

Office of Financial Aid

Program Review



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Prepared by:

The Office of Financial Aid Staff

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

I. Program or Department Mission

II. Program or Department Goals and Objectives

III. Description of Program/Department Capacity

IV. Effectiveness Indicators

V. Findings

VI. Action Recommendations Summary

VII. Appendices

Executive Summary:

The Office of Financial Aid at the University of La Verne is student-centered and provides institutional, federal, and state aid to qualifying students at all campus locations. This office ensures that the multifaceted federal, state, and institutional guidelines are followed when awarding La Verne students, and monitors the distribution of over \$100,000,000 in aid annually (Appendix A). In addition, the Office of Financial Aid offers group orientations, online orientations, individual student counseling, and debt management resources to provide various means of assistance to students. In total, the office strives to balance individual student needs, with the varied regulations, in an attempt to give as many students as possible the opportunity to attend the University of La Verne.

As part of the Office of Financial Aid's commitment to serve La Verne students, staff, and the community at-large, the primary focus of the office is to provide the following:

1. Timely and effective service to students and staff
2. Improving communication to the La Verne community
3. Adhering to Federal regulations
4. Automation of Federal and State Grant programs
5. Reducing the Office of Financial Aid's carbon footprint.

Though the objectives are varied, all contribute to the overall desire to be more efficient, informative, and accessible. Currently, the Office of Financial Aid staff consists of 20 full-time employees and one half-time employee. Taking into consideration this office serves all campus locations, which includes numerous programs (degree and certificate), each staff member serves

approximately 466 students each academic year. With this ratio of students to staff members, it is vital that this department continually endeavors to advance its processes. This program review illustrates the areas of success, as well as, identifies the areas for improvement.

Based upon the primary focus of the office, and to determine if changes need to be implemented for advancement, several performance indicators were selected. Among these were multiple internal and external surveys, an analysis of a compliance audit, and a review of office policies and procedures. From these performance indicators, it is clear that the Office of Financial Aid has made great strides in streamlining how we communicate with student's on completing outstanding requirements and sending award notification, responding to inter-departmental requests, and in maintaining no findings on the A-133 audits for three consecutive years. But, the assessments did uncover certain aspects of the financial aid process that could be made more effective.

As part of an internal survey conducted by the Office of Financial Aid staff, the need for further cross-training between the disparate job duties was indicated, coupled with the desire of more timely communication among systems staff and advisors. In an external survey conducted by financial aid staff that requested comments from other departments and students at La Verne, communication was also designated as an area for improvement. Additional suggestions from these surveys included: increasing inter-departmental training, and augmenting the contact with RCA students. Current departmental resources need to be increased to comply with some desired improvements, but immediate implementation will occur based on recommendations and or immediate need.

Initial steps have already been taken to increase and improve communication between Office of Financial Aid, and the students, staff, and community of La Verne. These venues (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Office of Financial Aid Newsletter) will continue to be developed and utilized. Keeping the Financial Aid policies and procedures up-to-date with the federal guidelines is also paramount for the department. And additional actions will be taken to collaborate with OIT to implement new automated systems and correct systems that are not functioning at peak capacity. Another focus for the department will be to employ new policies to decrease paper consumption to be more eco-friendly.

The Office of Financial Aid has a dedicated staff with an average tenure of seven plus years. The office strives in providing quality customer service to all its students, colleagues, and community as a whole, while complying with all federal and state regulations and working within institutional policy. As previously mentioned, the performance indicators used within this program review will allow our office to maintain some of our current, yet efficient processes, and enhance others. The Office of Financial Aid at the University of La Verne bridges reality with the dream of higher education.

I. Department Mission

The Office of Financial Aid at the University of La Verne is committed to:

- Adhering to federal, state and institutional policies in the administration of financial aid, including the protection of student privacy.
- Empowering La Verne students by providing them with the access and education needed to make informed decisions.
- Providing quality customer service to our students and the University community.

These commitments express the values, purpose and business of the Office of Financial Aid as we embrace the mission of the University of La Verne in providing Knowledge, Service to the community, and Vision for the future.

II: Department Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Providing timely and effective service to students and staff

- Enhancing cross training amongst Financial Aid staff
- Establishing policies and procedures

Goal 2: Improving communication to the La Verne community

- Disseminating timely information
- Relating effectively to other units within the La Verne community

Goal 3: Adhering to Federal regulations

- Adhering to federal regulations as reflected in the annual A-133 audit
- Reducing or maintaining the federal cohort default rate

Goal 4: Automation of Federal and State Grant programs

- Automating the delivery system for the Cal Grant program
- Improving the delivery and receipt of Federal Pell Grants to students

Goal 5: Reducing the Office of Financial Aid's carbon footprint

- Establishing a paperless office by providing electronic transmission of communication to students and the La Verne community

III. Department Description and Capacity

Staff and Personnel

The following is a list of each staff personnel in the Office Financial Aid with their title.

Director of Financial Aid - Responsible for the administration of the all financial aid programs.

Associate Director of Financial Aid (Acting Director #1) - Responsible for Operations.

Assistant Director of Financial Aid (Acting Director #2) - Responsible for Systems.

Assistant Director of Admissions and Financial Aid – College of Law - Coordinates financial aid programs.

Verification Analyst - Responsible for the verification process and manages flow of documents for all financial aid applicants and obtains and reviews documents.

Default Prevention and Management Officer - Responsible for the default prevention and financial literacy programs - Assists with the verification process.

Title IV Compliance Officer - Responsible for returning federal funds for all ineligible students – Updates Director regarding federal financial aid issues.

Administrative Assistant (50% in Reg. Office.) - Assists with monitoring CAPA enrollment for financial aid recipients and assisting at front counter.

Student Employment Coordinator - Responsible for hiring all student workers and monitoring the Federal Work Study Program

Information Systems Specialist - Responsible for importing and exporting of data - ISIR's, Federal grant payments, and run batch processes for all system generated letters

Quality Control/Scholarship Coordinator - Responsible for quality control (ensuring students receive accurate awards) and the named scholarship program

Systems Supervisor - Supervises the technical staff and manages the daily financial aid systems operation in the Office of Financial

Grants Coordinator - Responsible for Federal Pell Grants, Cal Grants, ACG & SMART Grants.

Student Loan Specialist - Responsible for the Federal Perkins Loan, ULV Loan and the emergency loan program.

Student Loan Coordinator - Responsible for the processing of all FFELP/Direct and private student loans through banks and the Department of Education.

Financial Aid Office Liaison and Financial Aid Advisor II – Assists students & parents regarding the financial aid process – Specializes in dependency overrides extenuating circumstance issues and alternative loans.

Financial Aid Advisor III – Assists students & parents regarding the financial aid process – Specializes in the graduate student population.

Financial Aid Advisor III – Assists students & parents regarding the financial aid process – Specializes in the graduate student population and Grad Plus Loans.

Financial Aid Advisor III – Assists students & parents regarding the financial aid process – Specializes in traditional undergraduates student population and Federal Plus Loans.

Financial Aid Advisor II – Assists students & parents regarding the financial aid process – Specializes in CAPA and RCA Students.

Financial Aid Advisor II – Assists students & parents regarding the financial aid process – Specializes in the communications to students to include Facebook, Twitter, Blogging and Quarterly Newsletter.

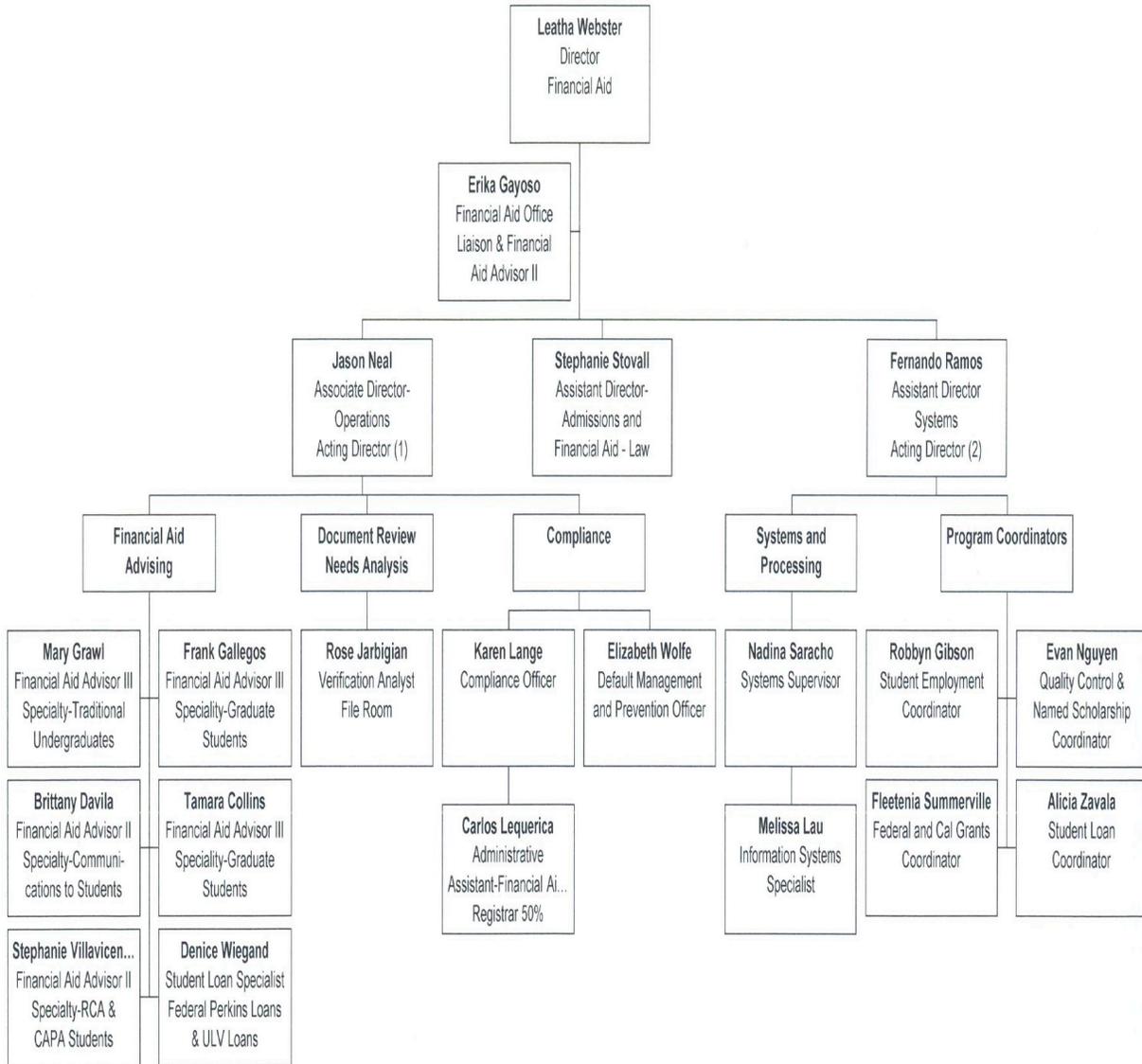
Staff to student ratio

The table below represents the number of students awarded by year and the number of staff members in the Office of Financial Aid servicing those students. As admitted and enrolled students increased as a whole, the number of staff members available to service these students increased. Effective June 30th 2009 the Office of Financial Aid lost a permanent position that has not been filled.

Matrix of Enrolled Students				Matrix of Funds Awarded			
Award Year	Number of Enrolled Students Awarded	Staff Mem bers	Students Served Per Staff Member	Award Year	Amount of Funds Awarded	Staff Mem bers	Funds Awarded Per Staff Member
10/11	8,858	19	466	10/11	219,333,150	19	11,543,850
09/10	8,235	19	433	09/10	191,421,691	19	10,074,826
08/09	8,324	20	416	08/09	174,618,929	20	8,730,946
07/08	7,941	20	397	07/08	161,472,952	20	8,073,648
06/07	7,855	20	393	06/07	154,380,637	20	7,719,032
Matrix of Students Awarded				Matrix of Funds Received			
Award Year	Number of Awards	Staff Mem bers	Number of Awards Per Staff Member	Award Year	Amount of Funds Received	Staff Mem bers	Funds Received Per Staff Member
10/11	36,166	19	1,903	10/11	124,943,328	19	6,575,965
09/10	31,848	19	1,676	09/10	109,780,460	19	5,777,919
08/09	30,472	20	1,524	08/09	102,502,086	20	5,125,104
07/08	28,100	20	1,405	07/08	94,604,841	20	4,730,242
06/07	27,936	20	1,397	06/07	86,582,792	20	4,329,140

UNIVERSITY OF LA VERNE
MAIN CAMPUS

OFFICE OF FINANCIAL AID
ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN



Turnover of Personnel

In the past 5 years there have been three employees that have left our department for other employment opportunities, and one employee position eliminated in the summer of 2009.

Inventory of Basic Equipment and Material

Work Station
Computer with speakers
Printer
Phone
Paper
Stapler
Tape dispenser
Pens
Phone system ACD line

Currently the Office of Financial Aid has adequate office supplies to assist us through the end of the fiscal year 2010-2011. These supplies include paper, writing instruments, staplers, tape dispensers, etc. Currently, there are four printers shared among 12 staff members within the office. Each staff member has a PC.

Computer Hardware – From time to time, the Department of Education modifies the minimum system requirements schools must meet in order to participate in the Department's electronic processes. This Technical Specifications Table lists the minimum configurations required beginning in the 2005–2006 award year. When reviewing these specifications, a school should be aware that its system requirements (processor speed, RAM, hard-drive storage, etc.) will depend on which FSA functions the school uses, the number of records processed, and school database interfaces.

Although all of the designated electronic processes can be performed using the minimum configuration, we strongly recommend the optimal configuration, particularly in cases where a school sends or receives 4,000 or more records in an XML document (batch). This is because the new XML file formats used by EDEExpress and COD (and in the future by CPS) are larger and require greater storage and computing power. For the same reason, we would encourage a school to consider moving away from “Dial-up” and instead use a high-speed Internet connection. Doing so will significantly reduce both transmission time and transmission interruptions. This is because the new XML file formats used by EDEExpress and COD (and in the future by CPS) are larger and require greater storage and computing power. For the same reason, we would encourage a school to consider moving away from “Dial-up” and instead use a high-speed Internet connection. Doing so will significantly reduce both transmission time and transmission interruptions.

System Configurations -

IBM or Fully IBM-compatible PC

Monitor and Video Card

Internet Connection

Printer

Operating System

-Outlined below is the minimum PC configuration for a financial aid staff member to perform their job responsibility:

1.2 GHz Processor

512 MB RAM

60 GB Hard Drive

48x CD-ROM Drive (CD-RW recommended)

Windows compatible keyboard and mouse

Capable of Super Video Graphics Adapter (SVGA) resolution (800x600) or higher

56 Kbps Modem (meets or is upgradable to V.90 standard)

Laser printer capable of printing on standard paper (8.5" x 11")

Windows 2000 or Windows XP Professional recommended

-Optimal Configuration

2.8 GHz/333 MHz Processor

1 GB RAM

80 GB Hard Drive

48x CD-ROM Drive (CD-RW recommended)

Windows compatible keyboard and mouse

Capable of Super Video Graphics Adapter (SVGA) resolution (800x600) or higher

High speed Internet connection (e.g., DSL, cable)

Laser printer capable of printing on standard paper (8.5" x 11")

Windows 2000 or Windows XP Professional recommended

Computer Software/Access - to be in compliance with the administrative capability requirements of 34 CFR 668.16(o), a school must—

- use the E-App to submit and update the school's eligibility information: www.eligcert.ed.gov
- enroll in the Student Aid Internet Gateway (SAIG): www.fsawebenroll.ed.gov

- use *FAA Access* or its SAIG mailbox to exchange FAFSA or ISIR data with the Department's Central Processing System:
<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/FOTWWebApp/faa/faa.jsp> or www.saigportal.ed.gov
- use the COD Website or its SAIG mailbox to exchange award and disbursement data for Pell Grants, ACG/SMART grants, and Direct Loans: cod.ed.gov or www.saigportal.ed.gov
- use the eCampus-Based (eCB) System to file the FISAP application and report (see Volume 6): www.cbfisap.ed.gov
- submit to the National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS) the school's Federal Perkins Loan data, student enrollment records, FSA program overpayments, and NSLDS Transfer Student Monitoring records: <https://www.nslsdfap.ed.gov/secure/logon.asp>
- electronically submit the school's annual compliance and financial statement audits, and any other required audits: ezaudit.ed.gov
- use the Default Management Web site to receive its draft and official cohort default rate data electronically: ifap.ed.gov/DefaultManagement
- use the Information for Financial Aid Professionals (IFAP) Web site to review Dear Colleague Letters, announcements, or Federal Registers: ifap.ed.gov

Workspace - The amount of shared and individual office space in Financial Aid is 2,350.5 square feet. The average AP office size is 10'x10'. Only 9 staff members have individual offices. We have four people occupying two offices downstairs and six people occupying two offices upstairs. This is based on the current configuration of Woody Hall and available space.

Operating Calendar and Function Flow

As a condition of our participation in Title IV federal financial aid programs, a participating school must designate a capable individual to administer the federal student aid programs and to coordinate financial aid from these programs with all other financial aid received by students attending the school. To properly package and most effectively use the various types of student assistance (federal, institutional, state, private, etc.), the coordinating official must be aware of all financial aid received by students attending the school, regardless of the source. When creating a student's financial aid package, in order to ensure that a

student's financial aid does not exceed his or her financial need, an financial aid administrator must include financial aid the student is receiving from external sources as well as institutional financial aid and federal student aid program assistance. Therefore, a school's operations must be administered in a way that ensures all the information the school receives that might affect a student's federal student aid eligibility is communicated to the coordinating official and to the financial aid office. The Office of Financial Aid at the University of La Verne receives more than \$100,000,000 annually federal, institutional, state, and private funds (appendix A).

As we carry out our responsibility in administering these funds, the University of La Verne academic calendars begin in August, with The College of Law beginning in the middle of August, and all other academic programs beginning at the end of August, or the beginning of September. Students can begin completing their Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FASFA) as early as January 1st of every year. The office of Financial Aid uses March 2nd as their priority funding filing deadline, so those eligible students can be considered for all sources of financial aid. Students must submit a FASFA every year to be considered for all sources of financial aid, which includes loans. Awarding eligible students financial aid can and will continue through the summer of the following year. For example, the FASFA is available for students to submit to the Department of Education on January 1st 2011, and is available to students until June 30th, 2012.

The Office of Financial Aid begins processing financial aid in March of any given year for the upcoming fall academic year; however, we begin preparing in January. Preparation for the awarding year includes updating consumer information for students and families. In addition, updating the technological components of our automated financial aid process, this includes

downloading FASFA applications into the Banner Financial Aid Module. The responsibility of these functions falls to the Assistant Director, Systems Supervisor and Information Systems Specialist. They are charged with processing all internal financial aid processes to ensure students are awarded timely and accurately. We begin awarding in March, which is the start of our peak processing of awards. During this time we are communicating with students informing them of the process which includes, but is not limited to:

1. Welcome Letters – Letters that acknowledge receipt of FASFA
2. Rejected FASFA Letters – Letters that inform student FASFA was not processed by Department of Education and they must make corrections
3. Missing Information Letters – Letters that informs student they have additional documents to submit before awarding can be completed
4. Preliminary Award Letters (Traditional Undergraduates Only) – Letters to traditional aged students with an estimated award that indicates there are still documents that need to be submitted before an official award can be created (ceases approximately two weeks before the start of the fall semester).
5. Official Award Letters (all students) – Letters that determine financial aid eligibility and provide students with information on how to go about putting in place their financial aid (My La Verne).

For students, the process begins with the student submitting a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>. If the FAFSA is completed correctly the Central Processing System (CPS) from the Department of Education will generate an Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR). CPS will also send a Student Aid Report (SAR) to the student. The student's ISIR is downloaded into Banner by our Information Systems Specialist where the data is assimilated. A new record is created for the student if a previous ISIR does not exist. If the student has a preexisting record, the information will be updated. When a new record is created the following items will be assigned or created in Banner using the student's ISIR information and student record (SGASTDN): tracking, budget,

packaging group codes, aid periods, c-flags, merit awards, and document requirements. The student's needs analysis and Pell analysis will also be processed.

A welcome letter will also be generated when a student's ISIR has been downloaded into Banner. If the ISIR is rejected by the Department of Education, we will notify the student and will provide them with instructions on how to correct the problem. If a student is selected for a process called verification, a missing information letter (MIL) will be sent to the student informing them of the documents needed. This MIL will be sent every three weeks to the student until the requirement(s) have been satisfied. All correspondences will be mailed to the new students and emailed to the continuing students. The verification is performed when all the requested documents have been submitted, with the completion timeline of 21 days.

Once the verification has been completed or a completed (official) ISIR has been received, an award letter will be generated. Award letters are generated through a process called batch packaging. During the batch packaging process a student's housing code, year in college and enrollment status is loaded in Banner based on the information provided on the FAFSA. The awards generated through batch packaging are reviewed by our Quality Control Specialist. The Quality Control Specialist will receive a batch packaging report generated by our Information Systems Specialist. The Quality Control Specialist will determine if a student has been packaged correctly. If the batch in review is correct our Information Systems Specialist will mail or email the award to student within 48 hours.

A student will be able to view their award letter online, through their MyLaVerne account, once the award has been mailed or emailed to the student. A student must read and accept the terms and conditions on MyLaVerne before accepting or declining their award. If a

student accepts a loan, they must complete an entrance interview and master promissory note if they are a first time financial aid recipient. The student's financial aid will be disbursed to Student Accounts once the student has complied with all requests and has met all the criteria for disbursement. If the student does not meet all the criteria for disbursement, a disbursement MIL will be sent to the student as outlined in the next section.

Once a student receives an official award letter and/or e-mail notification, a student is required to access their online "My La Verne" account and accept any loan(s) and/or federal work-study they have been awarded.

Beginning in July, the Office of Financial Aid's Loan Coordinator will start to send out loan originations to the Department of Education. This origination validates that a student is eligible to receive a student loan (s). In order for this to occur, a student is required to accept any loan funds awarded in "My La Verne", as all grant money is automatically accepted for the student (undergraduates only). If a student does not accept any of the loans, the loan origination cannot be submitted to the Department of Education. During this period, the Office of Financial Aid is communicating with students by informing them of the steps that need to be completed after they have been awarded:

1. E-Mail Notification – Please accept the awarded loan funds so we may submit your loan information to the Department of Education.
2. Disbursement Missing Information Letter - Letters that informs student they have additional documents to submit before disbursements can occur by the start of the academic year.

These communications inform the student on what they need to do to ensure loan funds are ready for disbursement when classes begin. Once disbursements occur after the first week of school, the Office of Financial Aid will continue to send correspondence to students asking them to submit the necessary documentation to complete the appropriate process (awarding and/or disbursement). This will continue into the summer of the following year.

When a student accepts their award on My Laverne, the Student Loan Coordinator runs a process, to gather students who have accepted their loans. This generally happens three times a week for the newest year's operation. Depending on when the student accepted their loan(s), they will show up on one of the days that the process is run. Once this is done, a query in Microsoft Access gives a listing of students gathered. This report includes student ID's, names, loan type, amount, grade level, loan period, and units for all applicable terms/semesters. The Student Loan Coordinator then verifies the loan period to make sure it includes the current term. In addition, the Student Loan Coordinator checks to see if there are any terms that have already ended, and makes sure they are eligible for the period of enrollment that has been identified. This is to comply with Federal Regulations. If there are any issues, the Student Loan Coordinator will troubleshoot with a financial aid advisor to resolve the issue. The students that are accurate are sent to the Common Origination and Disbursement (COD) site for origination. The electronic file is labeled and transmitted through EdConnect which is an application/software used to transmit files back and forth to COD.

Once COD receives the file, it is processed and in return they send a response file. The electronic response file, or acknowledgement file, will give the current status of the loan(s). The Student Loan Coordinator will load the electronic file through Banner. If loans are rejected, then

adjustments are made, and a new file is sent with the origination request again. In addition, COD sends response files daily for the students who have completed their entrance counseling and Master Promissory Note. Through a batch posting process, these documents are updated in Banner. Once these required documents for disbursement are satisfied, and the student meets all the other requirements, such as satisfactory academic progress and enrolled at least half-time, then the loan is ready for disbursement. Student accounts runs the disbursement process daily, and when a loan is ready to disburse because it has met all the requirements previously mentioned, funds will post for the specific term/loan period scheduled and future disbursements will post on the scheduled disbursement date. Once Student Accounts disburses the loan funds they have 14 days to issue the student a refund due to a credit balance. The Office of Financial Aid then has 30 days to report the disbursement to COD.

Providing the information to students is critical in completing the process to ensure students have their funding in place to attend the University of La Verne.

IV. Effectiveness Indicators

Staff Survey's

A survey was mailed to staff internally, and outside of the Office of Financial Aid, which included staff in Academic Support and Retention Services, Admissions, Graduate Academic Services, RCA, Registrar, and Student Accounts. The purpose of the surveys were to provide data and information to ULV's Financial Aid staff on how better they can work to meet various intradepartmental, interdepartmental and student needs.

Student Survey's

A number surveys were distributed to freshman undergraduates, transfer undergraduates and graduate students by offices outside of ours. The surveys were used to evaluate the services provided by the Office of Financial Aid. In addition, these surveys compared us to other institutions with responses favoring our office and the service provided to the students at the University of La Verne.

Correspondence Analysis

A correspondence analysis was used to evaluate the types of correspondences that is disseminated to students. The data collected allowed the Office of Financial Aid to review timeframes in generating correspondence to students regarding the awarding process and the awards themselves, generated timely, to ensure students had information to make informed decisions on financing their academic programs.

V. Findings

Goal 1: Providing timely and effective service to students and staff

- **Enhancing cross training amongst Financial Aid staff**
- **Establishing policies and procedures**

Staff Trainings

The Office of Financial Aid staff understands the importance of knowing what process is in place during the operating academic year. Understanding the overall operation is essential in providing service to students based on the time of year. The months between July and September, the staff is providing service to students who are attending summer, which is the end of the previous academic year (2010-2011). In addition, services are being provided to new students entering the upcoming academic year (2011-2012), which begins in August. One of the most critical times is the beginning of the academic year, as classes begin. This is when funds are disbursed to the student's account to pay off charges as a result of registration. During the months of October through December staff members are assisting students as they prepare for the next term or semester courses. This includes recalculating eligibility and making adjustments to awards as students' circumstances change. During the months from January through March, in addition to recalculating eligibility and making adjustments to awards, the Office of Financial Aid staff begins technical set up and document updated for the upcoming academic year (2012-2013). From months April through June we continue to process two academic years (2011-2012 and 2012-2013) and assist students (prospective and current).

The Office of Financial Aid participates in numerous trainings throughout the year. Primary conferences members attend include the following annual conferences:

National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA)
Western Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (WASFAA)
California Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (CASFAA)
Federal Student Aid Conference
SCT - SunGard Banner

There are other workshops and training opportunities that are presented by these organizations through local presentations and or webinars conducted online. As each member attends these conferences, it is departmental policy for attendees to summarize their findings and share them with other staff members so that it is a benefit to all. This provides the entire staff additional knowledge to better serve students. In addition, internal training with staff is provided as opportunities present themselves due to the ever-changing nature of this field.

Staff Access to Proper Systems

Here in Financial Aid we use many different programs and self service products to communicate with the students and other departments. The list of programs we use are: MyLaVerne, Banner, (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) FAFSA, (Central Processing System) CPS, (Common Origination and Disbursement) COD, (National Student Loan Data System) NSLDS, Financial Counselor (Entrance and Exit Interview for Perkins and ULV Loans, Esign Online (Signing Perkins and ULV Loan Promissory Notes), EDEXpress, and BDMS (Banner Document Management Suite).

When communicating with the students, MyLaVerne is utilized. This is a self-service program where students can view and keep track of their financial aid award status and guides them to what they need to do to complete all the steps. It also shows the terms and conditions to

receiving financial aid, their award information, accepting their loans, and any holds on their account. Terms and conditions need to be accepted before any award information is seen by the students. Students also utilize MyLaVerne to register for classes, update their mailing address, change phone numbers and check their balance. This is a very important tool for the students to get familiar with and logging into to check their status regularly.

The University uses Banner as the main operating system, including processing Financial Aid, and accepting payments by students and/or through loans. In financial aid many Banner forms are used for pulling in students' FAFSA information, logging in documents needed by the students, and awarding financial aid.

When a student gets admitted to the University and wants to apply for financial aid, the first thing they are directed to do is to go online to [FAFSA.ed.gov](https://fafsa.ed.gov). This is where the students will apply for financial aid. Once they have completed their FAFSA, the systems staff pulls their information into Banner. If there is anything that needs to be corrected by the student, it will be listed in the comment section, including an explanation of what is missing. It will also show if they are selected for verification and explain what they need to submit to verify information on their FAFSA. Once their information is in Banner, and it shows they are selected for verification, they will be notified. Brand new students will be notified by mail for the first semester and all continuing students are notified through their La Verne email accounts. If they are not selected for verification and all requirements are complete, they will begin the awarding process.

We also use the program CPS. This is a program that allows us to go onto students FAFSA accounts and check the status, if needed, and systems staff uses this program to check to see why FAFSA information is not transferring into Banner.

Another program Financial Aid uses to process students' financial aid is COD. COD is used to certify/originate the Direct Loans that students are eligible for. Once a student accepts their loans, they are given requirements to complete if they are first-time borrowers, namely the Direct Loans Entrance Counseling and to sign the Master Promissory Note. To complete these, they are required to go to: www.studentloans.gov. Also, through the COD program F. A. systems staff can access and verify if students have completed these requirements, or what might be missing if a student has stated they completed it already. If a student has been awarded a Direct Parent Loan, parents need to go to this same website to apply for the Direct Parent Loan.

The Office of Financial Aid also uses a program called NSLDS. This program allows staff members to view other loans a student has been given, either at La Verne, or any other institution. This assists with identifying any loans from another school given to students that overlap with loans that are offered by La Verne. This program helps to avoid over-awarding a student, and keeps track of student indebtedness. Students can also go to this site, at NSLDS.ed.gov, to view all their Federal Loans.

ECommand through ACS (Affiliated Computer Systems) is the forum used to keep track of Federal Perkins Loans and ULV Loans that have been disbursed on Banner and posted to the ECommand website. They are also the billing servicer for these loans. The Financial Counselor program through ACS is used for the Entrance Counseling students need to complete when being awarded these loans. Financial Counselor is also used for students to complete the Exit Counseling for these two loans when they are leaving La Verne. Along with this program, Perkins and ULV Loan Master Promissory Notes are completed online through the ESign program ACS has implemented.

With the University beginning to implement a scanning program, BDMS, the F. A. office will be scanning all incoming documents starting with 2011-2012 award year. This is one way Financial Aid is accomplishing a paperless office.

In a more recent survey, spring 2011 Graduate survey, 57% of all graduate students who responded (615) indicated they were somewhat satisfied or very satisfied with the services of the Office of Financial Aid. In the same survey, 31% of the students indicated they were neutral or services were not applicable. In a student survey, CIRP freshman 2010, 77% of those new freshmen who responded (467) indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with the communication from the Office of Financial Aid. In addition, 71 % of new transfer students indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with the communication from the Office of Financial Aid. In a similar student survey, CIRP freshman 2008, 72% of those who responded (98) indicated that they received all the information needed to apply for financial aid. Compared to other financial aid offers from other Universities to which they applied to 80% of those who responded (97) indicated their offer was the same or better. Based on the CSS survey for seniors, 60% of those who responded (209) indicated they were at least satisfied overall with the Office of Financial Aid. (Financial Aid Program Review Effectiveness Survey Findings)

Background:

The purpose of the survey was to provide data and information to ULV's Financial Aid staff on how better they can work to meet various departmental and student needs. The survey questions and results are listed below for reference purposes.

Summary:

A total of 10 questions were part of the Financial Aid Program Review Effectiveness Survey. These were answered by 42 participants, which was a lower result than expected since the survey was distributed to 60 people. The survey was distributed at the same time as another survey, which could have caused confusion among participants.

It appears that some work needs to be done in regards to the Financial Aid office after reviewing the findings of the distributed survey. There were zero instances where the majority of participants selected a “strongly agree” option in regards to something positive related to Financial Aid’s staff, service, and/or knowledge. That being said, five of the 10 survey questions, resulted in the majority of participants “somewhat agreeing” on a variety of positive descriptions over the quality of service offered by the Financial Aid Department staff. In two instances a higher percentage of participants “somewhat disagreed” over questions that revolved around a similar issue – whether the Financial Aid Department offered enough one-on-one service to students and whether it was adequately staffed. The findings showed that participants “somewhat disagreed” that either statement was true. A total of 13 participants left written comments at the end of the survey. These comments also are below for reference purposes.

In conclusion, it appears that the quality of customer service in the Financial Aid Department needs to be increased, (e.g. being friendlier, more patient and resourceful). It also appears that an increase in skilled staff would allow the overall department to function both more effectively and efficiently. The suggestion to extend office hours was highlighted as well as providing each satellite office with its own financial aid specialist, among other findings.

Financial Aid Program Review

Providing timely and effective service to students and staff

Survey: All statements are designed to be answered on a strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat agree, strongly agree.

1. The Financial Aid Office staff is knowledgeable when dealing with the financial aid needs of students with diverse backgrounds.

Strongly disagree	0.0%	0
Somewhat disagree	9.5%	4
Neither agree nor disagree	28.6%	12
Somewhat agree	33.3%	14
Strongly agree	28.6%	12

2. When dealing with the Financial Aid Office, your request and/or questions have been met or answered in a timely manner.

Strongly disagree	4.8%	2
Somewhat disagree	4.8%	2
Neither agree nor disagree	14.3%	6
Somewhat agree	57.1%	24
Strongly agree	19.0%	8

3. The Financial Aid Department provides high-quality one-on-one service to our students to meet their financial-aid needs.

Strongly disagree	4.8%	2
Somewhat disagree	38.1%	16
Neither agree nor disagree	14.3%	6
Somewhat agree	38.1%	16
Strongly agree	4.8%	2

4. The Financial Aid Office staff is approachable and friendly.

Strongly disagree	4.8%	2
Somewhat disagree	14.3%	6
Neither agree nor disagree	23.8%	10
Somewhat agree	38.1%	16
Strongly agree	19.0%	8

5. The Financial aid web site is user friendly.

Strongly disagree	14.3%	6
Somewhat disagree	9.5%	4
Neither agree nor disagree	23.8%	10
Somewhat agree	47.6%	20
Strongly agree	4.8%	2

6. The information provided on the Financial Aid web site is helpful to your department.

Strongly disagree	0.0%	0
Somewhat disagree	10.0%	4
Neither agree nor disagree	35.0%	14
Somewhat agree	55.0%	22
Strongly agree	0.0%	0

7. It will be good to have financial aid information in Spanish on the financial aid web site.

Strongly disagree	4.8%	2
Somewhat disagree	4.8%	2
Neither agree nor disagree	47.6%	20
Somewhat agree	19.0%	8

8. The Financial Aid Office is adequately staffed.

Strongly disagree	23.8%	10
Somewhat disagree	19.0%	8
Neither agree nor disagree	28.6%	12
Somewhat agree	23.8%	10
Strongly agree	4.8%	2

9. How can the Financial Aid Office improve its services to you?

- Provide workshops describing your services from the student point of view and that of yours. Also, allow employees to have access to student's files relevant to the employee interaction with the student/applicant.
- Provide overview workshops on the financial aid process to help answer basic questions about financial aid at the off-campus sites.
- The FA staff I have contacted have been extremely helpful and knowledgeable. Those I have worked with understand the ULV community is a complex one and it is vital that all departments interact to provide the student the best service possible.
- Ongoing sessions campus wide for undergrad/grad
- The service the Office of Financial Aid provides to me is fine.
- Friendlier and timely communication.
- Nothing. Your department is always very responsive to me and very informative.
- Each RCA Campus to have its own Financial Aid Specialist.

- If financial aid does not want students to call, then the necessary information and training should be given to the people who work with students directly. No other office is supposed to provide financial aid advice, so it is difficult to understand what the financial aid director would like for other offices to provide to students.
- The Financial Aid office must understand that staff/faculty at other departments are as not as well versed with Financial Aid protocol as they are. Therefore, responses to inquiries should be informative but not condescending.
- Not discourage late registrants from getting graduate FA
- They have always done a great job. Maybe changing the award information on MyLaVerne. Last year I had checked if I had any messages and in one screen it said I didn't. Although, when i spoke with a Financial Aid Advisor, they showed me a separate screen were it stated I needed to go to a Government Website to accept or apply for aid. It would be nice if everything is seen on one screen and an email was sent if an item was missing.
- Be able to process Aid for student who have been admitted late
- Would be nice if Fin Aid would be more open to collaborative efforts to streamline bureaucratic roadblocks such as having only one university-wide authorization to release information form. Having a financial aid release form that is nearly identical to the one

that other offices use is redundant and unnecessary. The FAQ section really shouldn't be in PDF but rather should be on a webpage. The Fin Aid office should consider reviewing peer universities and how their financial aid webpages are designed to compare itself with these institutions.

10. How can the Financial Aid Office improve its services to students?

- Be able to run your FASFA reports more often. This will help students understand a better time line expectation of when your office will have their respective packet completed.
- provide a financial aid officer at every RCA campus to assist with students and give them face to face time
- Most of the students I work with will contact FA by phone/email. It is very important that students feel that the information they are receiving is correct. A suggestion would be when speaking with a student ask some questions. Are you term or semester, UG or Grad etc, off campus or on campus. Toggle through Banner to assist in answering questions. Make sure the student feels like there call is important and they are not bothering you.
- Provide interview times for new students open door policy for walk-ins
- They complain about financial aid and the amount of paperwork they need to fax to the Office of Financial Aid. Some students do not understand the "next steps" after applying

for FAFSA and registering for their courses. Suggestions: 1) Hire new staff 2) Assign patient and people friendly people to the phones. 3) Rotate the Office of Financial Aid hours of business; close at 7:00 PM. Most students want to talk with Financial Aid, however, it's too late to contact the office. 4) Change the website. There is too much info on the web and most students do not know what all of it means. Also, students do not know the difference between Student Accounts and the Office of Financial Aid. Good luck!

- Friendlier and timely communication.
- Work with RCA to develop a step-by-step guide to financial aid that is tailored to adult students. There is so much information on the web site that students ignore most of it, so I wonder whether there is a way to focus students' attention better to the most critical elements and most frequently asked questions.
- By have a step by step checklist for RCA students to follow. Many of these students have been out of school for a number of years and may find the Financial Aid process confusing.
- Be sure to ask the right questions of students when they call. They should ask if they are graduate or undergraduate; if they are term or semester; etc. Students should not be given incorrect information about how many units they need to receive financial aid.

- I receive many complaints from students about how rudely they are treated by staff.
Efficient, friendly service is essential in an educational environment!
- Recognize that the grad programs are just as important as the undergrad population.
- Hire more full-time Financial Aid Advisors to meet the increasing demand of students.
Especially now that we are enrolling a large number of students to the University.
- Start with removing the unwelcome "welcome" signs that you have lining your hallways.
These signs establish a negative impression among guests about the kind of service they can expect. The Fin Aid office has a reputation on campus as having awful customer service; patrons seek immediate attention to their concerns and don't like to be referred to your 800-number. The online financial aid orientation video should not be hosted in Youtube (in other words, students shouldn't be linked away from your website to Youtube to complete the video tutorial; the video should really be hosted at screencast or another server and then have the code embedded on your website.

Action Recommendations:

The office of Financial Aid will continue to operate efficiently and effectively to ensure compliance with regulations as staff has opportunities to attend workshops outside of the office. In addition, continued training within in the university community is critical. As changes occur with regulations, the availability of resources to the Office of Financial Aid is imperative to its operation. These resources may include, but are not limited to, continued funding and other as-

needed resources. As a result of the staff survey, responders indicated that the Office of Financial Aid should increase staff levels to accommodate the increased student population for all programs, including traditional undergraduate, regional campuses, graduate, doctoral and law.

Goal 2: Improving communication to the La Verne community

- **Disseminating timely information**
- **Relating effectively to other units within the La Verne community**

As part of the Financial Aid process, the Office of Financial Aid goes through a three-step communication process in which our office disseminates information to students regarding their Award Letter. The three steps are:

- Welcome Letter
- Missing Information Letter (if applicable)
- Award Letter

Part 1: ISIR Uploads → Welcome Letter: Timeline and Information

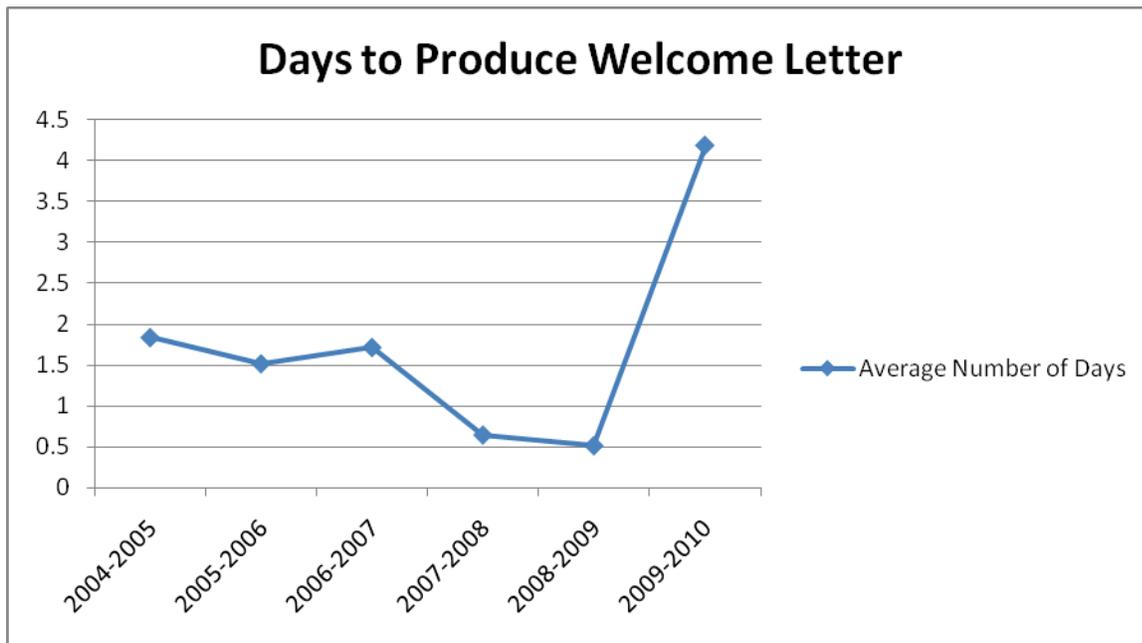
Once students submit their FAFSA, the first step for the Office of Financial aid is to load the ISIR. Once the ISIR is loaded, the Office of Financial Aid sends the Welcome Letter to the student. This is the first line of communication that begins between the Office of Financial Aid and the student.

The purpose of the Welcome Letter is to:

- Inform the student that the Office of Financial Aid has received their FAFSA
- Inform the student that they must be fully admitted into their degree program before they can be awarded any financial aid
- Inform the student that they will receive additional information from the Office of Financial Aid in the coming weeks
- Remind the student that they will need to complete and submit all documents requested from the Office of Financial Aid
- Inform the student that they can see any additional requirements they may be needing by viewing their Student Aid Report (SAR) on the FAFSA website: www.fafsa.ed.gov

During the past six academic years, the Office of Financial Aid has worked to ensure that the students hear from us in a timely manner once the ISIR has been loaded. By looking at the chart below, it shows that between 2004 and 2007, the Office of Financial Aid was able to produce and distribute Welcome Letters between an average of a day, to two days, of uploading the ISIR. In the 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 school years, we improved our timeline for communication as we were able to produce and distribute the Welcome Letters, on average, in less than a day's time.

Welcome Letter chart #1



Average: 1.74 days Median: 1.62 days

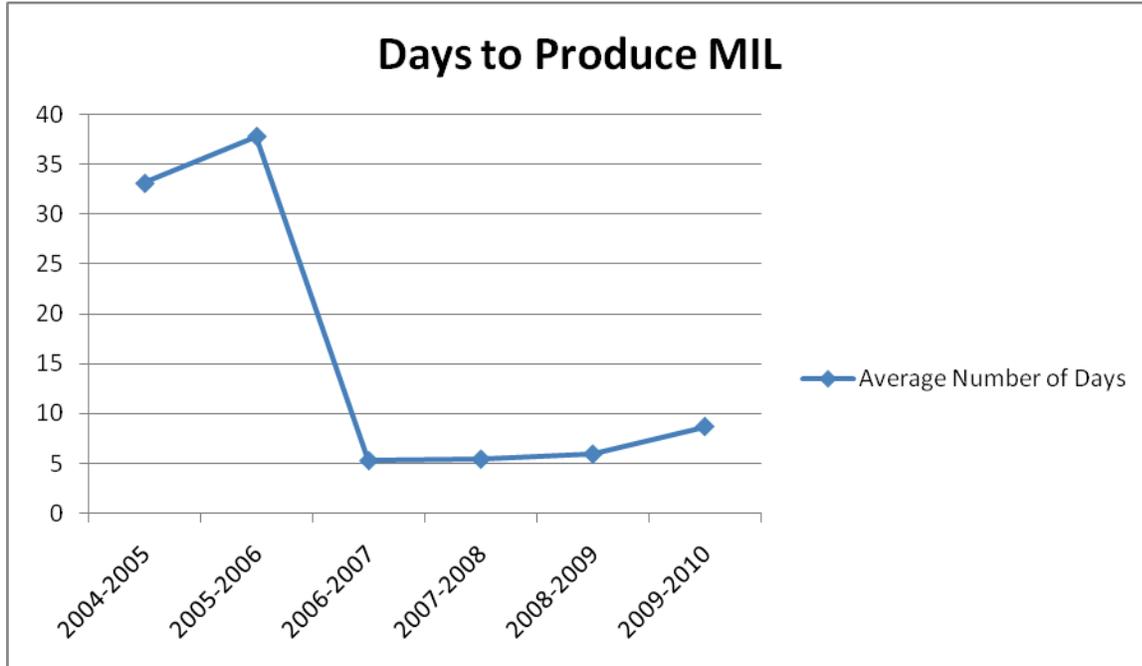
In the 2009-2010 academic year, the Office of Financial Aid, on average, took slightly over four days to produce and distribute Welcome Letters. Over the past six academic years, the Office of Financial Aid has worked diligently to ensure that students hear from our office in a timely manner, especially as the Welcome Letter is the first line of communication between our office and the student.

Part 2: **Tracking Requirement (RRAAREQ) → MIL**

When a student's ISIR is loaded into Banner, that tracking requirement shows up in RRAAREQ. After the ISIR is loaded into Banner, and the student's admission record reflects an admit status, other required fields show up as needed. These fields indicate that the ISIR was flagged for a specific reason. Common flags include Verification, proof of Selective Service Registration, rejected ISIRS, etc.

When an ISIR is flagged, the Office of Financial Aid produces a Missing Information Letter (MIL) for the student. The purpose of the MIL is to inform the student that before our office can proceed with the Award Letter process, the student must submit all required documents. Each letter lists the specific requirement that the student must satisfy before an award letter can be produced. The letter also lists a deadline for which a student must submit their documents in order to remain in priority status.

Days to Produce MIL chart #2



Average: 16.03 days Median: 7.29 days

The Office of Financial Aid has tracked the timeline for producing MILs. During the 2004-2005 academic year, the MIL letter was produced, on average, 33 days after the ISIR was loaded into Banner. In the 2005-2006 school year, the MIL letter was generated, on average, 38 days after the ISIR was loaded into Banner. In 2006-2007, an MIL was generated, on average, 5.25 days after the ISIR was loaded into Banner. During the 2007-2008 academic year, an MIL was generated, on average, 5.4 days after the ISIR was loaded into Banner. It took an average of 5.9 days to produce an MIL after the ISIR was loaded into Banner during the 2008-2009 academic year. And in the 2009-2010 academic year, the MIL was generated, on average, 8.7 days after the ISIR was loaded into Banner.

It is important to note that in each academic year, there are students whose ISIR was loaded into Banner, but who were not admitted until much later. ISIRS can be loaded into RRAAREQ before a student is admitted. The MIL, however, is not generated until the student's admissions record reflects that they have been admitted. It is in these cases that the overall average is raised. In the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 academic years, there were a large number of students whose ISIRS were uploaded months before the student were actually admitted to La Verne. This is the reason why the averages for those two academic years were much higher.

Part 3: Packaging Requirements Complete → Award Notification

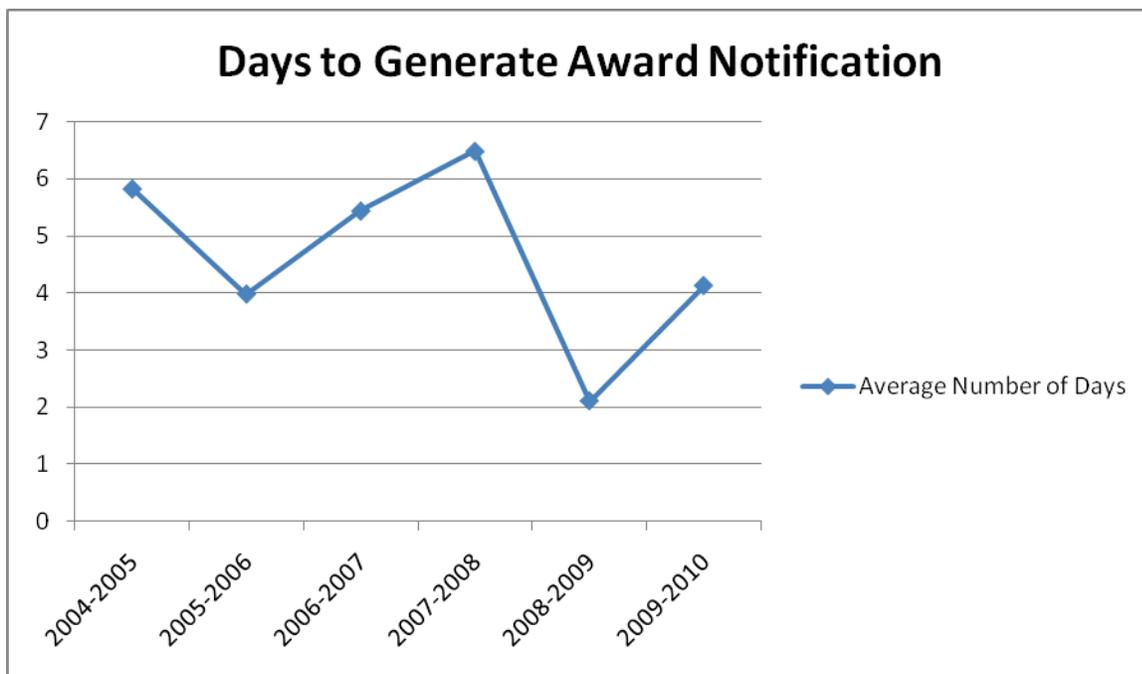
The third and final notice in the Award Letter process is the Award Letter Notification. The Office of Financial Aid generates an official award letter once a student turns in all required documents. All new students receive a hard copy letter in the mail along with a financial aid packet. Returning students receive an email sent to their La Verne issued email account, notifying them that their award letter is ready to view on their MyLaVerne. The Office of Financial Aid utilizes email as the main form of communication once a student is enrolled.

The Award Letter provides the following information:

- Informs student of all the Gift aid they have been offered for the academic year
- Informs student of all the Self Help aid they have been offered for the academic year
- Informs student of the total aid (Gift aid and Self Help aid) that they have been offered for the academic year
- Provides a breakdown of how much the student would receive for each semester
- Identifies the maximum amount of a Parent PLUS loan that the student's parent is eligible to accept (for dependent students only)
- Informs student that they must log onto their "MyLaVerne" and accept their Terms and Conditions in order to receive any financial aid, including Gift aid.

- Informs student that they must accept any Self Help aid that they wish to receive and must do so on their “MyLaVerne”
- Provides a chart outlining the Cost of Attendance (tuition and fees + room and board) for students who live on campus and for students who live off campus (traditional undergraduates only)
- Notifies student of the current Cal Grant Award process and that it is contingent on the approval of the California State Budget
- Provides an estimated Cost of Attendance
- Documents the student’s federal student loan history
- Reminds student that they must inform F. A. immediately if their housing arrangements have changed (going from on campus to with parents or vice versa)
- Refers students to the Terms and Conditions for additional information
- Advises students to check their La Verne issued email regularly, as the Office of Financial Aid utilizes email as the main form of communication with students once they are enrolled.

Award Letter Notification chart #3



Average: 4.66 days Median: 4.78 days

During the 2004-2005 academic year, an award letter was produced, on average, 5.83 days after all requirements were satisfied in Banner. During the 2005-2006 academic year, an

award letter was produced, on average, 3.98 days after all requirements were satisfied in Banner. In the 2006-2007 academic year, the average number of days that the award letter was produced once all requirements were satisfied was 5.44. During the 2007-2008 academic year, the award letter was produced, on average, 6.49 days after all requirements were satisfied in Banner. The award letter was produced an average of 2.1 days after all requirements were satisfied in Banner during the 2008-2009 academic year. In 2009-2010, the Office of Financial Aid was able to generate an award letter in, on average, 4.13 days once all requirements were satisfied in Banner.

Part 4: Development of Social Media and Alternative Communication Resources

In addition to the formal methods of disseminating information in a timely manner to the La Verne community, the Office of Financial Aid has developed Social Media profiles and adopted alternative communication resources in order to better relate effectively to other units within the La Verne community. The Office of Financial Aid has recognized that as the number of people who utilize social media grows every day, it is important to adapt our communication efforts in order to align with the communication styles that our student's best relate to. Four new communication resources have been implemented during the 2010-2011 academic year:

Facebook and Twitter: The Office of Financial Aid Facebook and Twitter pages are social media resources that provide an array of different information for the La Verne community. Facebook and Twitter posts are added at least every other day in order to maintain a presence in the Facebook and Twitter communities. Posts include, but are not limited to: reminders of upcoming financial aid deadlines, scholarship announcements, Youtube videos, answers to commonly asked questions, and links to relevant articles pertaining to financial aid and higher education. As of June 17th, 2011, 75 people "like" the Office of Financial Aid Facebook page. The Office of Financial Aid Facebook page can be accessed [here](#). As of June 17th, 2011, 62 people "follow" the Office of Financial Aid's Twitter account. The Office of Financial Aid Twitter page can be accessed [here](#).

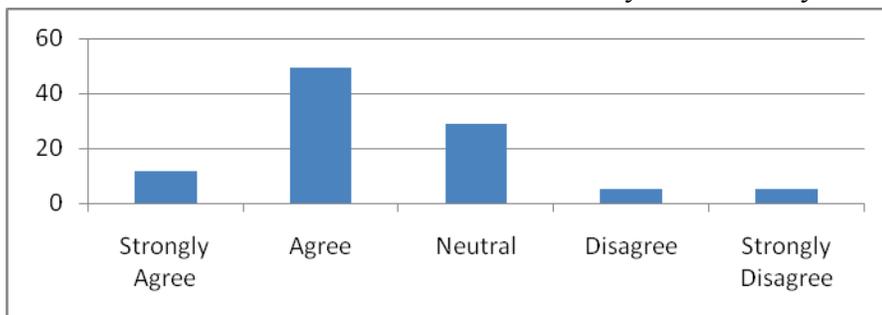
YouTube: The Financial Aid YouTube account was created in an effort to diversify the way in which we presented information to our students. Our office also wanted another

way to introduce and familiarize our staff with the La Verne community. Since the creation of the Financial Aid YouTube account, seven videos have been uploaded and four different staff members have presented information in video format. Once a video has been uploaded, they are posted onto our Facebook and Twitter accounts. The Office of Financial Aid YouTube account can be accessed [here](#).

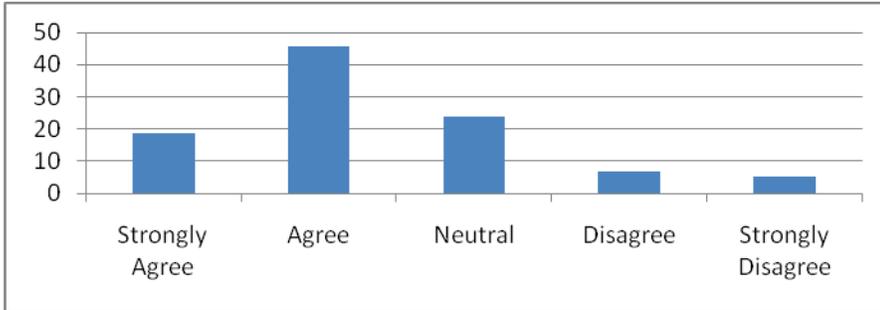
Quarterly Newsletters: The Office of Financial Aid has implemented a quarterly newsletter that, so far, has two publications. The purpose of the quarterly newsletter is to highlight for students, faculty and staff the most important financial aid information for that particular quarter. Each newsletter is purposely designed to be one page; the goal being effective conciseness. In an effort to go Green, the newsletter is distributed via email to the entire La Verne community each quarter. After the newsletter has been distributed, it is then archived on the Financial Aid homepage.

A 9-question survey (appendix B) was disseminated to 113 La Verne staff from the following departments: Academic Support and Retention Services, Admissions, Graduate Academic Services, RCA, Registrar, and Student Accounts. Responses were received from 60 individuals. The purpose of the survey was to obtain the thoughts and opinions of the primary departments that have direct interaction with the Office of Financial Aid, as it relates to their views of the effectiveness of this office. The questions are identified below, with response percentages provided.

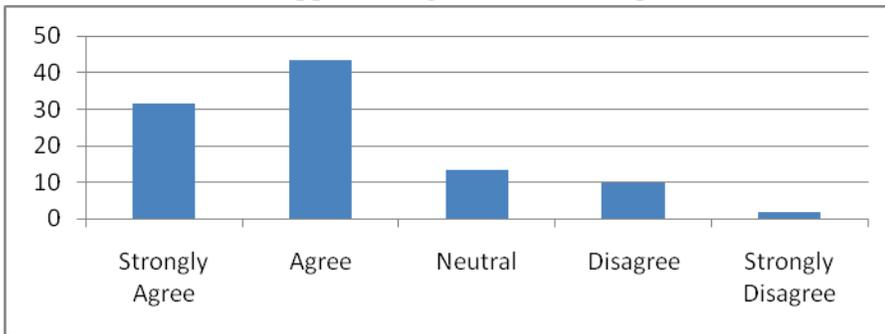
1. The Office of Financial Aid communicates with you in a timely manner.



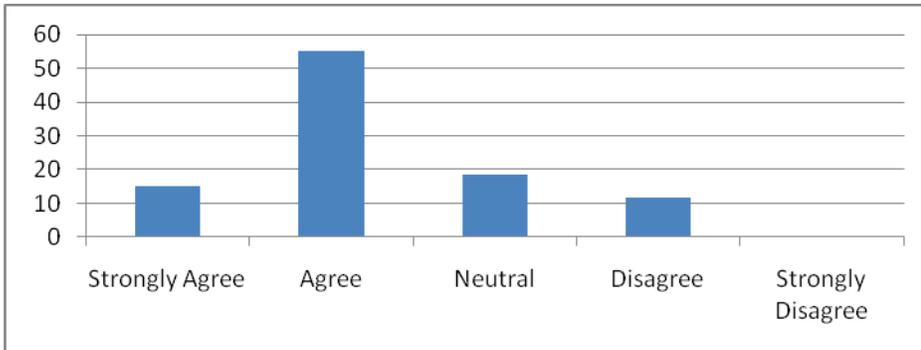
2. Your questions and concerns are efficiently addressed.



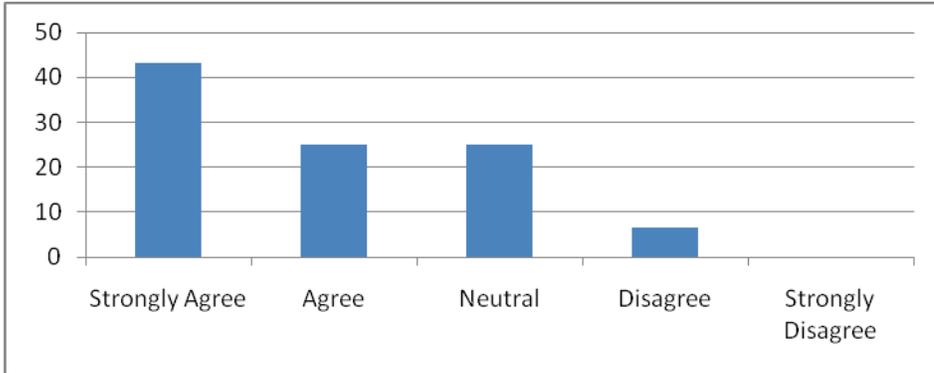
3. You feel comfortable approaching our staff with questions or concerns.



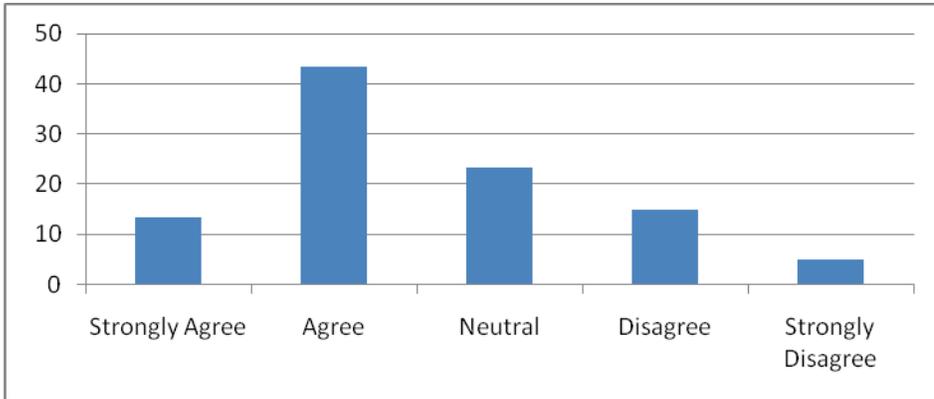
4. The information that the Office of Financial Aid communicates is helpful.



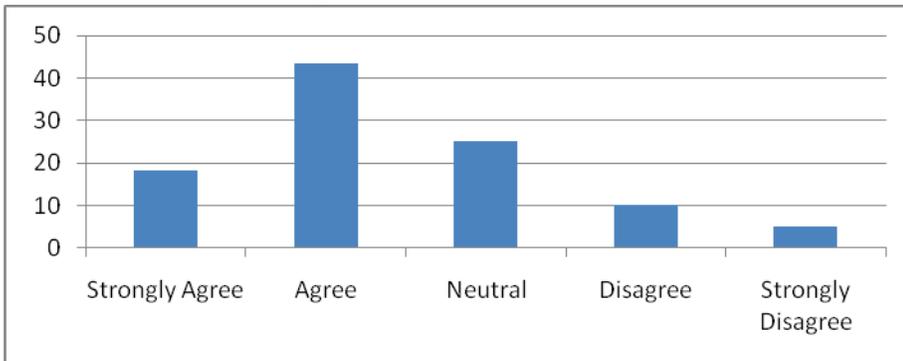
5. The Office of Financial Aid should communicate more information.



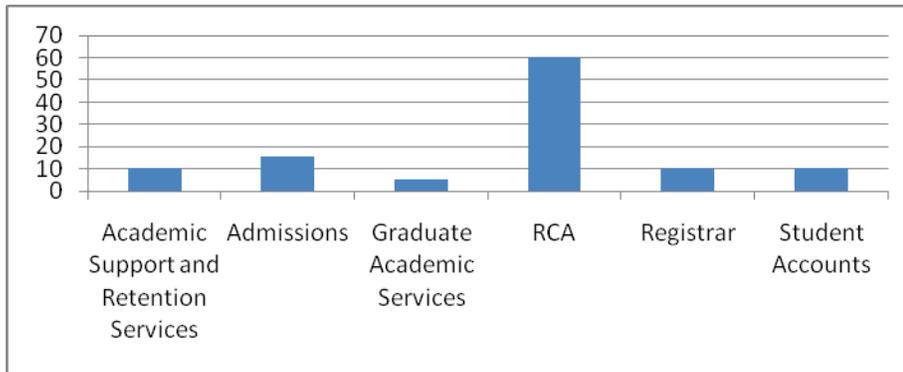
6. Our offices are aligned in the desire to put student needs first.



7. Our offices work well together to resolve student issues.



8. I work in:



Item 9 of the survey gave participants an open forum to write comments and suggestions. 25 of the 60 participants gave feedback in the comment section. Because a large percentage of participants were from the Regional Campuses, most of the concerns revolved around the desire to see additional information and training sessions developed for RCA staff, whose students communicate mainly via telephone and email.

Action Recommendations:

It has been determined that it would be beneficial to continue these newest communication ventures. The Office of Financial Aid has recently begun a quarterly newsletter, has developed a Facebook and Twitter page, and has posted informational videos on YouTube. All of these communication devices are in place to provide timely and accurate information to students, their families, and university staff. We have a new financial aid advisor whose responsibilities include maintaining and updating these communication devices on a regular basis.

The Office of Financial Aid recommends implementing an annual staff workshop/training/orientation. The majority of comments were from staff of the RCA campuses

who requested more trainings and outreaches. We believe it would be beneficial to have an annual workshop, in which all pertinent staff would be invited, to review and teach financial aid basics. This would improve the timely and efficient service to our students. We also have a new financial aid advisor whose specialty will be the RCA and CAPA populations.

Goal 3: Adhering to Federal regulations

- **Adhering to federal regulations as reflected in the annual A-133 audit**
- **Reducing or maintaining the federal cohort default rate**

A school that participates in any FSA program, including a participating foreign school, generally must have an independent auditor conduct an annual audit of the school's compliance with the laws and regulations that are applicable to the FSA programs in which the school participates (a compliance audit), and an audit of the school's financial statements (a financial statement audit). While a compliance audit covers the school's administration of the FSA programs, a financial statement audit provides the Department with information necessary to evaluate a school's status *vis-a-vis* the financial standards.

Program reviews and audits are conducted to identify compliance problems at the school and identify corrective actions. If a school is cited in a program review or audit for improperly disbursing FSA program funds, the school must restore those funds as appropriate.

If a school is cited in a program review or audit for other serious program violations, the school may be subject to corrective action and sanctions, such as fines, emergency action, or limitation, suspension, or termination.

A school that has an audit performed under the *Audit Guide* for FSA schools must submit both the compliance audit and the audited financial statements within six months of the end of the school's fiscal year. Both the compliance audit and the financial statement audit must be

performed on a fiscal-year basis. In addition, both audits must be prepared by an independent public accountant in accordance with the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and audited in accordance with the Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS). The compliance audit and financial statement audit may be performed by different auditors.

Public and nonprofit schools must comply with the Single Audit Act. The Single Audit Act requires these schools to have an audit conducted in accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Circular A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Nonprofit Organizations. (Circular A-133 allows an FSA compliance audit under the criteria of the *Audit Guide* under limited circumstances.)

The official title of the Inspector General's audit guide for the FSA programs is Audits of Federal Student Financial Assistance Programs at Participating Institutions and Institution Servicers.

The Office of Financial Aid at the University of La Verne has had three consecutive A-133 audits that resulted in no findings. This confirms that there are no material weaknesses in how Federal financial aid programs are administered.

Currently, a school's cohort default rate (CDR) is the percentage of the number of the school's FFEL and Direct Loan borrowers who enter repayment in one Federal Fiscal Year (October 1 through September 30) who default in that federal fiscal year or by the end of the next federal fiscal year.

Table #1 National Default Rates thru Fiscal Year 2008 based on two-year calculation.

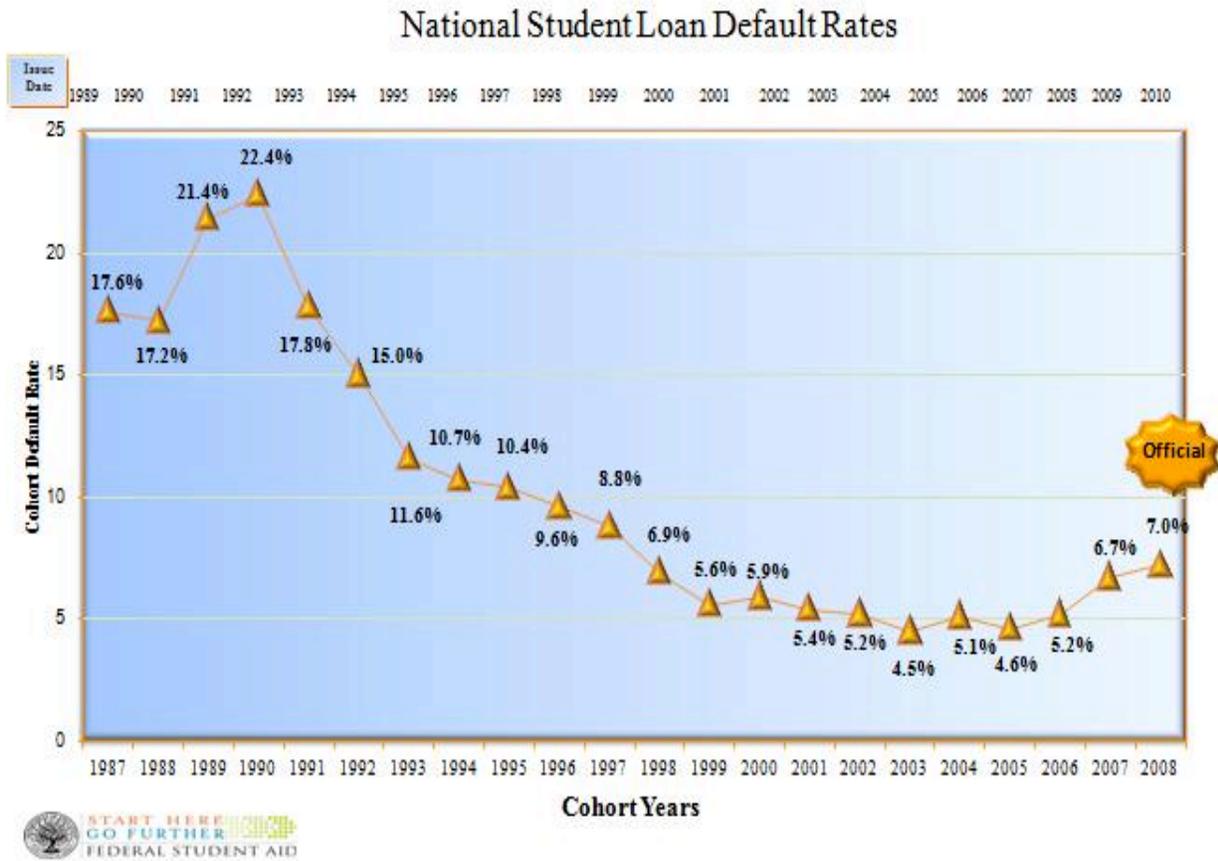


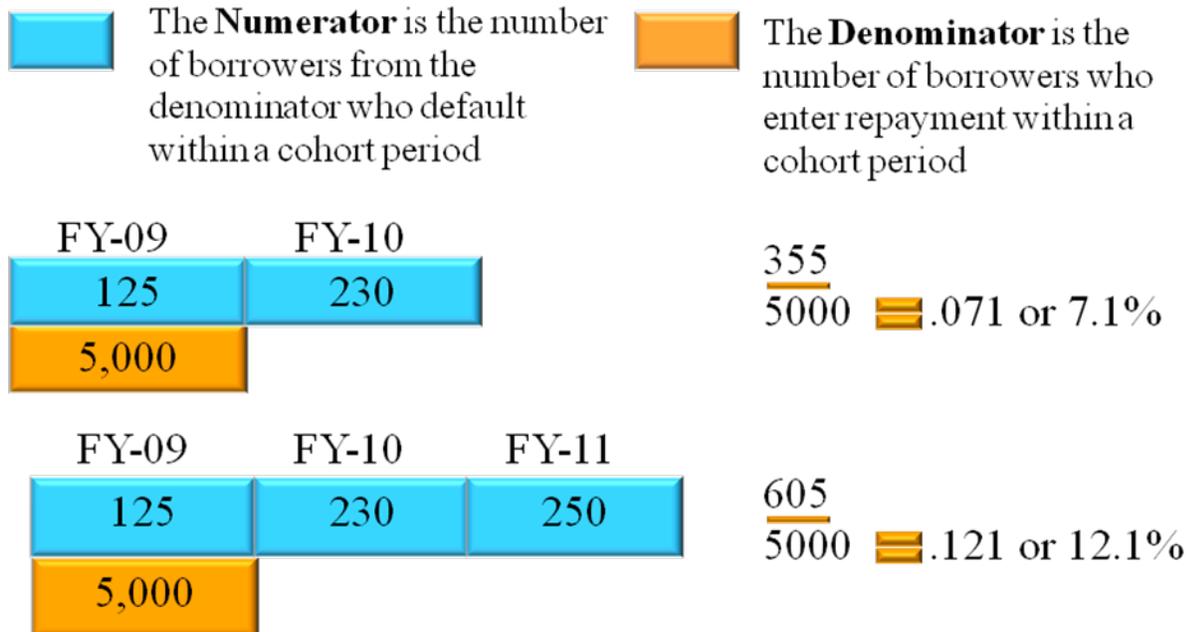
Table #2 outlines the University of La Verne’s 2 year CDR:

	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	5 year average
Default Rate	1.7	1.6	1.7	2.8	1.8	1.92
No. Defaulted	32	38	47	56	26	39.8
No. Repay	1873	2339	2764	1942	1428	2069.2

Beginning with the 2009 cohort, the calculation will be based on borrowers who default in that federal fiscal year or by the end of the next two federal fiscal years.

New Federal monitoring period and calculation for CDR will be going from a two-year calculation to a three-year calculation. This will become effective October 2011, and will include fiscal years 2007, 2008, and 2009.

2-Year Versus 3-Year Calculation



It is anticipated, nationally, all schools who participate in Title IV programs will see a rise in CDR. With this anticipation, Congress created a transition period during which, no school sanctions will be taken based on the 3-year calculated rate until after there have been three consecutive cohort years of such rates calculated. Two sets of draft and official CDR rates will be issued annually for Cohort Years 2009, 2010, and 2011. The two-year calendar will provide CDR for fiscal year 2009 and will become available in September of 2011. The three-year calendar will provide CDR for fiscal year 2009 and will become available in September of 2012.

Action Recommendations:

The office of Financial Aid will continue to operate efficiently and effectively to ensure compliance with regulations and the A-133 annual audits and maintaining and/or lowering our CDR. In addition, as changes occur with regulations, the availability of resources to the Office of Financial Aid is critical to its operation. These resources may include but not limited to office funding, staffing, and other as needed resources.

Goal 4: Automation of Federal and State Grant programs

- **Automating the delivery system for the Cal Grant program**
- **Improving the delivery and receipt of Federal Pell Grants to students**

2010-11 Cal Grant background information

It is the responsibility of the Grants Coordinator to administer the Cal Grant Program each academic year. Cal Grant is Need Based aid (Financial Need = Cost of Attendance (COA) – Expected Family Contribution (EFC)). The California Student Aid Commission (Commission) is the State Agency who administers the Cal Grant Program and is charged with ensuring the effective and efficient running of the program. Students attending a four-year institution, such as the University of La Verne, may be eligible for the following types of Cal Grant awards:

- | | |
|---|---|
| • Cal Grant A – Entitlement (E1) | Cal Grant B – Entitlement (E1) |
| • Cal Grant A – Transfer Entitlement (E2) | Cal Grant B – Transfer Entitlement (E2) |
| • Cal Grant A --Competitive (C1) | Cal Grant B – Competitive (C1) |
| • Cal Grant A – Competitive (C2) | Cal Grant B – Competitive (C2) |

For a student to be considered for a Cal Grant award, a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and a GPA Verification must be received by the Department of Education (the FAFSA) and Commission (the GPA verification) by the March 2nd deadline.

Every January, Banner is programmed to award tentative Cal Grant awards to new incoming undergraduate students based on that year's Cal Grant eligibility criteria. These awards are indicated on the students' preliminary Financial Aid Award Letter under the fund codes: CALAE (meaning Tentative Cal Grant A or CALBE (Tentative Cal Grant B/Tuition and Fee or Cal Grant B/Access Only)). These awards are *tentative* awards, meaning not actual awards.

A tentative award is somewhat flawed because Financial Aid systems staff is not able to extract the actual Total Income and Assets figures from the student's Institutional Student Information Record (After the student files a FAFSA, the institution receives an Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR) to accurately determine if the student meets the Total Income and Assets Ceilings for the academic year). Because of this incomplete information, some students are awarded a tentative Cal Grant but are not actually eligible. Also, some students awarded tentative Cal Grants were not eligible because they did not submit a FAFSA and/or GPA/Test Score by the March 2nd deadline, and were not considered for the grant by the Commission. It should be noted that a tentative Cal Grant Award is taken into consideration by Student Accounts, when determining a student's school bill.

NEW CAL GRANT AWARDS: Starting in late March (a) the Commission releases the Grant Payment Roster through Web Grants (their web-based site for reporting of payments, change in records, reporting of leave of absences, etc). This initial roster is a list of new Cal Grant Entitlement 1 or 2 tentative recipients; and (b) the Grants Coordinator begins reviewing

tentative Cal Grant awards in Banner against Web Grants tentative awards. (Students with new tentative Cal Grant awards and selected for verification (verification means financial information from the FAFSA is verified) are not reviewed until their verification process is complete and the new ISIR based on the verification is made current in Banner.) Students who meet the Cal Grant eligibility requirements Cal Grant award is then converted into an actual award (The exception are new Cal Grant – Transfer Entitlement recipients. Their awards are not changed to an actual award until the Grants Coordinator request and receive documents verifying specific eligibility requirements associated with transfer entitlement awards.) .

This process entails manually cancelling the tentative award and adding the actual award (for example, CALAE to CALA). It should also be noted that new Cal Grant Entitlement recipients are allowed to make corrections to their FAFSA any time during the months of January thru December. If the Financial Aid Office uploads and makes the ISIR with the corrections current, the Grants Coordinator needs to review the ISIR to be sure the student remains eligible or becomes eligible. A revised Financial Aid Award Letter is then requested, generated by Financial Aid – Systems and mailed to the student. If a student is awarded an actual CALB award, the student is instructed in the Financial Aid Packet to complete and submit a *Cal Grant B Access Authorization Form* (This form informs the Office of Student Accounts on how to apply the Cal Grant B Access funds.). This is a lifetime document that is collected by Student Accounts and the Financial Aid Office. The form is kept by the Student Accounts Office as required under state regulations.

Starting in April the Commission releases the Grant Payment Roster through Web Grants with new Cal Grant A and B Competitive Awards. The process is the same as the Cal Grant Entitlement¹ awards.

RENEWAL CAL GRANT AWARDS: Starting in January, Banner is programmed to rollover continuing La Verne students with a previous year Cal Grant disbursement to the upcoming academic year. For example, if a student received a 2010-11 CALA award in the amount of \$9708 and \$4854 disbursed, the \$4854 figure will rollover to the 2011-12 financial aid award as a tentative award—CALAE. The Grants Coordinator will manually cancel the 2011-12 tentative awards and replace them with actual awards based upon the student (a) meeting the renewal Income and Assets requirements, and (b) having at least 10% remaining Cal Grant eligibility. The exception is continuing students selected for verification. Their tentative award is not changed into an actual award until the verification process is completed and the new ISIR based on the verification is made current in Banner. At the end of June, the Commission starts adding renewal Cal Grant recipients to the Grant Roster through Web Grants.

DISBURSEMENT OF CAL GRANT FUNDS: Prior and during each term, the Grants Coordinator requests from Financial Aid systems staff a specific report with appropriate data needed to review each Cal Grant recipient's enrollment. The Cal Grant award will then be adjusted based on the student's enrollment so that the funds will disburse to the student's account. (Note: Cal Grant awards (new tentative and actual) are initially awarded based on anticipated full-time enrollment.) Student Accounts runs a disbursement job daily.

REPORTING OF CAL GRANT PAYMENTS, ETC: A couple of weeks prior to the date financial aid funds start disbursing to the students accounts, the Grants Coordinator starts

manually reporting the following information through Web Grants: payments, school change, verify high school graduation dates for new Entitlement 1 students, acknowledge transfer entitlement eligibility, leave of absences and non-attending students.

RECONCILIATION: The Cal Grant Program is reconciled after the end of each term (*fall, winter, spring, and summer*). This requires requesting a Banner versus Web Grants report from the systems staff. Any discrepancies are manually corrected. No Cal Grant payment adjustments for the academic year can be made after the Commission's year-end reconciliation deadline, in December.

Federal Pell Grant Work Flow

The Federal Pell Grant Program provides need-based grants to low-income undergraduate and certain post baccalaureate students to promote access to postsecondary education. Grant amounts are dependent on: the student's expected family contribution (EFC); the cost of attendance (as determined by the institution); the student's enrollment status (full-time, three-quarter time, half-time or less than part-time); and whether the student attends for a full academic year or less.

PELL GRANT AWARDED: The Federal Pell Grant Program is administrated through an automated Banner process. Each academic year, Federal Pell Grant criteria are programmed into Banner so that students with an official EFC who meets the eligibility requirements are automatically awarded. Preliminary and actual Financial Aid Award letters generated starting in January includes the Federal Pell Grant award to all eligible recipients. The Federal Pell Grant award is based on anticipated full-time enrollment. If there is a change in the student's rate code,

EFC, attendance status, enrollment status, or a professional judgment, Banner will recalculate the Pell Grant award provided the proper procedural steps are taken so that the recalculation occurs.

PELL GRANT ORIGINATIONS/DISBURSEMENTS PROCESS: Starting in August, the Financial Aid Systems Supervisor begins transmitting Pell Grant origination/disbursement batch files to the Department of Education through the Common Origination and Disbursement (COD) System. An origination record establishes a record for each potential Federal Pell Grant recipient at La Verne. A disbursement record tells COD how much was paid, or will be paid to, the student once a Pell disbursement is made. La Verne has up to 30 days to report the disbursement record to COD to avoid being in violation. The batch files are transmitted through EdConnect software. This process, for the upcoming year, is done on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. The COD Process is a simplified process for requesting, reporting and reconciling Title IV funds (i.e. Federal Pell Grant).

The COD Process is comprised of the following steps:

Pell Grant origination/disbursement records are submitted to COD	origination/disbursement records are received by COD and school sent receipt acknowledgement	Origination /disbursement records are processed by COD	Origination/disbursement record is Edited by COD	A full response file notification is sent to institution indicating the status of the records
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Once the Financial Aid-Systems Supervisor receives the full response file notice, the file is uploaded into Banner. Any reject or correction records are listed on COD reports and given to the Grants Coordinator to investigate, correct and resubmit.

Once a week (Tuesdays) the Systems Supervisors sends the Grants Coordinator a Pell Origination Report that identifies each student's Pell originations Action Code (Accepted, Rejected, and Corrected) status. All Pell originations with a rejected or corrected Action Code are reviewed and action taken so that the records can be resubmitted to COD.

PELL GRANT FUNDS DISBURSED IN BANNER: Federal Pell Grant awards for a term are disbursed based on the student's enrollment at the time of the census disbursement date. (This is the date an institution disburses financial aid funds for the term.) Student Accounts runs a disbursement job daily. Banner is set up to automatically adjust and disburse the corrected amount based on enrollment provided the student meets the disbursement criteria set up in the Banner System.

Although the Pell Grant award is automated, Pell Grant awards for students transferring to La Verne after the fall term, needs to be (and is) reviewed by the Grants Coordinator for accuracy. The Grant Coordinator will review the student's Pell payments for the academic year in COD before adjusting the Pell Grant award, if necessary.

The Grants Coordinator also reviews and resolves Multiple Reporting Records (meaning concurrent enrollment and eligibility over award), and POPs (Pell Over-award Process).

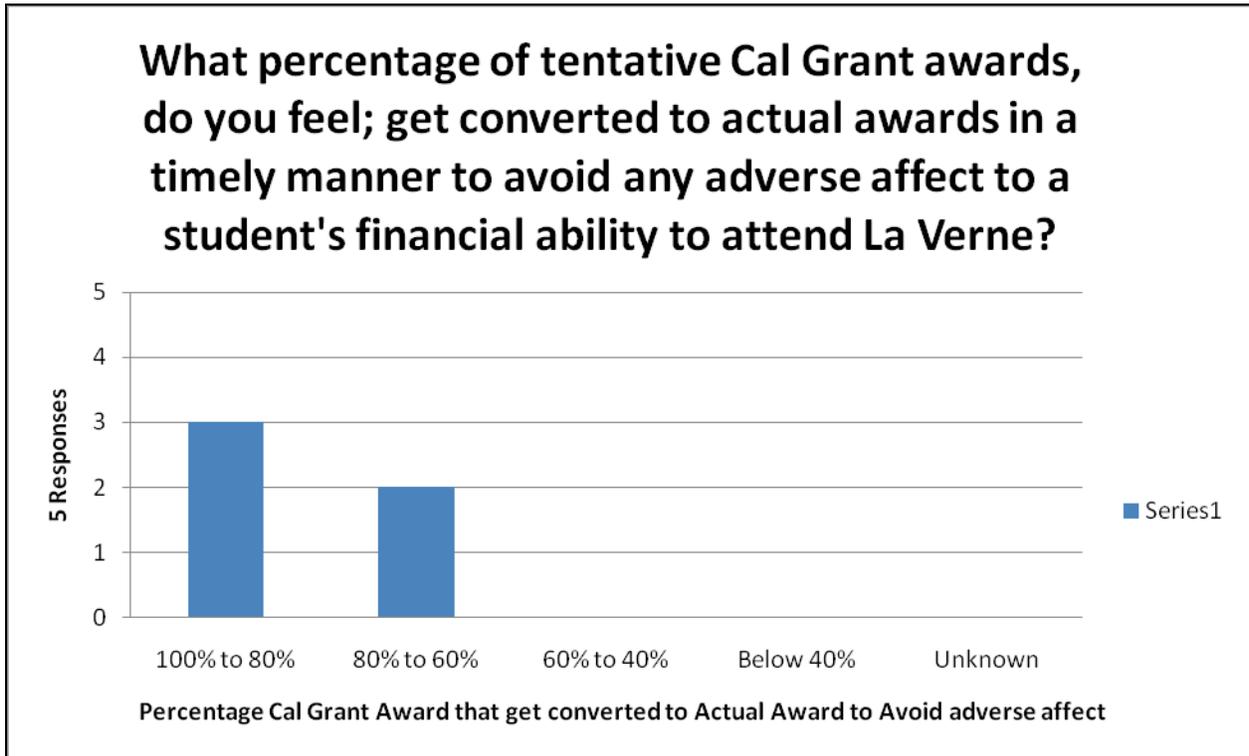
PELL GRANT RECONCILIATION: The Grant Coordinator must reconcile the Federal Pell Grant Program by September 30 following the end of the previous academic year. A post-deadline Processing is allowed for extended processing, audit adjustments, and resolution of POP situations.

Approximately 713 La Verne students are Cal Grant recipients. Over 6 million dollars in Cal Grant funds has been disbursed to La Verne students. The first part of the questionnaire consisted of questions pertaining to the Cal Grant program that is 100% manually administered (appendix C).

New students to La Verne are initially awarded a tentative Cal Grant. Once the Grant Coordinator manually determines if the student meets the eligibility requirements, the award is changed to an actual award or cancelled if determined not eligible.

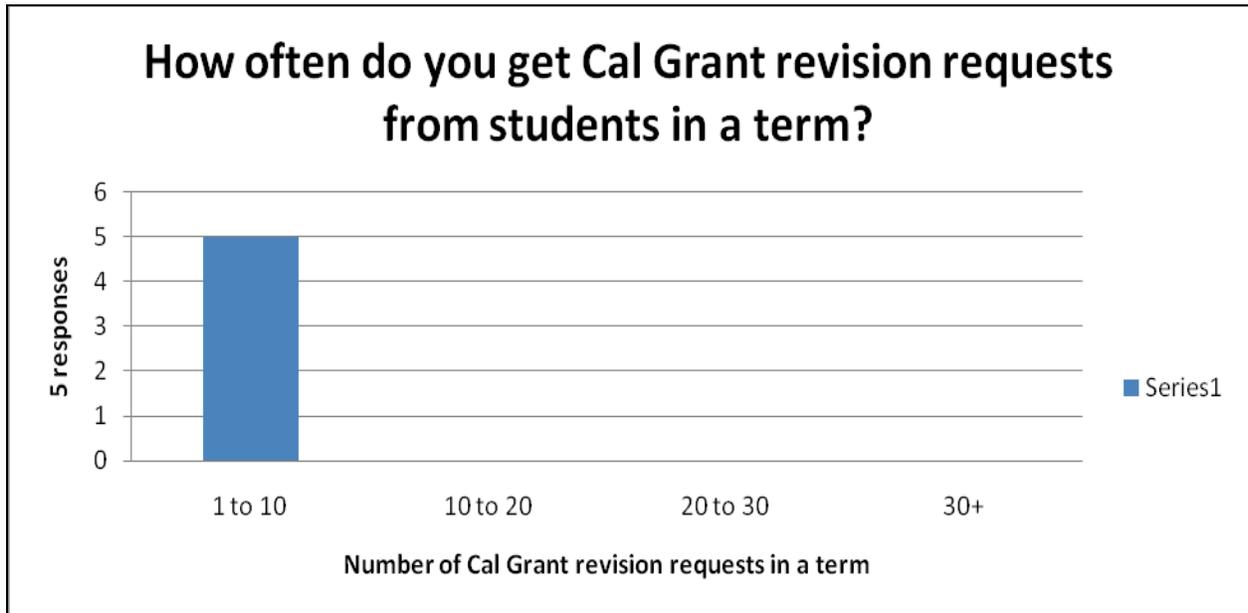
It is critical that tentative Cal Grant awards are converted to actual awards, as quickly as possible, to avoid any negative adverse affects to a student's financial ability to attend the University of La Verne. Three out of five Advisors indicated 80% to 100% of tentative Cal Grant awards got converted to actual awards in a timely manner; thus concluding up to 20% of students having some degree of financial difficulty due to ineligibility or having been awarded an incorrect Cal Grant type, etc. Two out of five Advisors felt no less than 60% of tentative Cal Grant awards were converted to actual awards in a timely manner. The questionnaire results suggest there needs to be improvement in awarding actual awards earlier in the awarding process (table #1).

Table #1



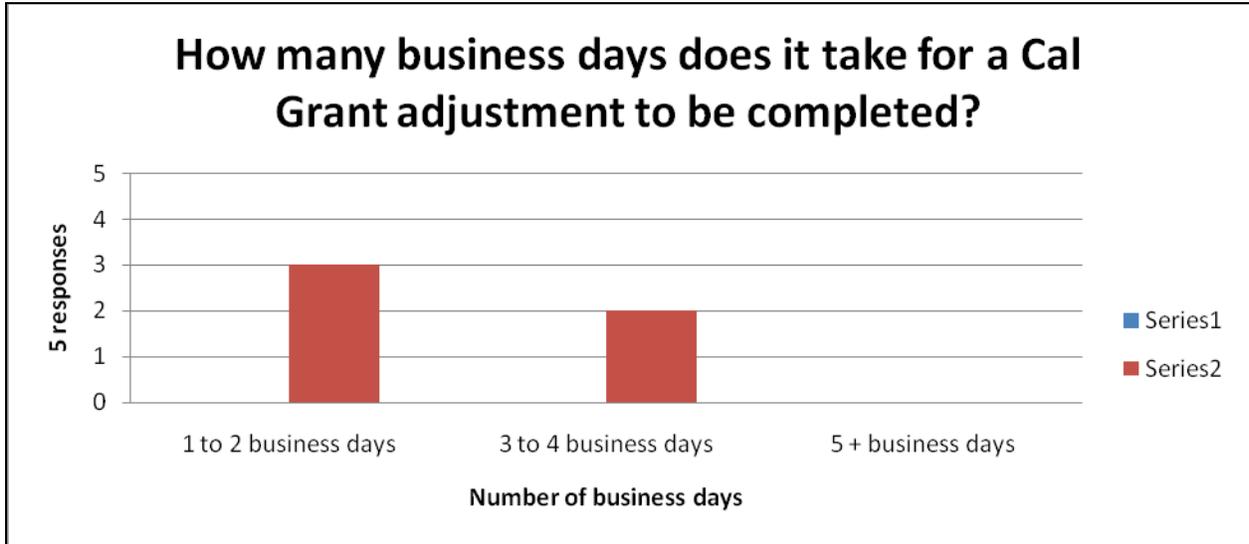
We then wanted to know how often revisions were requested in a term. (Note: Prior to Cal Grant funds being disbursed, the Grant Coordinator review units for the term and makes adjustments to the Cal Grant award for the term.) Five out of five Advisors received between one and 10 Cal Grant revision requests from students. No one reported receiving 10 or more revision requests (table #2).

Table #2



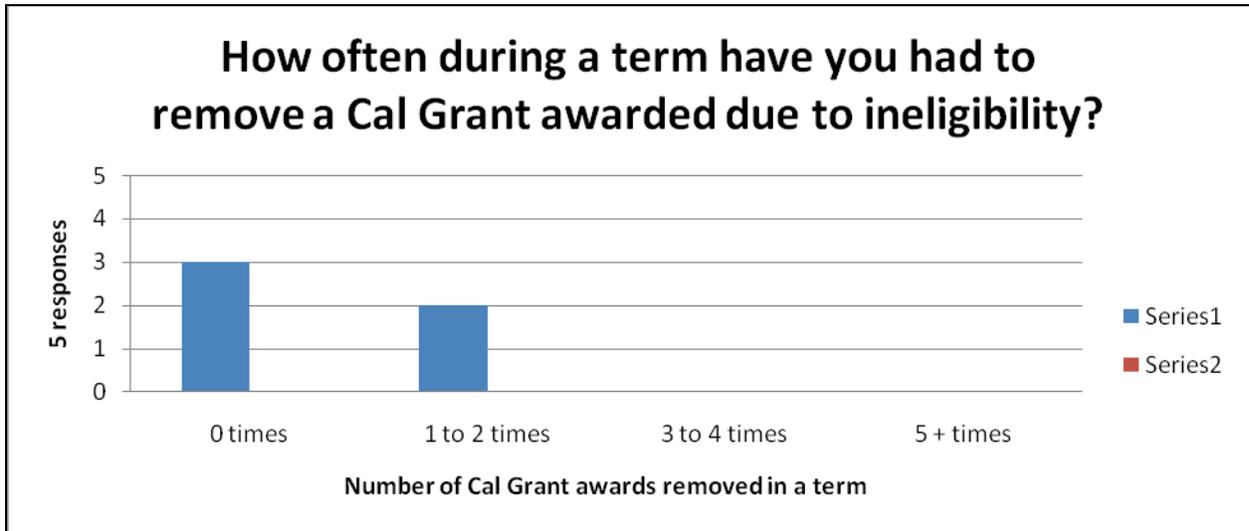
Revisions usually are necessary due to enrollment issues that affect the award amount. This would affect the term students more so than CAPA or Traditional students because they have a tendency to enroll less than full-time in at least one term during the academic year. When adjustments are made, three out of five Advisors stated, on the average, it takes one to two business days for the Grants Coordinator to adjust the Cal Grant award to the correct amount for the term. No Advisors felt it took more than five business days to update a student's award amount (table #3). A goal is to have the majority of revisions completed in no more than one to two business days.

Table #3



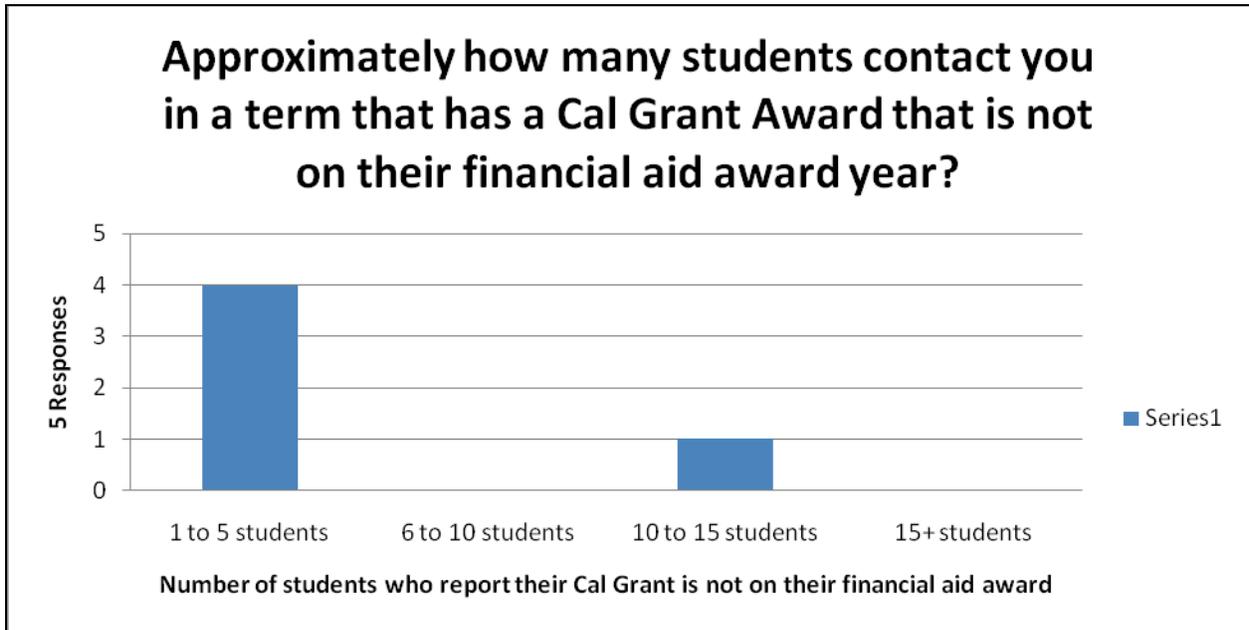
It is infrequent that a Cal Grant award is removed due to ineligibility but if an award was uploaded from the California Student Aid Commission’s database, it might occur less frequently. Three out of five Advisors never had to remove a Cal Grant award due to ineligibility in a term. And, two out of five Advisors only experience this situation one to two times in a term (table #4).

Table #4



The last Cal Grant accuracy question addresses students not being awarded a Cal Grant, when they have been determined to have met the eligibility requirements by the California Student Aid Commission, administer of the program. Only one Advisor stated between 10 to 15 students per term notified them that they have a Cal Grant but it is not on the financial aid award. The remaining four Advisors stated one to five students contact them in a term (table #5).

Table #5



No doubt this issue could be eliminated once the capability to automatically upload award information from the Commission’s database is possible. In most cases involving incoming transfer students, the reason their Cal Grant does not appear on their financial aid award is because they have not notified the Commission of a school change and thus does not appear on La Verne’s Cal Grant Roster.

The Cal Grant comment section of the questionnaire addresses the adequacy of communicating the Cal Grant Program to the students and the perception of the Cal Grant process.

Two Advisors felt more information could be included on our website regarding the Cal Grant program, such as:

- More information on how to apply
- The Cal Grant A and B Income and Asset ceilings

One Advisor responded that the current Cal Grant information on our website is adequate (two additional advisors agreed) but “students just don’t read.” Based on this information from the Advisor, perhaps the copy could be presented in a more innovative fashion on our website.

All five Advisors agreed that notifying students of their Cal Grant award through their award letter was efficient and three out of five Advisors felt overall the Cal Grant process was generally effective in its current manual process.

Only one Advisor responded to the final question regarding any adjustments/improvements to the Cal Grant procedures. The individual stated there should be “some method so that Advisors can tell students if they qualify (for a Cal Grant).”

2010-11 Pell Grant background information:

Approximately 2,195 La Verne students are Pell Grant recipients. Over 7 million dollars in Pell Grant funds has been disbursed to La Verne students.

The second part of the questionnaire addresses the Pell Grant program. The goal of the questionnaire was to discover the reasons for Pell Grant funds being removed after being initially awarded. Identifying these reasons will assist with developing recommendations for procedural changes to best reduce the removal of funds in the future.

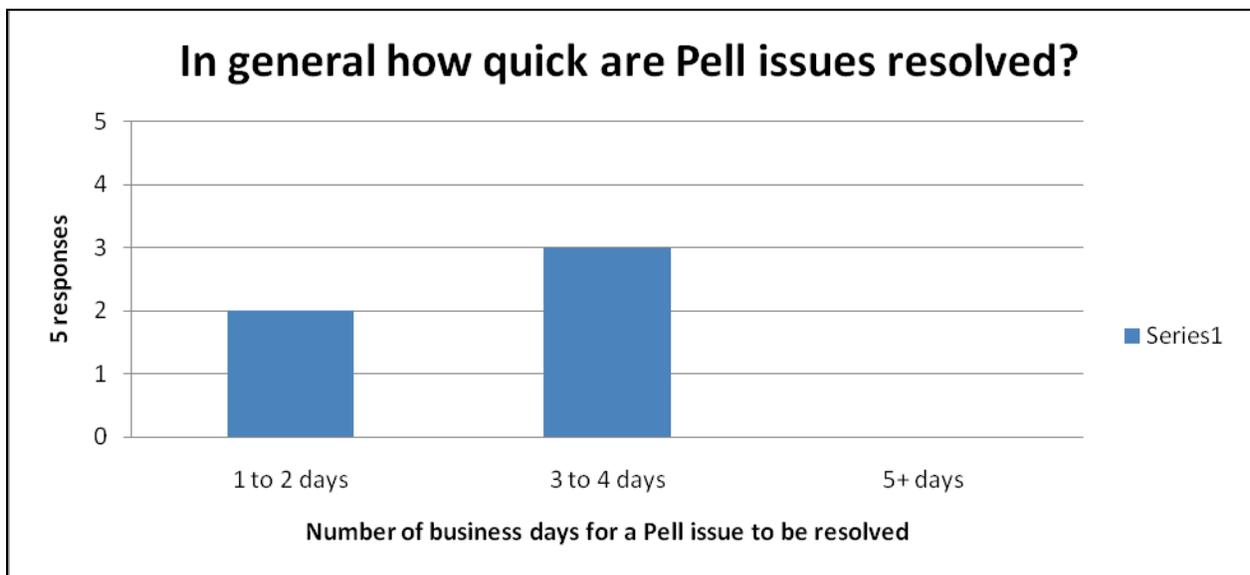
The Advisors found the top reason Pell Grant funds backed out was due to students changing from a Pell eligible program to a non-Pell eligible program at La Verne. The second

highest reasons were: (a) system errors; (b) change of enrollment (drops/withdrawals/not attending).

Most Advisors felt there was a lack of communication when it came to Pell disbursement problems due to system malfunctions, as well as, students not informing them of changes in their enrollment plans. The majority of the Advisors also felt that Pell issues were not communicated in a timely manner. These responses validate the need for better communication to be provided to the Advisors of Pell disbursement issues due to system malfunctions so that they can, in turn, be better prepared to handle the phone calls related to problems that arise due to the malfunction.

Three out of five Advisors felt Pell issues were resolved in three to four days, and the remaining two advisors answered one to two days (table #6).

Table #6



Pell Grant awarding and adjustment issues can sometimes take many steps to resolve and can involve outside (with students and other institutions) communications and actions from others.

Five out of five Advisors felt our website provided appropriate Pell Grant program information. Two Advisors suggest we include information on our website explaining situations that could (a) affect a student's Pell Grant eligibility and (b) include a Pell Grant Unit Requirement Chart.

All five Advisors had no recommendations in the areas of adjustments or improvements to the Pell Grant procedures or automation. This response is not altogether unexpected since the Advisors are looking at the Pell Grant process from their prospective *verses* Financial Aid staff personnel working behind the scenes utilizing COD, etc.

In conclusion, the questionnaire was successful in identifying, and in some cases validating, strong and weak procedural areas of the Cal Grant and Pell Grant programs. The final phase will be to make recommendations based on the results of this questionnaire and concerns identified, but not addressed in the questionnaire.

Action Recommendations:

- **Financial Aid Website**

It is important to make available as much useful information as possible to students. In the quest for going green, and in order to provide this information to students in a timely and cost-efficient manner, it is recommended that the Office of Financial Aid department's web pages include links to information on Cal Grant Income and Asset Ceiling charts. In addition, it is also recommended that information on how eligibility for the grants is determined would also be useful to have on the Web site. A concern was raised about how some students do not know where to look or do not have the time to read the information on the Web site. As a possible solution, a suggestion would be to include an announcement in the department newsletter that is

emailed to students or using the department's social media sites when new information about Cal Grant income, asset ceiling charts, and grant eligibility determination is available online.

Another recommendation would be to have a link for FAQs to answer selected topics, including Cal Grant and Pell Grant.

- **Communication**

Currently the Office of Financial Aid uses morning email notifications to communicate with the department's employees about who is out for the day, significant campus events, and what to expect the week to look like. This method of communication appears to be efficient and would be even more efficient by adding a few more items to make department members aware. It was suggested to use these morning emails to inform staff about any grant issues including problems that occur due to awarding, deadlines, and disbursements. Not only would this keep communication lines open, but it would utilize the method of communication that currently works well in the office.

- **Automate Cal Grant**

Automating Cal Grant will facilitate the exchange of electronic files between the Commission and La Verne-Financial Aid through report of payments, reconciliation, etc. With the automation of Cal Grant, it can provide the Financial Aid Advisors with resources and information needed to assist students with the program. Also, the Grants Coordinator would have the ability to better manage and transmit (through batches) school changes, address changes, leave of absences, and payments.

The Commission has available for students the site, WebGrants 4 Students (WGS), where they are able to log in to view and manage their Cal Grant online by letting them received updates,

make school changes, make address changes, make corrections, and post leave of absence requests. The Grants Coordinator would be able to identify a student with a Cal Grant award but not on our Grants Roster because the student did not list La Verne as their first school choice

- **Training**

A. The following training recommendations below will keep the Financial Aid staff members current regarding the grant programs and allow them to utilize systems tools to better inform and provide the best service possible to the students.

(1) Provide Cal Grant program training to the Financial Aid Advisors on eligibility requirements and processes.

(2) Provide COD and Web Grants access to the Financial Aid Advisors and guide them where to check online to determine student eligibility so they can service students with prompt and accurate information. This is especially useful when the Advisors are on the Queue phone service and/or student appointments.

B. Hire a Banner/Financial Aid Expert to:

(1) Evaluate overall Financial Aid Department Banner process functions to determine if Banner is being used to its upmost capabilities.

(2) Identify problems and make recommendations. Resolve Banner problems, for example, the removal of Pell Grant awards due to mid-year program changes and having to manually adjust Pell Grant awards for a term because Banner disbursed the incorrect award amounts.

C. Make all Financial Aid staff members aware of and encouraged to sign up for Sun Gard, Banner List Serve. This is a useful site to communicate and learn from other schools using Banner.

- **Banner Workflow**

Incorporate **Banner Workflow from SunGard Higher Education**. Banner Workflow creates an automatic, logical workflow process that simplifies, and directs the information and procedural steps of a program. The workflow tool would detect unnecessary procedures, as well as, procedures missing that would enhance the quality of our processes. This software will identify all work tasks, as well as, a short description and timeline associated with each work task. Using Banner Workflow will enable the Financial Aid Department to operate in a more efficient manner.

Using Banner Workflow would also address the problem of the Pell Grant response files not always being uploaded from COD, thus affecting reconciliation. This would eliminate the time it takes to discover why Banner and COD records do not match and the time spent searching for the file.

Goal 5: Reducing the Office of Financial Aid's carbon footprint

- **Establishing a paperless office by providing electronic transmission of communication to students and the La Verne community**

In an effort to reduce the Office of Financial Aid's carbon footprint, the goal of establishing a paperless office has been chosen. This office handles a variety of paperwork, from students as well as internal staff. And it generates a variety of letters that are sent to students in an effort to keep them informed of the current status of their financial aid award, or requesting documents

needed. The first letter sent to a student is a Welcome Letter. This letter is generated once a student's FAFSA application is received. Since its inception, which was in the Summer of 2004, we have sent a total of 38,495 Welcome Letters to students (Chart 1). However the Welcome Letter does not constitute the bulk of informational letters sent to students. There are many other types of letters that are mailed, such as the Missing Information Letter (MIL).

The Missing Information Letter (MIL) is designed to inform students of any missing information or document that the F. A. office needs in order to process their financial aid award. From the 2003/2004 academic year to now, approximately 50,447 had been mailed MIL's to students. From these letters, a student typically submits the requested documents, which then increases the amount of paperwork our office handles on a daily basis. Since the 2003/2004 academic year, students have submitted a total of 33,388 requirements for verification. Verification is when the Department of Education selects a student for further review. When a student is selected for verification, the office must review, at minimum, the family federal income tax returns, W-2's, household size and number in college (Charts 2 and 3).

One of the main forms of paper use is through the printing and mailing of Financial Aid Award Letters. These letters are sent to all admitted students who have been awarded any type of financial aid through the University of La Verne. From the 2003/2004 academic year through Spring 2011, this department generated and mailed a total of 86,624 Award Letters. This is a total of 726,744 pages printed (Chart 4). After receiving the award letter, if a student does not complete the required steps, another letter is sent: the Disbursement Missing Information Letter (DMIL).

The Disbursement Missing Information Letter (DMIL) advises students of additional steps

they must complete to be eligible to receive financial aid. This letter is sent once every three weeks to students with outstanding requirements. Students who receive financial aid will receive additional letters if they 1) are not making Satisfactory Academic Progress, 2) withdraw mid-term or when they graduate, or 3) cease to be enrolled in a minimum number of units for their program.

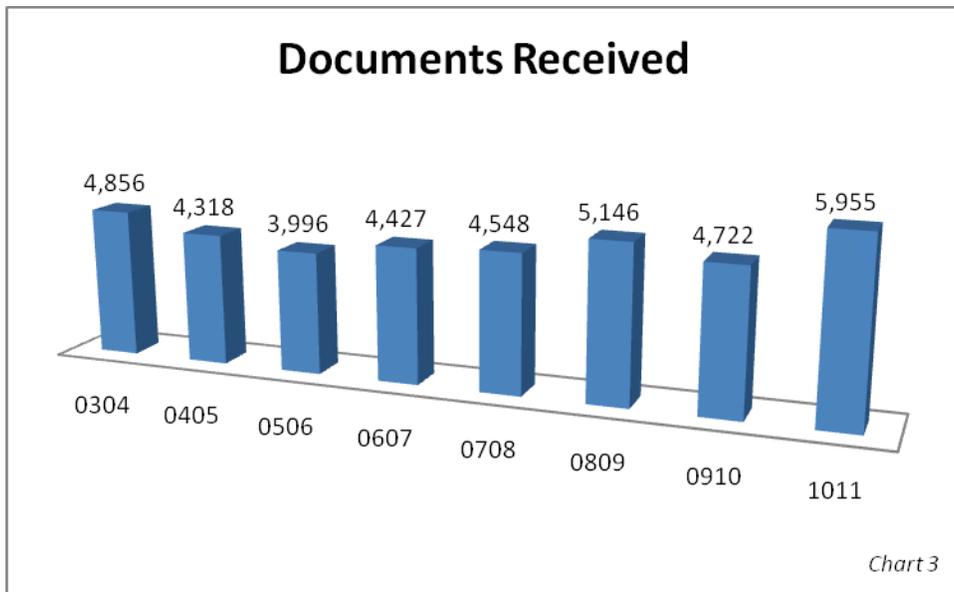
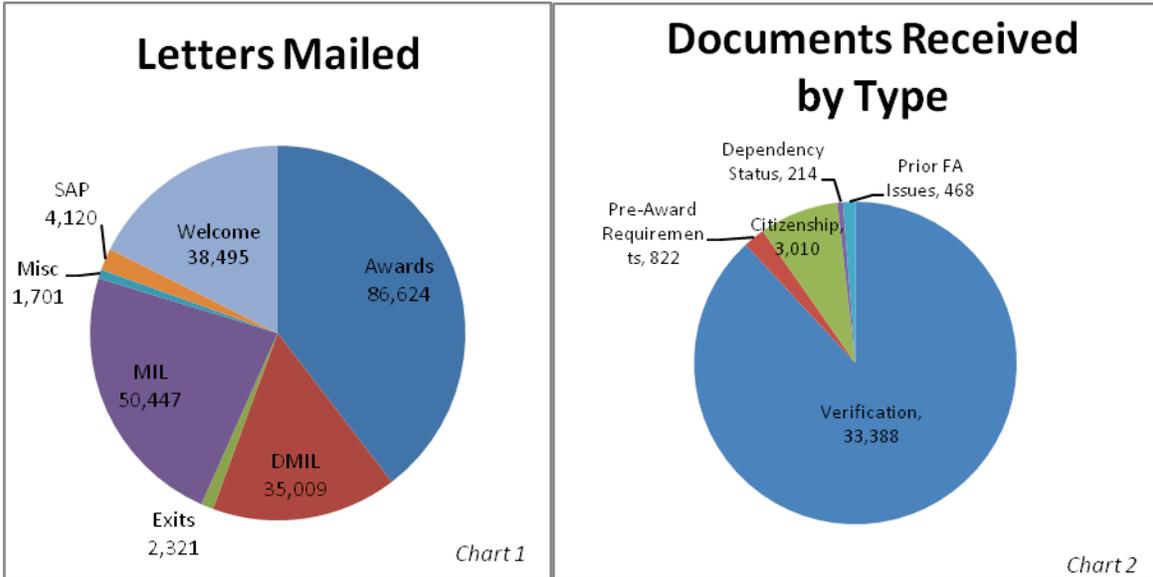
It is required by federal regulations to monitor students and be certain they are making Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP). All financial aid recipients must complete at least 67% of the courses for which they are registered. An undergraduate or Law school student must maintain a minimum 2.0 GPA; a graduate level or doctoral student must maintain a 3.0 GPA. The Office of Financial Aid must notify students when they are failing to do so, and if appropriate, allow them a chance to appeal the decision. If a student changes enrollment, or withdraws from all their classes mid-term, they will receive a letter advising them on how this impacts their financial aid. When a loan recipient graduates, withdraws, or drops below half-time status, it is a federal requirement to notify the student of federal exit counseling requirements. (See Chart 1 for an overview of letters mailed.)

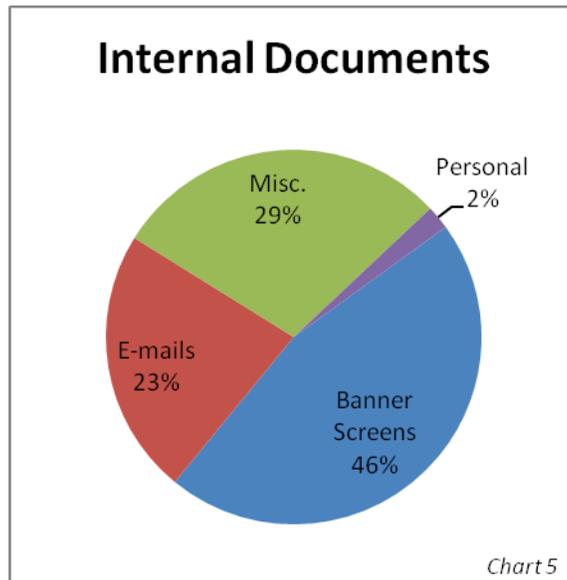
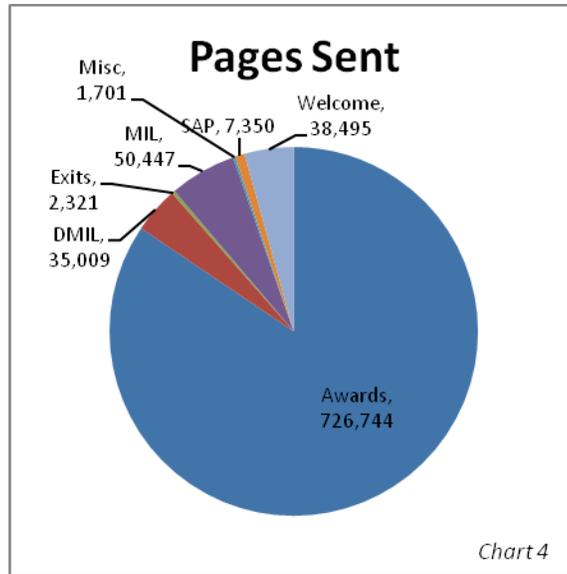
A survey was conducted of the financial aid staff (see Appendix D) and found that on a typical day approximately 196 documents are printed for internal use; this is over 47,800 pages annually. Such documents include Banner screen prints for students requesting award revisions, specific student information that must be kept in a hard file, reports to review, and e-mails containing important information are common documents printed by staff (Chart 5).

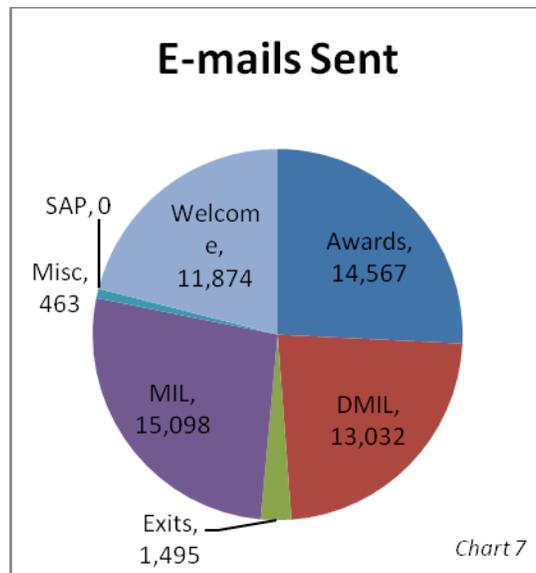
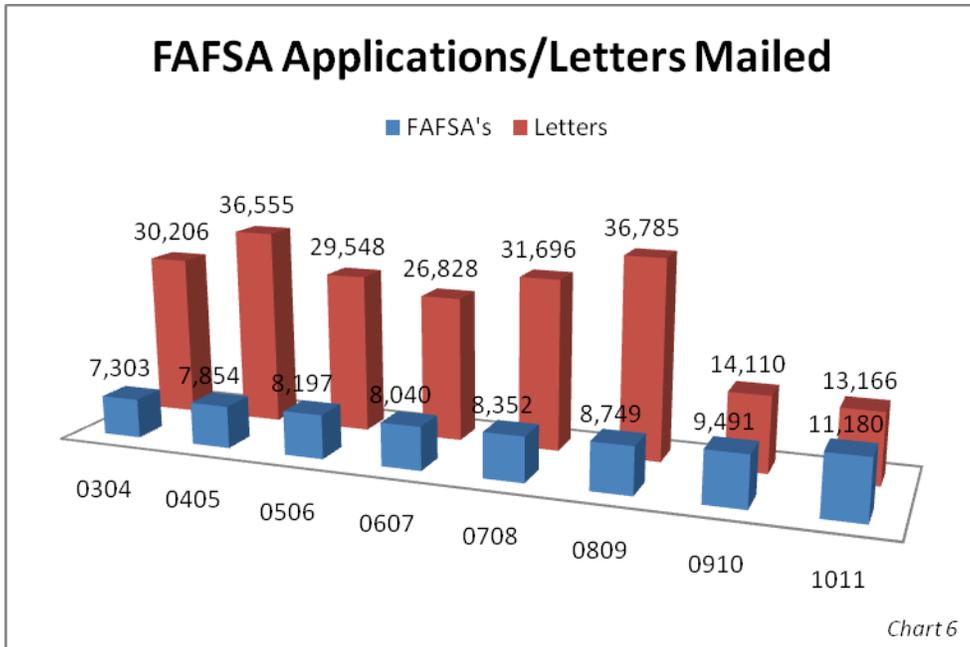
As the number of admitted students increases, it would be expected that the number of printed documents and mailed letters increases as well. However, as Chart 6 demonstrates, in the

2009/2010 and 2010/2011 award years, the Office of Financial Aid was successful in reducing the number of letters printed and mailed, even though the number of students applying for financial aid increased. In 2009, sending e-mail notifications to continuing students whenever possible became standard policy, rather than mailing letters. And as of April 2011, a total of 14,567 email Award Letters were sent to students, reducing paper consumption in one of the highest volume areas of letter generation. Email notifications are also being utilized to send students information regarding requirements for their financial aid (Chart 7). Although this department has begun to take steps in establishing a paperless office, there is still room for improvement, including many other innovative ideas that can be adopted.

Charts 1-7







Action Recommendations:

Banner Document Management Suite (BDMS)

The University has purchased the Banner Document Management Suite (BDMS) which allows documents to be scanned, linked to a student's record and stored electronically. Ideally this would allow staff to view documents from their personal workstation and would significantly reduce the amount of documents stored in a paper filing system. The Office of Financial Aid sent 4 staff members to in-depth 3-day training on BDMS, and though this department's procedures might be unique within the University, BDMS has not delivered what was promised. The hope was to scan documents as received and retrieve the documents at a later time to complete specific processes, specifically the verification process in which there is a requirement by the Department of Education to verify a family size and income.

The verification process requires multiple documents to be viewed simultaneously. BDMS allows a user to view only one document at a time and the print on the screen is small and hard to read making it extremely difficult to complete the process utilizing electronic documents. Not to mention, that it takes approximately an additional 4 minutes to scan and index documents for a typical student. An additional staff position, responsible for scanning and indexing all documents, will be required because currently there is no capacity to store hard copies of files as the number of admitted students had continued to increase. Unfortunately at this time, BDMS is not helping to reduce our carbon footprint.

- **Banner Workflow**

Workflow is the automation of a business process, in whole or part, during which documents, information, or tasks are passed from one participant to another for action, according

to a set of procedural rules. Workflow can automate, simplify, direct and manage the flow of information/tasks throughout an entire organization according to set business rules. For example, if a student is selected for verification after they have been awarded, the Verification Analyst would be notified via email when all the required documents are received. The analyst would then complete the verification process and another email would automatically be sent to an advisor to review the student's award for any changes. This eliminates the need to print out tracking reports and greatly reduces the time in which processes can be completed. The initiation of Banner workflow is in development at the University and requires appropriate parties to write processes and reports and for staff to be trained how to utilize this software.

- **Software Training to reduce the number of emails printed on a daily basis.**

Understanding the full functionality of different programs such as Outlook and One Note could help people utilize electronic storage and reminders rather than printing documents for future reference. Peer to peer training could be used during staff meetings as well as asking if OIT offers training in this specific area.

- **Receive FAX to an e-mail account**

Speak with Technology Services to determine the feasibility of receiving our fax communications through e-mail rather than the current system which prints the document immediately as it comes over the phone line. If received via e-mail, it may be possible for the document to be transferred directly to BDMS.

- **Bi-Tech and Banner Interface**

An interface between Bi-Tech (Payroll information software) and Banner (Financial Aid information software) would greatly reduce the paperwork between the Federal Work Study

Coordinator and the Payroll Office, and reduce the hours required in hiring and managing employment for our Federal Work Study and Student Employees. A student is hired in Bi-Tech. But since the Office of Financial Aid staff does not have access to Bi-Tech, all hiring information must also be added into Banner in order to better service La Verne students and provide them with accurate up-to-date information. Each pay period, a report is generated showing the earnings for every Federal Work Study (FWS) student. The earnings must be manually entered into Banner so staff and students know the amount earned to date and are able to determine the remaining amount of Federal Work Study funds available for the student to earn. At a minimum, a program to upload information between Bi-Tech and Banner is needed.

- **Online Timecards**

Currently, 1,000+ student employee time cards are printed per month. This department is in the early stages of creating a student time card online, similar to what is used for classified employees. In order to begin this new process, a duplicate set-up must be created as it was for classified employees, but for student use. OIT will need to create between 7-10 installs (icons) that the student will see when they log into any La Verne computer system. One purpose for creating an online time card is to reduce paper consumption because it will eliminate the need to generate time cards each pay period. This will save a considerable amount of resources in time, money, paper and toner. However, the student online timecard system being initiated will still require the supervisor to print, sign and submit a paper timecard to payroll. Ideally, a timecard system that allows for electronic submission of timecards would be more effective.

- **Enabling Electronic Submission of Documents**

Many documents that are submitted to the Office of Financial Aid require a signature from

the student and/or parent(s). Enabling students to submit documents via the student self-service portal MyLaVerne, allowing them to electronically sign the document(s), and then transferring the document to BDMS may eliminate the need to print and scan the documents.

The Office of Financial Aid is dedicated to establishing a paperless office and reducing its carbon footprint. However, it will take time and research in order to implement all these recommendations. The BDMS system is something that could be beneficial to the goal of reducing paper consumption, yet with the current technical system issues, it could take more time to completely and successfully implement this recommendation. Banner Workflow and software training can be achieved through training our staff thoroughly. Other recommendations, such as the e-Fax, Submission of Online Documents, Bi-Tech and Banner Interface, and online Timecards may require more time and research to fully implement them. Ultimately, F. A. staff will work to implement, when possible, each action recommendation so that a paperless and eco-friendly office is established.

VI. Action Recommendations Summary

Goal 1: Providing timely and effective service to students and staff

- Continue training within the office and university community.
- Continue the availability of resources that will allow staff opportunities to attend Department of Education and state association trainings.

Goal 2: Improving communication to the La Verne community

- The Office of Financial Aid has recently begun:
 - a quarterly newsletter
 - developed a Facebook and Twitter page,
 - and has posted informational videos on YouTube.
- Have an annual workshop, in which other departmental staff would be invited, to review and teach financial aid basics.

Goal 3: Adhering to Federal regulations

- With changing regulations, continue to provide resources to the Office of Financial Aid. May include, but is not limited to office funding, staffing, and other resources as needed.

Goal 4: Automation of Federal and State Grant programs

- Continuing to provide accurate information via website, and communication via e-mail to students
- Work on automating Cal grant and incorporating workflow.

Goal 5: Reducing the Office of Financial Aid's carbon footprint

- By implementing the following software and process this goal can be achieved:
 - Banner Document Management Suite (BDMS),
 - Banner Workflow
- Software training to reduce the number of emails printed on a daily basis,
- Receive Faxes to an e-mail account
- Establish Bi-Tech and Banner Interface
- Online Timecards and enabling electronic submission of documents.

VII: Appendix

Appendix A



CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

April 6, 2011

Dear College and University Presidents:

During the past two years, we have witnessed the largest increase in financial aid in the history of the federal student aid programs. As a result, record numbers of students are enrolling in higher education programs, reflecting the increased accessibility of postsecondary education.

Your financial aid administrators play a vital role in ensuring students can access higher education and that your institutions remain in compliance with federal student aid program regulations. I am writing this letter to articulate my appreciation for their efforts and congratulate them on their continued success.

As you may know, President Obama signed legislation in March 2010 that called for all federal student loans to be originated by the Department of Education through a program called the William D. Ford Direct Loan Program (Direct Loan Program). This legislation required financial aid offices at many postsecondary institutions to transition to the Direct Loan Program.

At the same time many schools were working to ensure a smooth transition to the Direct Loan Program, financial aid administrators were faced with an unprecedented increase in student aid applications. In addition, your financial aid staff were responsible for ensuring that your schools were in compliance with several new student aid regulations designed to improve the integrity of the student aid programs. I acknowledge that collectively, these changes presented significant challenges for your staff.

Nevertheless, your financial aid administrators were able to quickly adapt and continued to seamlessly and effectively administer the financial aid programs on your respective campuses. Their dedication and professionalism throughout this period is commendable. As a result of their efforts, today, any student who requires federal student aid to attend a participating institution of higher learning in this country can generally receive it.

Current regulations governing the administration of the federal student aid programs require schools to supply an adequate number of qualified persons to administer the federal student aid programs (Section 668.16(b)) and to provide adequate financial aid counseling to eligible students who apply for student aid through these programs (Section 668.16(h)).

Office of Financial Aid

I encourage you to provide your financial aid offices with the necessary support to ensure that they are properly trained and staffed. This will ensure that your financial aid professionals can assist all students as they seek the financial aid assistance required to make their post secondary educational dreams a reality.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William J. Taggart". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

William J. Taggart
Chief Operating Officer
Federal Student Aid

cc: Financial Aid Administrator

Appendix B

Survey Questions:

1. The Office of Financial Aid communicates with you in a timely manner.
2. Your questions and concerns are efficiently addressed.
3. You feel comfortable approaching our staff with questions or concerns.
4. The information that the Office of Financial Aid communicates is helpful.
5. The office of Financial Aid should communicate more information.
6. Our offices are aligned in the desire to put student needs first.
7. Our offices work well together to resolve student issues.
8. I work in:
9. Comments/Suggestions

Appendix C

To: Financial Aid Advisors

Please complete this questionnaire regarding our Cal Grant and Pell Grant delivery and receipt procedures. This information is requested to assist us in determining how efficient these grants are currently being processed and identify areas for improvement by changing procedures and through automation. Thanks in advance for your participation and input!

CAL GRANT PROGRAM

1. How often do you get Cal Grant revision requests from students in a term (circle one)
1 - 10
10 - 20
20 - 30
30+

2. How many business days does it take for a Cal Grant adjustment to be completed? (circle one)
1 – 2 business days
3 – 4 business days
5+ business days

3. How often during a term have you had to remove a Cal Grant awarded due to ineligibility (circle one)
0 times
1 – 2 times
3 – 4 times
5 + times

4. What percentage of tentative Cal Grant awards, do you feel; get converted to actual awards in a timely manner to avoid any adverse affect to a student’s financial ability to attend La Verne? (circle one)
100% - 80%
80% - 60%
60% - 40%
Below 40%
Unknown

5. Which issues do you find transfer students who have a Cal Grant encounter when they transfer to La Verne? (circle answers that apply)

Their Cal Grant award is not on their financial aid award letter from La Verne

They have to notify us of their Cal Grant eligibility

They have not informed CSAC of a school change

Write in your answer if not listed above _____

6. Approximately how many students contact you in a term that has a Cal Grant award that is not on their financial aid award letter? (circle one)

No students

1 – 5 students

6 – 10 students

10 – 15 students

15+ students

7. Does the financial aid website provide informative up to date information regarding the Cal Grant Program (e.g. program descriptions, deadlines, links to CSAC, FAQs)? What changes or additional information should be added?

8. Do you think the current method (students are notified of their award through their award letter) of notifying students of their Cal Grant eligibility is efficient?

Yes

No. *If your answer is “no” explain why below:*

9. Please provide your perception of the current overall Cal Grant process.

10. What adjustments/improvements (e.g. procedures, automation, etc) would be helpful to see in the future?

11. What adjustments/improvements (e.g. procedures, automation, etc) would be helpful to see in the future?

PELL GRANT PROGRAM

1. What do you find are the top 3 reasons Pell Grant awards are backed out?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

2. Do you feel that Pell issues that arise are communicated to you in a timely manner? (circle one)

Yes.

No. *If your answer is "no" explain why below:*

3. In general how quick are Pell issues resolved? (circle one)

1 – 2 days

3 – 4 days

5 + days

4. Does the financial aid website provide informative up to date information regarding the Pell Grant Program (e.g. program descriptions, requirements)? What changes or additional information should be added?

Appendix D

*In an effort to achieve our goal of **reducing the Office of Financial Aid's carbon footprint**, our group has put together a survey to gather information from our staff. We would appreciate your partaking in this project and welcome any input or comments from our fellow colleagues with regard to this goal. Thank you and have a great day!*

-Group 5



- 1) Which printer do you utilize most?
 - a. Front counter system printer
 - b. Personal Desktop printer
 - c. Back Office system printer
 - d. Systems printer (upstairs)
- 2) Do you print more often in color, or in black and white?
 - a. Color
 - b. Black & White
- 3) Please list the 4 types of documents you print most on a daily basis:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
- 4) Please use this sheet to track the types of documents you print on an average day:
 - a. Banner
Screens: _____
 - b. Emails: _____

 - c. Misc: _____

 - d. Personal: _____

- 5) How much of what you're printing is kept for future reference? How much is shredded?
 - a. Kept: _____
 - b. Shred: _____
- 6) How do you think the Office of Financial Aid can improve our goal of **establishing a paperless office**?

Office of Financial Aid

7) Comments:
