a semblance of normalcy, as all the COVID19 flexibilities related to financial aid administration have expired and we did not implement any major changes in financial aid this year. However, the Financial Aid Office has begun to prepare for the implementation of "FAFSA Simplification", the first major redesign of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid process in over 40 years.

As it relates to staffing, the Financial Aid Office successfully filled two vacancies in our Student Services Assistant positions. However, we continue to have two vacancies in the position. Additionally, the department successfully onboarded a new Student Assistant Technician, who was hired during the latter part of the 2022-23 aid year. Unfortunately, after a failed multi-hire recruitment, we continue to have two vacant Student Assistant Technician positions, so our staff continue to be stretched thin. Lastly, in Spring of 2024, our department hired a new Director, who replaced our longstanding Director of 21 years. The transition from our longstanding Director to a new Director resulted in the loss of over 20 years of institutional knowledge and financial aid expertise. However, the transition in leadership has also created new opportunities to re-envision department processes, procedures, and our overall outlook on financial aid administration.

In response to the major changes related to FAFSA Simplification, Federal Student Aid announced a delay in the opening of the 2024-25 FAFSA application from October 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023. When the application became available, applicants were met with a multitude of technical glitches and other known defects that prevented an unknown number of students from successfully completing the application. Financial Aid Offices were left scrambling and expected to assist students troubleshoot their issues, often with minimal or conflicting guidance from the Department of Education, leaving many families and staff frustrated and overwhelmed.

Provide any edits or updates to the prompts originally documented in the Data Reflection section for Year 2.
Requests for one-on-one assistance to complete financial aid applications continue to be a popular request. While we are unable to offer advance appointments, Financial Aid Staff have been extremely busy assisting students complete their aid applications on the self-service computers directly next to and in front of the Financial Aid Office. Additionally, the Financial Aid Office participated in application workshops with CalSOAP and partnered with key departments, including EOPS, Borderless Scholars, Student Affairs, Basic Needs, and Academic Counseling Services at resource fairs, information sessions, and even drop-in hours at the FAST Center. The Financial Aid Office also offered a limited number of Zoom appointments to students that were unable to visit our office in-person.

As student enrollment has increased, so has the number of underrepresented students applying for and receiving financial aid. 2023-24 has seen a 9.2% increase in the underrepresented applicants; Hispanic/Latino, Asian, Black/African American, Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaskan Native, and multi-ethnic students.
As a department, we reaffirmed the importance of increasing the number of financial aid applicants, increasing the

number of students who are ultimately awarded aid, and ensuring that our students are successfully completing their courses.

Review Outcomes Report. Review the unit's outcomes assessment process for 2022 - 2023. Discuss connections to unit goals/action plans/resource requests.
In 2023-24, we saw an 8% increase in the number of students disqualified for Satisfactory Academic Progress, along with a 26% increase in the number of students who submitted an appeal. However, we also saw marked improvement in the percentage of students that had their appeal approved, an increase of 14% from the 2022-23 aid year. Overall, 62% of students had their appeal approved, compared to 48% in 2022-23.

Early indications show that our efforts have been successful, however there is more work to be done.

Provide any edits or updates to the prompts originally documented in the Practice Reflection section for Year 2.
The mending of relationships with between the Financial Aid Office and key departments, including Basic Needs, EOPS and Borderless Scholars, has led to improved coordination between our departments as we all strive to provide our students with the tools and resources, they need to fulfill their educational goals.

YEAR 3 Updates (2024 - 2025)

Provide any edits or updates to the prompts originally documented in the Executive Summary section for Year 3.
The 2024-25 aid year has been met with many challenges, not only at Mesa Financial Aid, but at aid offices across the country. The rollout and implementation of FAFSA Simplification, the first major redesign of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid process in over 40 years, has proven to be more challenging than first imagined.

The 2024-25 FAFSA and Dream Act Application were delayed 3 months, leaving families with less time to plan for the current aid year and less time for aid offices to determine eligibility for our needy students.

When the FAFSA was ultimately released, students were faced with dozens of known and unknown defects and glitches to the application, some of which had no viable resolution. The Financial Aid Office was inundated with calls and student inquiries from panicked and frustrated families seeking help on completing the application, requesting information we did not have access to, and with growing concerns about the privacy of the data included in their application.

Many of the challenges faced this year related to FAFSA Simplification have been technical in nature. In addition to the application being transformed, changes to Pell Grant eligibility determination, need analysis, and data security required massive changes to our systems, business practices, policies and procedures. Unfortunately, competing priorities diverted much needed technical resources in our District to other important efforts. As a result, students experienced longer than normal delays in receiving their aid and placed our office in the difficult position of being the bearer of bad news to our students, while not being able to offer any concrete timeline of when issues would be resolved.

In terms of staffing, we successfully filled our two vacant Student Services Assistant positions, which helped to shore up our customer service efforts. Unfortunately, we continue to have two vacant Student Assistant Technician positions but we are actively recruiting and hope to have those positions filled in the coming weeks.

The change of Director has allowed our department to be a more student-centric, equity-minded department. Although race, gender, ethnicity, and other protected statuses do not factor into eligibility determination, they now inform how we serve our students. Acknowledging our students' differences allows us to tailor services that better meet their specific needs. The enhanced relationship with EOPS, Basic Needs, and Counseling Services has also resulted in improved relationships with the students we collectively serve. Additionally, the Director has challenged the Financial Aid staff to reimagine how they approach their work. Often our work can feel restricted by compliance with federal and state regulations, however we are afforded many flexibilities that can be extended to our students. The Financial Aid Office now aims to maximize that flexibility to the extent possible, while also being good stewards of the funds we administer.

Summary and Reflection

Provide any edits or updates to the prompts originally documented in the Data Reflection section for Year 3.
Underrepresented communities were the most impacted by the FAFSA Simplification changes. Mixed status families were particularly affected, as an update in the application process related to identity verification left many of our students unable to complete the application for several months. Additionally, Dream Act Applicants experienced longer delays in receiving their aid packages when compared to FAFSA applicants. Unfortunately, because technical resources had to be diverted to addressing updates to the FAFSA, Dream Act applicants were not awarded aid in our district until late October.

Despite these challenges, the Financial Aid Office was able to leverage emergency resources to provide direct emergency support to Pell Grant eligible students and Dream Act Applicants, which helped minimize the impact of processing delays.

Review Outcomes Report. Review the unit's outcomes assessment process for 2023 - 2024. Discuss connections to unit goals/action plans/resource requests.
In 2024-25, we continue to see a marked improvement in the percentage of students that are successfully appealing to have their aid reinstated through the Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal process. This year, approved appeals have increased by 18 % from the 2023-24 aid year. Overall, 80% of students had their appeal approved, compared to 62% in 2023-24 and 48% in 2022-23.

Provide any edits or updates to the prompts originally documented in the Practice Reflection section for Year 3.
In 2024-25, Student Assistant Technicians were given more autonomy to approve appeals prior to them being reviewed by the SAP appeal committee and were encouraged to provide more grace to first-time appealers, first generation students, non-traditional students, and students from underrepresented communities. Additionally, working closely with Academic Counselors and campus partners to better educate them on SAP appeal considerations have aided our efforts to better inform students on what steps they can take to maximize their chances of having their appeal approved. Lastly, our continued work to educate students via our SAP appeal workshops, both virtual and in-person, have proven to be successful.

YEAR 4 Updates (2025 - 2026)

Provide any edits or updates to the prompts originally documented in the Executive Summary section for Year 4.
The 2025-26 aid year has been a year of transition for the Financial Aid Office, particularly as it relates to staffing. After 28 years with the department, our longest serving staff member retired, taking with them many years of institutional and departmental knowledge, particularly around student employment. Additionally, one of our SSAs vacated their role after being on medical leave for the better part of the 2024-25 academic year.

Vacancies in these positions, along with two vacancies in our SAT positions, created advancement opportunities for well-deserving members of our team. Two SSAs were promoted to SAT positions, and a Project Assistant was promoted to an SSA position. Additionally, we were able to hire and successfully onboard three new SSAs. While it was incredibly challenging to onboard two new SATs and four new SSAs, the new staff members introduced a fresh perspective and energy to our team, which was sorely lacking.

Although the onboarding process for our new staff is ongoing, turnaround times for email responses and document processing have been drastically reduced. Wait times on phones and at our front counter are also down. Turnaround times will continue to vary depending on the academic calendar, however the Financial Aid Office is currently responding to student inquiries within 48 to 72 hours, a trend we hope to continue.

Staffing transitions have also allowed our department to revisit antiquated practices and office norms. The Financial Aid Office now utilizes Teams Chat as our primary mode of communication; Outlook Calendars are leveraged for customer service scheduling, training, leave reporting, and maintaining important financial aid dates and deadlines; Microsoft Forms are utilized for professional development requests; and the Financial Aid SharePoint page has become the central hub for storing policies, procedures, and other important information.

Summary and Reflection

Heading into the 2025-26 aid year, all Financial Aid Forms and Appeals were revamped to create a consistent look and feel across all documents. Additionally, significant language updates were made to all forms, our website, and communications in an effort to eliminate technical language wherever possible and make our content easier to understand. As a result, the percentage of “complete” documents has increased, reducing the back and forth between students and our office.

Provide any edits or updates to the prompts originally documented in the Data Reflection section for Year 4.

Mixed status families continued to endure many challenges related to financial aid processing. During the 2024-25 aid year, many families experienced technical glitches when attempting to complete the FAFSA Form due to wide sweeping changes to the application that now required identity verification for undocumented contributors prior to completing the form. During the 2025-26 academic year, many of the technical issues were resolved. However, several students expressed reservations in completing the FAFSA form due to concerns of outing their undocumented parents or spouse on a federal application. As a result, eligible students decided not to submit a FAFSA Form, essentially forgoing thousands of dollars in gift aid.

While the Financial Aid Office continues to advocate for equitable access and comparable turnaround times for our undocumented and mixed status families, we have seen a noticeable drop in application submissions; we saw a 25% drop in enrolled California Dream Act applicants from Fall 2025 to Spring 2026.

Review Outcomes Report. Review the unit’s outcomes assessment process for 2024 - 2025. Discuss connections to unit goals/action plans/resource requests.

In 2025-26, we continue to see a positive trend in the percentage of students successfully appealing to have their financial aid reinstated through the Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal process. This year, approved appeals have increased by 9.5% compared to the 2024-25 aid year. Overall, 89.5% of students had their SAP appeal approved, compared to 80% in 2024-25, 62% in 2023-24 and 48% in 2022-23.

Provide any edits or updates to the prompts originally documented in the Practice Reflection section for Year 4.

The Financial Aid Office continues to partner with strategic departments to better inform staff and students on Satisfactory Academic Progress requirements, but also the preventative steps students can take to maintain their aid. For example, the Financial Aid Office and Rising Scholars partnered to provide a financial aid workshop for justice impacted students with a special focus on maintaining satisfactory academic progress. Additional workshops are scheduled during the Spring semester for former foster youth, students participating in the STAR/TRIO program, and Borderless Scholars.

Additionally, SATs have maintained the autonomy to review and approve all SAP appeals, rather than having certain appeals automatically forwarded to the SAP appeal committee. Anecdotally, staff at Mesa College now view SAP appeals as a second opportunity for students to address challenges they may have experienced in the past, rather than road block that could ultimately prevent persistence and graduation.

YEAR 5 Updates (2026 - 2027)

Provide any edits or updates to the prompts originally documented in the Executive Summary section for Year 5.

Provide any edits or updates to the prompts originally documented in the Data Reflection section for Year 5.

Review Outcomes Report. Review the unit’s outcomes assessment process for 2025 - 2026. Discuss connections to unit goals/action plans/resource requests.

Provide any edits or updates to the prompts originally documented in the Practice Reflection section for Year 5.

Unit Goals, Action Plans, and Updates

Increase FAFSA / CADAA Application

Unit Goal: Increase the number of college enrolled students complete the FAFSA / CADAA application.

Goal Status: Active

Beginning Year: 2022 - 2023

Projected Completion Year: 2025 - 2026

Action Plans	Updates
Action Plan Status: Active **Action Plan:** 1. Increase the number of aid application workshops in partnership with key departments, like Student Affairs, EOPS and Basic Needs. 2. Increase visibility, marketing, exposure of financial aid resources. **Action Plan Cycle:** 2025 - 2026, 2024 - 2025, 2023 - 2024, 2022 - 2023	**Submission Date**: 01/26/2026

	Action Plan Update: During the 2025-26 aid year, the Financial Aid Office continued to work closely with our District Office to set checklist items and send out communications to continuing students encouraging them to renew their financial aid application. Unfortunately, we've seen a small decline in applications when comparing the 2024-25 academic year to the 2025-26 academic year. In 2024-25, Mesa College had 11,206 enrolled aid applicants compared to 10,563 in the 2025-26 aid year. However, we anticipate this figure to increase as Spring 2026 and Summer 2026 enrollment is ongoing. Additionally, we continued to partner with strategic departments to promote application completion. Some of our efforts include, but are not limited to, participation in JumpStart, Summer and Winter CRUISE, hosting a Fall and Spring Financial Aid Information Fairs, participating and presenting at the districtwide Dreamer Conference, and participating and presenting at the districtwide Former Foster Youth Summit. In partnership with Student Success and Equity, the Financial Aid Office formalized our efforts to maximize financial aid receipt and systematically increase FAFSA completion, especially among identified disproportionately impacted student populations: At San Diego Mesa College, financial aid is available to assist students cover their total cost of attendance while enrolled in one of our eligible degree or certificate programs, including a wide array of associate degree for transfer programs and a bachelor's degree program. The first step all students should take to maximize their financial aid opportunities is to submit a financial aid application as soon as they are able to. Through strategic partnerships with various EOPS Programs, including Borderless Scholars, NextUp, Rising Scholars and CalWORKs, along with the Umoja and KAPWA learning communities, the Financial Aid Office will conduct targeted outreach during the months of October and February (Financial Aid Awareness Month) encouraging students to complete or renew their FAFSA Form or their California Dream Act Application (CADAA). Efforts will be centered around the October 1st financial aid application launch date and the March 2nd priority filing deadline. However, similar outreach will be conducted during the weeks leading up to the September 2nd California Community College priority filing deadline. Outreach will be conducted in various formats, including social media posts, email campaigns, calling campaigns, texting campaigns, and will culminate with the semi-annual "Financial Aid Information Fair", which is held every semester. In addition to targeted outreach, the Financial Aid Office will lead two application workshops during the month of October and two workshops during the month of February to assist students start and complete their financial aid applications. The goal of the first application workshop will be for students to sign up for a "Federal Student Aid ID" and to complete the student section of

Action Plans	Updates
	their FAFSA Form. The focus of the second workshop will be for parents to complete the contributor section of the student's financial aid application. Independent FAFSA applicants and CADAA applicants will have the opportunity to complete their entire application by attending one of the two offered workshops. By completing their financial aid application early, students will ensure that they are considered for all forms of funding available, including grants, scholarships, and other forms of need-based financial aid that have a priority filing deadline or limited availability. These funds include, but are not limited to, the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG), the Cal Grant, the Student Success Completion Grant (SSCG), and the Dream Service Incentive Grant (DSIG). Federal Work-Study is also awarded on a first-come, first-served basis, which is why it is critically important that students submit their aid application as soon as feasible. Additional efforts will be made to assist late applicants complete their application, as the California College Promise Grant (CCPG) and the Federal Pell Grant, considered an entitlement, are available to eligible students year-round. **Update Year**: 2025 - 2026 **Action Plan Progress**: Barriers Encountered
	Submission Date: 01/30/2025 **Action Plan Update**: 2023-24: Although we were not able to partner with departments to conduct application workshops during the 2023-24 aid year, due to staffing considerations, the Financial Aid Office participated CalSOAP application workshops, partnered with the District Office on an email campaign to encourage all Mesa students to apply for aid, and we participated in various information fairs, information sessions, classroom visits, and tabling in an effort to promote the completion of financial aid applications. As a result, we experienced a 7.1% increase in the number of financial aid applicants this year; 9,941 aid applicants in 2022-23 increased to 10,653 applicants in 2023-24. **Update Year**: 2023 - 2024 **Action Plan Progress**: On Track
	Submission Date: 01/30/2025

Unit Goals, Action Plans, and Updates

Action Plans	Updates
	Action Plan Update: During the 2024-25 aid year, we once again partnered with the District Office on an email campaign encouraging students to apply for aid. We also collaborated with the Student Affairs Social Media Team to inform students of delays in application availability and to encourage them to apply once the application became available. Additionally, we participated in JumpStart and Summer CRUISE leading up to the academic year in an effort to promote application completion. We also partnered with our local feeder High School, Kearny High School, to promote application completion for early graduates who were starting at Mesa in the Spring. In addition to our Fall and Spring Financial Aid Information Fairs, we also plan on conducting application workshops in the Spring to promote the March 2nd priority deadline for 2025-26 As a result, we've experienced a modest 2.75% increase in the number of financial aid applicants this year; 10,653 aid applicants in 2023-24 to 10,946 in 2024-25. The relatively small increase was likely affected by the many challenges our students experienced with the 2024-25 FAFSA Simplification rollout and implementation, which created barriers for certain underrepresented students in completing the application. However, most of the defects have been resolved for the 2025-26 application, so hopefully we see another increase going into next year. **Update Year**: 2024 - 2025 **Action Plan Progress**: Barriers Encountered

Completion of FA Files

Unit Goal: Increase the number of students who complete their financial aid files and whose files have Mesa as Campus of Record (COR).

Goal Status: Active

Beginning Year: 2022 - 2023

Projected Completion Year: 2025 - 2026

Action Plans	Updates
Action Plan Status: Active	**Submission Date**: 01/26/2026

Unit Goals, Action Plans, and Updates

Action Plans	Updates
Action Plan: 1. Develop additional notifications by social media to enrolled students, grant eligible students of their need to complete their files. **Action Plan Cycle:** 2025 - 2026, 2024 - 2025, 2023 - 2024, 2022 - 2023	**Action Plan Update**: In 2025-26, we saw a 2% increase in the number of students successfully completing their financial aid file. The figure grew from 14,871 in 2024-25 to 15,177 students in the 2025-26 academic year. Although the total number of students completing the financial aid process increased, the percentage of students completing the process decreased slightly from 79.3% to 78.2%. In an effort to improve these figures, and in continued partnership with strategic departments, limited drop-in hours with financial aid representatives will be offered at select resource centers during the month of July to advise our students in the spaces they feel most comfortable, hopefully driving up our file completion rate. **Update Year**: 2025 - 2026 **Action Plan Progress**: Barriers Encountered
	Submission Date: 01/30/2025 **Action Plan Update**: During the 2023-24 aid year, we saw a 9.6% increase in the number of students that completed their financial aid files compared to the prior year; increased from 8,805 in 2022-23 to 8,830 in 2023-24. Although we increased the total number of students completing their file, the percentage of students completing their file decreased from 82% in 2022-23 to 79% in 2023-24. **Update Year**: 2023 - 2024 **Action Plan Progress**: Barriers Encountered
	Submission Date: 01/30/2025 **Action Plan Update**: During the 2024-25 aid year, we have seen a 33% increase in the number of students that have completed their financial aid files, which increased from 8,830 in 2023-24 to 11,788 in 2024-25. Although we increased the total number of students completing their file, the percentage of students completing their file remained at 79% when compared to the 2023-24 aid year. **Update Year**: 2024 - 2025 **Action Plan Progress**: Barriers Encountered

Successful SAP Appeal

Unit Goal: Increase the number of students satisfactorily submitting an SAP appeal whom have Mesa as Campus of Record (COR).

Goal Status: Completed

Beginning Year: 2022 - 2023

Unit Goals, Action Plans, and Updates

Projected Completion Year: 2025 - 2026

Action Plans	Updates
Action Plan Status: Active **Action Plan:** 1. Submit for approval to the District SS Council updates and modifications simplifying the Satisfactory Academic Progress for Financial Aid Recipients policy (34 CFR 668.16). 2. Update the SAP appeal's form and distributed materials to reflect the changes to policy. 3. Update the SAP appeal's workshop presentation and materials. **Action Plan Cycle:** 2025 - 2026, 2024 - 2025, 2023 - 2024, 2022 - 2023	**Submission Date**: 01/26/2026 **Action Plan Update**: In 2025-26, we once again saw an increase in the percentage of students successfully completing the SAP appeal process. The approval rate increased by 9.5%, from an 80% approval percentage in 2024-25 to 89.5% in the 2025-26 aid year. **Update Year**: 2025 - 2026 **Action Plan Progress**: Completed **Submission Date**: 01/31/2025 **Action Plan Update**: During the 2023-24 aid year, we saw an 8% increase in the number of students disqualified for Satisfactory Academic Progress, along with a 26% increase in the number of students who submitted an appeal. However, we also saw marked improvement in the percentage of students that had their appeal approved, an increase of 14% from the 2022-23 aid year. Overall, 62% of students had their appeal approved, compared to 48% in 2022-23. The total number of appeals approved increased from 159 in 2022-23 to 257 in 2023-24 **Update Year**: 2023 - 2024 **Action Plan Progress**: On Track **Submission Date**: 01/31/2025 **Action Plan Update**: In 2024-25, we continue to see a marked improvement in the percentage of students that are successfully appealing to have their aid reinstated through the Satisfactory Academic Progress appeal process. This year, approved appeals have increased by 18 % from the 2023-24 aid year. Overall, 80% of students have had their appeal approved, compared to 62% in 2023-24 and 48% in 2022-23. The total number of appeals approved increased from 257 to 300 so far, and we still have the remainder of the Spring semester for additional approvals. **Update Year**: 2024 - 2025 **Action Plan Progress**: On Track