

SAN DIEGO
MESA COLLEGE



Program Review

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

Administrative Services - Student Accounting

Executive Summary

Describe the successes and challenges your unit has faced since the last comprehensive review.

One of the successes that Student Accounting Office has faced since the last comprehensive review was the batch online credit card refunds that are processed weekly. This success has sped up our online credit card refund process compared to our prior manual one-by-one refund process between two systems (PeopleSoft and Touchnet) that took each staff at least 15-30 minutes to process a single refund.

Another success was the launch of the PRONTO bus passes. In the past, students would get a sticker on their Student ID cards. Now, students can use a virtual card when they download the PRONTO app. They don't have to worry about losing their physical card and it's reloadable whenever the pass expires. Currently, students are eligible for a free HEERF semester/monthly bus pass if they apply and are eligible through Basic Needs/STAND.

Yet another success our Student Accounting department was reclassifying our Senior Account Clerk to an Accounting Technician. The type of work has changed with our new PeopleSoft Campus Solutions. It requires more analytical and technical work. Handling the ever-increasing and demanding workload of the new integrated student system requires the staff to be classified as technicians.

Despite some successes, there are some challenges that our Student Accounting Office has faced since the last comprehensive review. One of the challenges is the staffing/manpower in the office. There are currently many vacant positions. With the vacant posts, it created some Acting positions. Having acting positions between different departments have significantly impacted the office's workload. The reason is that the position is temporary and still determining how long it would last. It causes a domino effect within the District, leaving some departments with less staffing, requiring the department to hire temporary NANCE workers.

Another challenge is the credit card payment issues for parking permits online purchase as well as at our Accounting windows. At the beginning of every term, students having problems purchasing the permits online. During Covid pandemic, we didn't charge student for parking permits. Last Fall 2022, permits were required; but our credit card feature for the purchase was not functional. Our District team worked with Touchnet to fix the issue. So for Fall 2022, District used the JIRA ticket system for all the students requesting permits. Toward the end of Fall semester, the system got fixed. But in Spring 2023, students were charged more than once when they tried to purchase their permits There needed to be integration from our credit card merchant Touchnet to our student system PeopleSoft Campus Solutions. Due to the error, Touchnet was unable to automatically resolve the issue. Both the District staff and campus Student Accounting staff had to manually fix all the errors and process the refunds.

Yet another challenge that our department faces daily is the handling of our Financial Aid warrants. We need to have a better communication with Financial Aid and District Office. We need to streamline the process with District Office Accounts Payable and Financial Aid. This is to ensure a smooth operation so students can receive their warrants in a timely manner. If a business process changes, then it must be reflected and shared immediately with all involved parties.

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.

A major service change that our Student Accounting Office engaged is the way how our third parties want to be invoiced using certain online systems. By doing so, it requires staff members to personally register an account and go through trainings. Examples of third-party billings are: Retail Management programs, Amazon Choice, the Veterans Chapter 31 Vocational Rehabilitation program, and the Military programs (Post 911/GI Ch33, Navy,

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Marine, Army, Air Force).

Another major change was the HEERF funding for student outstanding debts which have created an abundance of work for not only our department but for the entire district. The decision was made to pay prior student enrollment debt but it impacted the Financial Aid students. At the beginning, it was not clearly defined how the HEERF funding would work to pay the student debt. This was not communicated well to students and the departments. Student distribution of HEERF funds went through the Edquity website. Unfortunately, this did not integrate with our current system which caused issues with auditing and reporting purposes. Later the transactions posted in Campus Solutions for HEERF reporting purposes. It created confusion for the student regarding their accounts. It would have been a better process for everyone if management met with all involved parties.

Since the last comprehensive review, there is a lack of communication that affects departments when decisions/ideas are made for new work processes. The decisions made by other departments or external organizations has greatly impacted the amount and type of work for the receiving department who handles the work process. For example, our department have new trainings to use external org systems for third party invoicing and payment tracking. Another example, the last-minute decision for not dropping students greatly impacts and stresses our students. Yet another example, having new grants without a clear plan of disbursement.

If applicable, describe the impact of any new resources (human, fiscal, etc) on the unit and/or action plan implementation.

Our Student Accounting Office is impacted by not having enough office personnel. The department's workload has increased but our staffing has decreased. Our department has assisted with more duties and new work processes that impacts our campus, our District, and external organizations.

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

Related Documents for Charts and Graphs

Executive Summary Complete

Yes

Data Reflection

Trends observed in program/service area's data.

Since returning from the COVID pandemic, the use of our Student Accounting Office emails has increased which requires ongoing monitoring and responding. We receive up to 50 emails/week from students, staff, faculty, and third parties. We have gotten an abundance of students with HEERF bus pass requests. The number of students for the EOPS and College Promise programs have increased in paying for student tuition and fees and parking permits. New scholarships and grants (i.e. CalKIDS, ECMC-Project Success, Pantry, Grocery Cards, Golden State Education & Training Grant) have been introduced. They require monitoring and maintaining accurate information and processing disbursement/reimbursement requests to our students, staff, and faculty. Also, new programs or grants have caused an increase in newly created Fiduciary accounts (i.e. Region X EOPS) to support the process of how funds are used.

Describe any equity gaps in the data. Are there differences and/or patterns observed by demographics (e.g.race/ethnicity, gender, age, etc.)

We service a diverse group of students with different race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender and other demographic traits. For example, the number of students we serve for these student programs in processing payments are: EOPS (which pays for students' health fees, Associated Student fees, and parking permits): Fall 2022 – 511 students/Spring 2023 – 484 students; HEERF monthly/semester bus passes: Fall 2022 – 173

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students/Spring 2023 – 200 students; and College Promise Emergency grants: Fall 2022 – 180 students/Spring 2023 – 172 students. We are responsible to disburse Project Success ECMC funds of \$80K+ to eligible students. We have invoiced and received tuition fees from the Department of Veterans Affairs for our VA Ch31 students: Fall 2022- 60 students/Spring 2023 – 62 students and for our VA Ch33 students: Fall 2022 - 353 students/Spring 2023 - 572 students.

Describe the discussion(s) that took place about the unit's learning outcomes assessment data.

N/A

Related Documents for Charts and Graphs

[Student Accounting Office Survey _ Fall 2023 FA Fair part2.pdf](#)

[Student Accounting Office Survey _ Fall 2023 FA Fair.pdf](#)

[Student Accounting Services Survey 2023 Report.pdf](#)

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.

With the new programs and grants, our department constantly has to adapt to new changes in policies and procedures. We have to modify our processes in order to accommodate the students, staff, and faculty. We have to request new PeopleSoft reports in order to reconcile all the student accounts related to the third-party accounts and programs.

What other factors (internal or external) might also impact the above data trends and equity gaps?

Staffing changes have affected our office operations because the duties are temporarily given to new staff to handle, which requires time and training. Our department has to recruit and hire new employees to temporarily fill the vacant acting positions.

Related Documents for Charts and Graphs

Practice Reflection Complete

Yes

Mid-Cycle Updates

Are there any edits or updates to the Executive Summary above?

Updates for 2023-2024: One of the success this year is that our Student Accounting department collaborated with the Financial Aid Office to streamline the process for all incoming external scholarship checks. All external scholarship checks will first go directly to our Financial Aid Office so they can be recorded and included in PeopleSoft as the student's award packaging. Then our Student Accounting department will deposit the check and disburse the funds appropriately.

One of the challenges that we currently face is the mail service is too slow for our department needs. The mail comes twice a week Monday and Wednesday. It is already an inconvenience that our mail does not get directly dropped off/picked up in our office. We have to go to another department to drop off/pick up mail. By doing so, it delays the process of all incoming/outgoing mail. Students are waiting for their scholarship/Financial Aid checks or our department not receiving the requests (AS/Fiduciary/Agency/Student Rep/Clubs) to process payments in a timely manner. Going directly to the mailroom is an inconvenience because we do not have sufficient staffing and sometimes the mail is not ready. The mailroom needs to have a better schedule to streamline the mailing service for our department needs.

Another challenge is Ch.33 Post 9/11 checks. Currently we have to request a special handling to AP to send us these warrants and then we would turnaround and include the debt letters with the checks. Due to the slow mail

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process, we get them almost a week later after we post the refund in PeopleSoft. Recently, we had an issue where the checks were erroneously mailed out by District without the debt letters. Sometimes the VA Debt Management Center would return the checks because they cannot identify who the debt belongs to. In addition, another challenge is the availability of check signers for our special funds account (AS/Fiduciary/Club/Agency/Student Rep). This delays the process of disbursing our reimbursement checks or paying invoices since we are unable to get immediate signers for the checks. The challenge that we still face is the parking permit issue where students are unable to purchase their permit online before the semester starts. Students are having issues due to compatibility and server overload. There should be a grace period for students to purchase their permit online or in person. We recommend having at least 1-2 weeks to help ease the student stress and to avoid students from paying daily permits. Toward the end of last Spring 2023, our department function was impacted by the bank merger from Union Bank to US Bank. It caused issues with our deposits going to other campus bank accounts and checks being cashed twice or cashing an overage check. It also required more funding to purchase new bank supplies.

Are there any edits or updates to the Data Reflection above?

Updates for 2023 -2024: Starting new fiscal year 2023, free bus pass program is no longer valid using HEERF funds. We currently are using Student Retention grant to fund eligible Mesa College students. Data is provided below using the current grant for free bus pass.

- July 2023 – 4 monthly bus pass for Retention
- Aug 2023 – 84 semester bus pass for Retention
- Sept 2023 – 63 semester bus pass for Retention
- Oct 2023 – 11 monthly bus pass for Retention

A new Financial Aid grant called Dream Act Service incentive grant program has surfaced which requires us to give the check directly to students.

The number of FA returned check warrants have increased due to invalid addresses by 10-20 checks.

The number of Amazon students have increased from about 6 to 20 students.

The number of sponsors for the Retail Management program have increased from 3 to 5. Food 4 Less and Ralphs were recently added to our third-party billing process. We recently had one special sponsor Smart and Final who continues to pay for a specific student after completing the Retail Certificate program.

In additions for this Fall 2023, our department participated in the Financial Aid Fair. It was held on November 15th for just a couple of hours. For the duration of this fair, we asked students who came to our Student Accounting booth to complete our department survey. The number of students who completed our survey was very low. We did not offer any good incentives to motivate all students to complete the survey. We have attached the survey questions and results for Fall 2023. We plan to participate in the Spring 2024 Financial Aid fair and give the same survey. Hopefully, we can get more and better results.

Are there any edits or updates to the Practice Reflection above?

Updates for 2023-2024: In addition to last year's program review practice reflection, we need to streamline the procedure for handling Financial Aid warrants (checks). Our department needs to have a structured procedure and timeline from Accounts Payable for different scenarios. Our department needs to have a consistent workflow and what documentation to provide with what communication method.

In collaboration with District and other Student Accounting Offices and Financial Aid Offices, we need to improve R2T4 school portion by processing a mass group post school portion after Financial adjust the award to avoid students paying for it and generating more refunds to process.

With agreement with District and the Financial Aid Office, we should channel the disbursements of Cal Kid grants through PeopleSoft Campus Solutions similar to how the Cal Grant is handled. This new grant has occurred frequently and the numbers of students have increased. This will also assist in better reporting than to have each campus handle them differently.

There are several departments who are giving students stipends using grant funding; but not enough

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communication is sent out to our Student Accounting department. Student Accounting Office will be the first department whom the student contacts about their disbursements.

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Professional Learning

Unit Goal: Professional growth opportunity and training for department staff to better support and monitor our students with new programs and/or grant funding.

Goal Status: Active

Beginning Year: 2022 - 2023

Projected Completion Year: 2025 - 2026

Mapping

Mesa College Strategic Plan: Roadmap to Mesa2030: (X - Highlight the X to Align)

- Community - Objective 1: X
- Pathways and Partnerships - Objective 3: X
- Scholarship - Objective 1: X

Action Plans	Action Plan Update
<p>Action Plan Status: Active</p> <p>Action Plan: Goal 1 Action List:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Request for the position through Classified Hiring Priority process 2. Encourage and support the staff in applying for the reclassification process. 3. Engage in professional trainings 	<p>Submission Date: 11/29/2023</p> <p>Action Plan Update: Just hired a new Accounting Tech. Transfer one staff from .75FTE to 1.0 FTE. In progress on hiring the replacement of 2 Senior Account Clerks. Planning to have staff attend trainings/conferences when department is fully staff. Need to work with other campuses to reclass the Senior Account Clerks to be Acct Techs due to the complexity of PeopleSoft.</p> <p>Update Year: 2023 - 2024</p> <p>Action Plan Progress: On Track</p>
<p>Action Plan Cycle: 2022 - 2023, 2023 - 2024, 2024 - 2025, 2025 - 2026</p>	

Streamline the Check Warrant Processes

Unit Goal: Collaboration with District Office and Financial Aid Office to streamline the check warrant processes.

Goal Status: Active

Beginning Year: 2022 - 2023

Projected Completion Year: 2025 - 2026

Mapping

Mesa College Strategic Plan: Roadmap to Mesa2030: (X - Highlight the X to Align)

- Completion - Objective 4: X
- Pathways and Partnerships - Objective 1: X
- Stewardship - Objective 3: X

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Action Plans	Action Plan Update
<p>Action Plan Status: Active</p> <p>Action Plan: Goal 2 Action List:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with the Financial Aid Office on different scenarios and propose the plan for each scenario. 2. Request a “All Hands On” meeting with all parties/department involved and discuss the proposed plan and implement it. 	<p>Submission Date: 11/29/2023</p> <p>Action Plan Update: In agreement with Financial Aid for overage check cancellation, Student Accounting will verify any on-hand checks and give them to FA to adjust award and any other non-physical checks will be handled by FA based on District's email. District agrees to not enforce the 30-day FA check cancellation. Still need to complete other scenarios with FA.</p> <p>Update Year: 2023 - 2024</p> <p>Action Plan Progress: On Track</p>
<p>Action Plan Cycle: 2022 - 2023, 2023 - 2024, 2024 - 2025, 2025 - 2026</p>	

New Contract Position

Unit Goal: Establishment of new contract positions and continuous project assistants (preferably full-time, if possible) to assist with new projects related to student retention, success, and equity.

Goal Status: Active

Beginning Year: 2022 - 2023

Projected Completion Year: 2025 - 2026

Mapping

Mesa College Strategic Plan: Roadmap to Mesa2030: (X - Highlight the X to Align)

- Stewardship - Objective 4: X
- Stewardship - Objective 6: X

Action Plans	Action Plan Update
<p>Action Plan Status: Active</p> <p>Action Plan: Goal 3 Action List:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Keep the current project assistants 2. Allow for Project Assistants to work full-time 3. Approval to hire new contract positions with appropriate job classification. 	<p>Submission Date: 11/29/2023</p> <p>Action Plan Update: If funding is available next year, we need project assistant (PAs) especially during busy registration time; but hiring part-timers are not easy because everyone wants to work full-time. Need approval for PAs to work full-time.</p> <p>Update Year: 2023 - 2024</p> <p>Action Plan Progress: On Track</p>
<p>Action Plan Cycle: 2022 - 2023, 2023 - 2024, 2024 - 2025, 2025 - 2026</p>	