

# 2018-2019 Program Review Cycle



*Student Services Programs*

## CAN Program Review (Student Services) - Financial Aid (Odd Year)

### Program Review Narratives

**2018-2019**

#### **Student Services Program Review (SSPR)**

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#### **Executive Summary**

**0. Executive Summary:** The Financial Aid Department provides students, prospective students and their families access to local, state and federal financial aid information and resources that reduces or removes the financial barriers to higher education. Financial aid supports students in their ability to make measurable progress toward the completion of their educational goal(s) at Cañada College, within the SMCCCD and upon transfer.

The strength of the Financial Aid Department is in its staff. We are a department of exceptional student advocates focused on delivering accurate and timely assistance to all students and are aware of the social imperative of our work in supporting college access for our most marginalized student populations.

Demand for financial aid expertise and support continues to increase pressure on the department as local area outreach efforts and new initiatives like the Promise Scholars Program are institutionalized. We continue to be understaffed and place an overreliance on student assistants to staff our front service counter that undermines our efforts to provide the best customer service and resolve complex issues at the earliest opportunity. A lack of appropriate level staffing also impedes our ability to efficiently coordinate with outreach and other programs and balance work as new programs are launched and technical changes implemented.

In order to maintain program integrity, the Financial Aid Department requires a sufficient operating budget and staffing level.

#### **Program Context**

**1. Mission:** Financial Aid Mission Statement:

It is the mission of the Cañada College Financial Aid Department to aid students and prospective students in their understanding, application, and timely receipt of all eligible financial aid resources they need to reduce the significant barriers the costs of higher education present. Our philosophy is that everyone is deserving of an education and we support this entitlement through education, compassion and respect.

Cañada College's Mission Statement states that we provide our community with an environment that ensures students from diverse backgrounds have the opportunity to achieve their educational goals through a Vision that is committed to supporting inclusion of diverse cultures and the practice of personal support and development. The underlying values that support our Mission and Vision include a commitment towards transforming lives, supporting a diverse and inclusive environment and strengthening community relationships.

Financial Aid services align with and support the College's Mission and Values by promoting access and inclusion for students from diverse backgrounds and communities that experience high economic stress and educational inequity in their pursuit of their educational goals.

**2. Program Description:** The Cañada College Financial Aid Department administers many types of financial assistance including

federal and state programs as well as scholarships from the SMCCC Foundation and private sources to help students meet their educational costs.

To qualify for most financial aid, students must demonstrate financial need while maintaining academic progress. Financial aid awards are intended to assist students in meeting their annual educational expenses such as tuition and fees, books and supplies, room and board, transportation and other personal expenses and educational costs.

During the 2017-2018 aid year, the Financial Aid Department provided 4,697 students with \$6,285,787 in aid through a combination of fee waivers, scholarships, grants, work study and student loans.

Current staffing in the Financial Aid Department consists of the following:

- 1.0 FTE Director, Financial Aid Services
- 1.0 FTE Financial Aid Technical Support Specialist (vacant)
- 3.75 FTE Financial Aid Technicians (1.0 FTE on leave)
- .33 FTE Financial Aid Reconciliation Specialist

Financial aid staff have substantial training and experience managing different programs and each is assigned a caseload of students along with specific oversight of one or more specialized program.

**3. Community & Labor Needs:** The Financial Aid Department is responsive to community needs and makes every effort to participate in and host presentations and workshops to ensure correct information is provided to students and families in our service area.

The Financial Aid Department regularly collaborates with Outreach to fulfill numerous requests that come to the College throughout the year from our local high schools and community partners for financial aid participation in their events.

Applying for and completing one's financial aid file is an integral component of the Promise Scholars Program which was developed and supported with District funds as a direct response to community needs and a local labor market that needs a local educated workforce.

As new CTE certificate programs are developed and approved in response to labor needs, as eligible, they are added to our federal ECAR and then added to our Gainful Employment disclosure and reporting requirements so they maintain federal Title IV (financial aid) eligibility.

**4. Equity & Access:** The Financial Aid Department assures equitable access to its services for all students by maintaining both day and evening office hours, a comprehensive website, accessible 24/7 online information such as Financial Aid TV (FATV) and our GetSAP Financial Aid Counseling platform, and utilizes both email communications to students and provides access to financial aid related information through WebSMART.

The Financial Aid Department also works closely with specialized program staff such as those in EOPS and Promise who have a high need for financial aid support in expediting student aid processing. Staff also make one-on-one appointments to meet with students as needed.

### **Looking Back**

**4. Major Accomplishments:** Financial aid is subject to state and federal legislative, regulatory and budgetary changes which oftentimes drives our actions and accomplishments. Additionally, local initiatives may also directly or indirectly prompt change. For the 2017-18 and 2018-19 financial aid years, this is no exception.

Major Accomplishments:

1. Year one Promise Scholarship implementation began in earnest in the summer 2017 term with a significant level of manual work to identify eligible students through the financial aid office. Program oversight transitioned from the Financial Aid Director to the Promise Program Supervisor in fall 2017.
2. Implemented Board of Governors Fee Waiver name change transition to California College Promise Grant with CSM and Skyline: Beginning in fall 2017, began transitioning all communications, publications, forms, processes, and system configurations in Banner to new CCPG naming convention. Provided in-person updates to ESC, FASC, SSPC, Classified Senate, Counseling and others due to confusion over similarity of the names of very different programs which continues to be an issue

(e.g. California College Promise Grant, Cañada Promise Program and AB19 - Community College Promise.).

3. Implemented Community College Completion Grant which provided an additional \$1,500 in grant aid to fulltime Cal Grant recipients and required schools to verify and monitor student pace to completion each term with their comprehensive Student Educational Plan in order to disburse the funds. The program was discontinued after one year of funding and rolled into the new Student Success Completion Grant beginning in the fall 2018 semester.

4. Received approval to participate in the Department of Education Loan Counseling Experiment. Established counseling curriculum and implemented process that complies with experiment requirements. We will reporting on 2017-18 data in fall 2018 and continuing participation.

5. BankMobile Conversion beginning in spring 2018 through fall 2018. The Financial Aid Department transitioned from Blackboard as our third party disbursement servicer to BankMobile. This was a major undertaking requiring coordination across all three colleges, District finance and IT services and our SMCCCD marketing departments. The launch has been successful with full migration to the BankMobile platform prior to the first scheduled fall 2018 disbursement. Continued outreach and assistance is needed to increase the percentage of students signed up for a refund option.

6. Implementation of new Student Success Completion Grant in fall 2018 semester for 2018-19 aid year. Grant has complicated payment level eligibility that can change from term to term or at the end of the year based on cumulative completed and enrolled units. We are planning to work with IT and our consultant to identify additional automation options.

7. Coordinated very successful venue change from Gym to Grove and Theater for 2018 Student Recognition and Achievement Awards and Reception. Significant event planning activity from facilities set-up, event flow, etc. that was very well received. Future event planning will most likely keep event in Grove/Theater as a result of positive feedback.

**5. Impact of Resource Applications:** The Financial Aid Department was not successful in its bid to have a permanent Financial Aid Assistant position approved for the 2017-18 year. However, one-time funds were allocated that allowed us to advertise and hire a short-term position in August 2017. The benefit of this staffing on the office and in serving our students was immediate. However, due to the temporary nature of the position, we were unable to keep the employee into the spring 2018 semester and ended up falling back on student assistants as our primary source front counter coverage.

Resource requests made for the year were overlooked in the budget development cycle due to administrative turnover in Student Services. A late budget augmentation was made in March 2018 that provided funds to attend the CCCSFAAA conference but that is all. For the 2018-19 year, the Financial Aid Department is still waiting for a final operational budget.

### **Current State of the Program**

**6A. State of the Program - Observation:** The Financial Aid Department is a high volume, student friendly service area that strives to provide students with appropriate financial resources that enable them to pursue post-secondary education. The Department holds itself to high standards in terms of having well-trained, student-centered staff and its fiduciary responsibilities in the administration of highly regulated programs.

Strengths:

Financial Aid staff deliver excellent service and work well together and across the College and District to streamline processes and improve service delivery.

Department staff are skilled in the use of technology and competently able to use multiple state and federal sites in the administration of financial aid programs.

The Financial Aid Department is collaborative and partners with all areas of the college to support student access, retention, success and completion. There is strong collaboration with Outreach, Promise, EOPS and SparkPoint where affordability is often the primary access barrier. We also regularly partner with Transfer Services and the Stem Center to provide workshops and one-on-one appointments to help students understand how financial aid may differ at their four year universities.

Financial Aid staff are professionals who are sensitive to and supportive of the needs of our undocumented students and families and apply their work through the lens of social justice. Staff are responsive to community needs and are creative in their approaches to meet those needs.

Financial Aid staff participate in District workgroups and meetings including FASC, ESC and other ad hoc groups to ensure communication is occurring across the District in regards to regulatory changes and programmatic needs that affect other areas.

Challenges:

Staffing is a critical need. We have requested a 1.0 FTE Financial Aid Assistant for the last three hiring cycles and we are submitting a new request for a 1.0 FTE Financial Aid Program Services Coordinator. Staff continue to feel stretched thin in keeping up with work and having the capacity to take on any additional responsibilities. This pressure impacts their bandwidth to take on the emotional toll of working with students concerned about whether or not they should apply for financial aid due to deportation and similar fears.

Since the 2017 fiscal year, our BFAP-SFAA allocation has been insufficient to cover any non-position control expenditures and we have struggled with a meager general fund allocation that for the last two fiscal years has been overlooked when resource requests and budget augmentations have been allocated. This is more than unsustainable as it puts the Department at risk of not meeting minimum training standards and the ability to plan and support outreach efforts.

For financial aid, in particular, it is extremely important for the integrity of our programs to ensure appropriate staff participate in key regional, state and national training on a regular basis. A lack of appropriate training can also be an audit finding as it is an indicator of a deficiency in institutional administrative capability. A resource allocation to address this funding gap is part of this program review.

With the addition of more programs and needed involvement of the Financial Aid Department, the Director and staff are required to attend more interdepartmental and district meetings. This pulls staff out of the office which further increases our inability to serve our students in a timely and efficient manner.

**6B. State of the Program - Evaluation:** The Financial Aid Department is chronically understaffed and cannot continue to support the numerous outreach efforts and on campus support requests without compromising its administrative capacity and effectiveness and ability to manage its current student volume.

Hiring a 1.0 FTE Financial Aid Assistant and 1.0 FTE Financial Aid Program Services Coordinator would expand our capacity to support financial aid access for special programs like our Promise Scholars Program that relies on our assistance to ensure their students are completing their financial aid applications and not leaving resources on the table.

We also have an increasing homeless student population and mandates from the state under AB 801 to serve them in more intentional ways. Having a dedicate liaison to support these high need areas is critical.

**7A. Current SAOs & SLOs:** SAO: Implement BankMobile for student financial aid disbursement refund processing for fall 2018.

**7B. SAO Assessment Plan:** Successful implementation was accomplished through the work of a committed implementation team and project management leadership by financial aid directors, District staff and BankMobile client services.

- Email messaging began in June, marketing materials were ordered and batch mailing of BankMobile enrolment envelopes (green envelopes) started.

- The soft launch was scheduled for mid-July and target met. Test refunds were processed and then live refunds for late summer disbursement began.

- Full implementation was complete August 1 in time for first fall 2018 scheduled scholarship disbursement.

**7C. SAO Assessment Results & Impact:** The implementation was successful and carried out is a very tight timeline. The overall impact is that students have access to a secure online banking product or they can choose to use their own personal account for direct deposit. The BankMobile account set-up is less restrictive than conventional banks so some students who may have had credit or citizenship issues in establishing a bank account have access to a fee-free checking account.

**7D. SLO Assessment Plan:** Not applicable.

**7E. SLO Assessment Results & Impact:** Not applicable.

**Looking Ahead**

**7F. SAOs & SLOs for the Next Review Cycle:** SAO: Implement and award full 2018-19 state allocation of the new Student Success Completion Grant (SSCG).

The SSCG is a new state grant that was established in the 2018-19 budget that merges eligibility requirements and decommissions the Fulltime Student Success Grant and Community College Completion Grant into one grant for fulltime students who are Cal Grant eligible.

State funding and guidance makes awarding the grant complicated in subsequent terms as payment levels will differ from term to term based on whether the student is fulltime in 12 but less than 15 units, 15 or more units or a combined enrollment of 30 or more units within the aid year.

We will continue to work with ITS and our financial aid consultant to automate as much of the awarding process as possible.

**9. Program Improvement Initiatives:** 1. Staffing: The Financial Aid Department views itself as an integral component of the college and a significant contributing factor for student success. With sufficient staffing, the Financial Aid Department will be able to fully support and engage in all outreach and in-reach initiatives of the College. Students applying for aid will have easily identifiable support staff available to assist them in completing their financial aid applications in a timely and accurate manner. The end result will be students better resourced earlier in the academic year which will positively impact student success and completion and appropriate referral to other programs and services.

Balancing workload is also an issue. Presently the Financial Aid Director coordinates the Cañada Scholarship Program and has assumed the point of contact role for resolving financial aid processing delays for the Promise Scholars Program and departmental liaison duties for serving homeless youth, foster youth and other high need populations. This scope of work belongs with a Financial Aid Program Services Coordinator, not a director.

2. Laptops to expand outreach: The Financial Aid Department needs to have dedicated administrative laptops to use outside of the office. Because of security issues and the need to ensure student data is protected, we cannot share laptops with other departments or those that students may use in labs. Having laptops that are set-up to allow staff to access state and federal sites will help us in onboarding students as part of a larger outreach effort - an emerging recommendation as we engage in Guided Pathways business process assessment.

3. Training: Financial aid staff require access to a variety of professional development and ongoing state and federal trainings each year. It is extremely important for the integrity of our programs to ensure appropriate staff participate in key regional, state and national training on a regular basis. A lack of appropriate training may lead to audit findings or trigger a federal program review as it is an indicator of a deficiency in institutional administrative capability.

4. Sufficient Operating Budget to support general department needs each year.

**Program Review Narrative Status:** Complete

## Objective: Expand Outreach Support and Coordination of Financial Aid

To provide trained financial aid support for all outreach and in-reach efforts, case management with special populations including homeless youth, foster youth, Promise Program financial aid completion, etc. and coordination of scholarship program requires additional staffing - 1.0 FTE Program Services Coordinator for Financial Aid is being submitted

**Objective Status:** 1 - New (PR)

**Objective Year:** 2019-2020

**Estimated Start Date:** 07/01/2019

**Estimated Completion Date:** 06/30/2020

**Please select the college goals with which this objective aligns.:** Student Completion/Success - Provide educational and student services programs that highlight inclusivity, diversity, and equity in their mission to help students meet their unique educational goals and minimize logistical and financial barriers to success., Community Connections - Build and strengthen collaborative relationships and partnerships that support the needs of, reflect, and enrich our diverse and vibrant local community.

**Please select the district goals with which this objective aligns.:** District Goal #1 - Develop and Strengthen Educational Offerings, Interventions, and Support Programs that Increase Student Access & Success, District Goal #2 - Establish And Expand Relationships With School Districts, 4-year College Partners, And Community-based Organizations To Increase Higher Education Attainment In San Mateo County, District Goal #4 - Ensure Necessary Resources Are Available To Implement This Strategic Plan Through Sound Fiscal Planning And Management Of Allocations. Protect Community-supported Status And Undertake The Development Of Innovative Sources Of Revenue That Support Educational Programs Beyond That Which Is Available From Community And State Allocations.

# CAN Program Review (Student Services) - Financial Aid (Odd Year)

## Action Plans

**2019-2020** - Hire and train Financial Aid Program Services Coordinator to provide sufficient staffing to address increased need for coordination of services with special populations, scholarship program and all financial aid outreach efforts. (Active)

**Who's Responsible for Completing this Action Plan?:** Margie Carrington and FA/Outreach teams

**Estimated Completion Date:** TBD - dependent upon hiring of PSC or other identified financial aid staff that can take on the coordination of this work.

**Related Documents:**

[1819 Staffing Request - FA PSC.docx](#)

## Resource Requests

**1.0 FTE Financial Aid Program Services Coordinator** - Hourly estimate included below if permanent staffing is not approved through annual position request and justification process.

Budgeted amount in this justification assumes short term hourly rate at \$25.05/hr x 7.5 hrs x 180 days max. No benefits.

Staffing needed to coordinate all financial aid outreach efforts (event staffing, presentations, scheduling, etc.); serve as a financial aid liaison for local area outreach and with special populations including Promise students, Homeless and Foster Youth, and Study Abroad; maintain all communications (website, social media, marketing materials), coordinate Cañada Scholarship Program and serve with Director in liaison capacity with Foundation, donors, etc.

**Type of Resource:** Non-Instructional Personnel

**Cost:** 33817

**non-personnel general operating budget - supplies and duplicating (\$3,000), mileage (\$1,000), food for hosted events (\$1,000) - 2018-2019 need**

**Type of Resource:** Supplies (Items less than \$5000)

**Cost:** 5000

## Objective: Expand Comprehensive Financial Aid Support Offsite

Purchase Laptops for Financial Aid Department to assist students in completing their financial aid applications and documents when outside of the office - requires secure laptop that is only used by Financial Aid department.

**Objective Status:** 1 - New (PR)

**Objective Year:** 2019-2020

**Estimated Start Date:** 07/01/2019

**Estimated Completion Date:** 07/01/2019

**Please select the college goals with which this objective aligns.:** Student Completion/Success - Provide educational and student services programs that highlight inclusivity, diversity, and equity in their mission to help students meet their unique educational goals and minimize logistical and financial barriers to success., Community Connections - Build and strengthen collaborative relationships and partnerships that support the needs of, reflect, and enrich our diverse and vibrant local community.

**Please select the district goals with which this objective aligns.:** District Goal #1 - Develop and Strengthen Educational Offerings, Interventions, and Support Programs that Increase Student Access & Success, District Goal #2 - Establish And Expand Relationships With School Districts, 4-year College Partners, And Community-based Organizations To Increase Higher Education Attainment In San Mateo County

## Action Plans

**2019-2020** - Purchase laptops (Active)

**Who's Responsible for Completing this Action Plan?:** Margie Carrington

# CAN Program Review (Student Services) - Financial Aid (Odd Year)

Estimated Completion Date: 07/01/2019

## Resource Requests

2 each:

Dell Mobile Precision 5510 XCTO Laptop i7-6820 HQ, 32GB, 512GB SSD, 15.6" LED

Dell Adapter USB-C to VGA p/n 470-ABNC (300003912)

Targus Meridian II Topload Carrying Case - Fits Laptops with Screen Size Up to 15.6-inch p/n A1734720 (300003911)

Extended Warranty Dell ProSupport Plus 5 Years Next Business Day Onsite

Sub-total: \$2,755.73

E-waste Tax: \$6.00

Standard Price/unit: \$2,761.73

Tax (8.75%) = \$241.65

Total = \$3,003.38 VENDOR: Computerland

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Financial Aid staff need access to secure laptops for administrative use when working away from the office in any outreach capacity where they are looking up student data. Sharing laptops that are used by other departments or students expose the District to data breaches and also may violate state and federal financial aid program data security requirements. -- Will allow FA staff to go out with outreach teams and Promise to help students on site complete their financial aid files, make real time corrections, have Banner access, etc.

**Type of Resource:** Information Technology

**Cost:** 6008

**non-personnel general operating budget - supplies and duplicating (\$3,000), mileage (\$1,000), food for hosted events (\$1,000) - 2018-2019 need**

**Type of Resource:** Supplies (Items less than \$5000)

**Cost:** 5000

## Objective: Provide Sufficient Base Funding to Support Financial Aid Ongoing Operational Needs

At present time, the Financial Aid Department does not have a sufficient budget to support its operational needs including funds for staff overtime, non-FWS student assistants, general office supplies, duplicating, minimal food for hosted events on and off campus and mileage reimbursement for staff travel between SMCCCD sites. This need is for 2018-19 and then ongoing as a base allocation for the 2019-2020 budget forward.

**Objective Status:** 2 - Continuing (PR)

**Objective Year:** 2019-2020

**Estimated Start Date:** 07/01/2018

**Estimated Completion Date:** 06/30/2019

**Please select the college goals with which this objective aligns.:** Organizational Development - Focus institutional resources on the structures, processes, and practices that invest in a diverse student population and prioritize and promote equitable, inclusive, and transformative learning.

**Please select the district goals with which this objective aligns.:** District Goal #1 - Develop and Strengthen Educational Offerings, Interventions, and Support Programs that Increase Student Access & Success, District Goal #4 - Ensure Necessary Resources Are Available To Implement This Strategic Plan Through Sound Fiscal Planning And Management Of Allocations. Protect Community-supported Status And Undertake The Development Of Innovative Sources Of Revenue That Support Educational Programs Beyond That Which Is Available From Community And State Allocations.

## Action Plans

# CAN Program Review (Student Services) - Financial Aid (Odd Year)

<b>2018-2019</b> - Identify in general fund appropriate support level as a base allocation for the Financial Aid Department (Active)
<b>Who's Responsible for Completing this Action Plan?:</b> VPA, VPSS, Financial Aid Director <b>Estimated Completion Date:</b> TBD
<b>2019-2020</b> - Identify in general fund appropriate support level as a base allocation for the Financial Aid Department (Active)
<b>Who's Responsible for Completing this Action Plan?:</b> VPA, VPSS, Financial Aid Director <b>Estimated Completion Date:</b> TBD

## Resource Requests

<b>non-personnel general operating budget - supplies and duplicating (\$3,000), mileage (\$1,000), food for hosted events (\$1,000) - 2019-2020 need</b>
<b>Type of Resource:</b> Supplies (Items less than \$5000) <b>Cost:</b> 5000
<b>non-personnel general operating budget - supplies and duplicating (\$3,000), mileage (\$1,000), food for hosted events (\$1,000) - 2018-2019 need</b>
<b>Type of Resource:</b> Supplies (Items less than \$5000) <b>Cost:</b> 5000
<b>Staff overtime (\$6,000) and student assistant budget (\$6,000) - 2019-2020 need</b>
<b>Type of Resource:</b> Non-Instructional Personnel <b>Cost:</b> 12000
<b>Staff overtime (\$6,000) and student assistant budget (\$6,000) annually - 2018-19 need</b>
<b>Type of Resource:</b> Non-Instructional Personnel <b>Cost:</b> 12000

## Objective: Increase funding to support ongoing financial aid staff development and training

Provide access to regional, state and federal trainings to address ongoing training needs for compliance, program administration, professional growth and accountability.

**Objective Status:** 2 - Continuing (PR)

**Objective Year:** 2019-2020

**Estimated Start Date:** 07/01/2018

**Estimated Completion Date:** 06/30/2019

**Please select the college goals with which this objective aligns.:** Organizational Development - Focus institutional resources on the structures, processes, and practices that invest in a diverse student population and prioritize and promote equitable, inclusive, and transformative learning.

**Please select the district goals with which this objective aligns.:** District Goal #4 - Ensure Necessary Resources Are Available To Implement This Strategic Plan Through Sound Fiscal Planning And Management Of Allocations. Protect Community-supported Status And Undertake The Development Of Innovative Sources Of Revenue That Support Educational Programs Beyond That Which Is Available From Community And State Allocations.

## Action Plans

<b>2018-2019</b> - Provide base allocation for financial aid training needs as identified by Financial Aid Director for 2018-19. (Active)
<b>Who's Responsible for Completing this Action Plan?:</b> VPA, VPSS, Financial Aid Director

# CAN Program Review (Student Services) - Financial Aid (Odd Year)

**Estimated Completion Date:** TBD

**2019-2020** - Provide base allocation for financial aid training needs as identified by Financial Aid Director for 2019-20 (Active)

**Who's Responsible for Completing this Action Plan?:** VPA, VPSS, Financial Aid Director

**Estimated Completion Date:** TBD

## *Resource Requests*

**Funds to send one or two staff to a variety of required trainings including CCCSFAAA, CASFAA, Ellucian, Federal Student Aid each year - 2018-2019 need.** - Staff will rotate attendance and trainings based on need and job duties.

**Type of Resource:** Professional Development

**Cost:** 15000

**Funds to send one or two staff to a variety of required trainings including CCCSFAAA, CASFAA, Ellucian, Federal Student Aid each year - 2019-2020 need.** - Staff will rotate attendance and trainings based on need and job duties.

**Type of Resource:** Professional Development

**Cost:** 15000