Program Review Summary Page

For Academic & Student Support Programs

Support Program(s) under Review: Financial Aid

Term/Year of Review: Spring 2022

Summary of Program Review:

A.   Major Findings

   1.   **Strengths:**

> The number of students receiving financial aid remains stable. More than 65% of the college student population received some form of financial aid, and during the Coronavirus Pandemic that number increased as students who did not apply for financial aid became eligible to receive Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) Emergency Financial Aid grants. Financial aid applicants overall mirrored the institution rate for retention and successful completion, while students with NVC Promise Scholarships and Work Study had significantly higher rates of retention and successful completion.
> The Financial Aid staff, with years of knowledge, skills, and little turnover, provide consistent expertise to advise and support students, faculty, staff, and the community. The staff work together as a team and collaborates with other departments to provide exceptional support and assistance to students to help them access necessary financial aid resources to reduce their out-of-pocket educational expenses so they can successfully complete their educational goal. The services provided by the Financial Aid Office directly support the College mission statement and the department mission statement.
>
> The Financial Aid unit adapts quickly to change, implementing Financial Aid Self-Service and Ocelot Chatbot, before the COVID-19 National Emergency, and before the campus implemented other Student Affairs Self-Service and Chatbot functions. These changes were made to better serve students, so they are empowered with the tools necessary to easily access their up-to-date financial aid status, awards, missing documents, etc. through Financial Aid Self-Service. Their general questions are answered 24/7 with Ocelot Chatbot. Financial Aid implemented BankMobile disbursements so students can receive their financial aid refunds more quickly through electronic deposits. This process also reduced the workload and cost of producing and distributing checks in the Business and Finance Office. The Financial Aid/EOPS Department was the first department on campus to transition to Electronic Forms through DocuSign. When the campus closed for in-person service due to the COVID19 Pandemic, financial aid paper and pdf forms were converted to DocuSign electronic forms, making it easier for students to complete and submit electronically. The Financial Aid/EOPS Department was one of the first departments to utilize Cranium Café through ConexEd to provide virtual services to students (virtual lobby for

general questions and help, and virtual appointments via video and phone with Financial Aid Specialists for more complex assistance and assistance with FAFSA/CADAA completion). The Financial Aid unit also utilized Zoom to conduct our staff meetings and Cash for College student workshops. In addition, financial aid staff adapted quickly to state and federal regulatory changes, verification flexibilities, and pandemic related withdrawal calculations. Finally, the Financial Aid unit expanded its processing beginning May 2020 to include all NVC students who met federal or state criteria to disburse an additional $4.1 million in emergency financial aid grants to students. Financial Aid staff will continue to process emergency financial aid grants for NVC students until funds are exhausted.

2. **Areas for Improvement:**

- Sufficient staff to perform the duties necessary to maintain administrative capability and compliance requirements, and still have time available for in- and outreach activities and regular student communications and workshops. Financial aid is a complex system of regulations, requirements, processes and, with COVID-19, yearly changes, that imposes additional duties and increases workloads for the staff in the financial aid unit, regardless of NVC's enrollment levels. Without additional staff to maintain compliance and manage the increased workload, the financial aid unit had to reduce or stop providing non-critical services, such as financial aid orientations, on-campus loan entrance/exit counseling sessions, financial literacy workshops, delinquency and default management processes, in-reach/outreach services, updated student handbooks, and regular informational communications.
- Increased financial aid presence at College events and outreach activities.
- Improve on-campus in-reach and presentations to increase financial aid awareness for all students, but especially among underserved populations, and to increase the number of students receiving financial aid resources. Examples include classroom presentations, campus events, workshops for specialized groups like Puente, Umoja, and Kasaysayan Pilipinx Learning Communities, EOPS, MESA, Athletes, Dreamers, Veterans, and other specialized programs.
- Improve communications using group workshops and informational videos. Workshops can be scheduled once a month to teach students how to effectively use these services. Short videos can be created teaching tools and to provide an alternate medium for different learning styles.
- Improve interdepartmental communications to inform staff, faculty, and administrators of available financial aid programs and services, current processes and deadlines, and to improve the reliability of information provided to students outside of the Financial Aid Office.
- Automate manual processes to decrease time from application to award so students receive timely financial assistance, and to free-up time for staff to provide direct student assistance. This improvement will require hiring an IT programmer consultant to create custom programming, develop calculated fields, and write new subroutines for Colleague.

- Develop a more efficient work study clearance process.
- The Financial Aid/EOPS/Veterans Services Office space needs to be updated. The Financial Aid Office looks shabby with worn and bubbled carpet and stained walls and ceiling tiles. When it rains, the gutters overflow and leak on the ceiling, causing damage to the ceiling tiles at the front counter and in the computer lab and to the computers and other equipment below the tiles..
- The new NVC housing complex will increase the need for financial aid and specifically, student and parent loans. Students will need access to funds quickly to buy books, pay tuition/fees/housing costs, and for personal needs. The increased need for fast money and 24/7 services will require more staff and automated systems to support student needs and demands.

3. **Projected Growth, Stability, or Viability:**

The Financial Aid Program is in a state of stability. Despite the decrease in student enrollment at NVC, the number of students who applied for and received some form of financial aid remained stable over the three-year period. There is not a significant decline. In fact, the number of students receiving the NVC Promise increased by 604% over the three years since its inception in 2018/2019. Sixty-five percent (65%) of students attending NVC received some form of financial aid. With the availability of additional federal and state financial aid resources and the expanded eligibility requirements for some programs, more students will become eligible for financial assistance.   It is expected that with on-campus housing, the need for financial aid will expand, especially in Federal Student Direct Loan and PLUS (parent loan) processing. In addition, the changes made by the FAFSA Simplification Act and in how federal Title IV eligibility will be calculated and determined for the 2024-2025 academic year are expected to increase the number of middle-income students who could qualify for financial assistance. Major changes to the financial aid system in Colleague will be necessary, and training for staff is anticipated. The current decrease in the number of Work Study students is tied directly to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Work Study program is expected to return to its pre-pandemic size as more students return to campus for in-person classes.

B. **Program's Support of Institutional Mission and Goals**

1. **Description of Alignment between Program and Institutional Mission:**

The College Mission: Napa Valley College prepares students for evolving roles in a diverse, dynamic, and interdependent role. The college is an accredited open-access, degree-and-certificate granting institution that is committed to student achievement through high-quality programs and services that are continuously evaluated and improved. The college serves students and the community in the following areas: transfer courses, career-technical education and training, basic skills, and self-supporting contract education and community education classes.

The Financial Aid/EOPS Department Mission: The mission of the Financial Aid/EOPS programs is to promote student access and success by providing academic support and financial assistance to eligible students who want to pursue higher education. Programs include Financial Aid, EOPS, CARE, CalWORKs, Veterans Services, Foster Youth, Scholarships, Educational Talent Search (ETS TRIO) and Student Support Services (SSS TRIO).

The Financial Aid unit provides programs and services that are in alignment with both the College and Financial Aid/EOPS Department Mission.

2. **Assessment of Program's Recent Contributions to Institutional Mission:**

Services provided:
- Individualized appointments - in-person one-on-one appointments scheduled in advance, same day appointments, walk-in, phone, and by email. Due to the COVID_19 pandemic, adjustments were made to offer virtual appointments (video or phone) for in-depth, complex questions, and virtual lobby assistance for quick general questions, through Cranium Café.
- Walk-in self-service computer lab with printer to support online student learning.
- Outreach and in-reach presentations are conducted throughout each year to bring financial aid awareness to the community, prospective students and parents, and current students. Due to COVID-19, services transitioned to virtual Zoom presentations.
- Online forms – Paper and pdf forms were converted to online forms with electronic signatures using DocuSign, so students can easily complete and submit required documents to the Financial Aid Office. Forms are available on the Financial Aid Forms website or in Self Service on the missing documents page.
- Financial Aid Self Service implemented – students can view missing documents, access electronic forms, view SAP status and description, view award information, print their award letter, view disbursements, access resource links, and more.
- Ocelot Chatbot implemented – allows students to ask the Stormy (AI) Chatbot general, financial aid, and Veterans questions 24/7
- BankMobile Disbursement implemented – allows students to select from one of two electronic financial aid refund options, allowing them easier and quicker access to their financial aid funds.
- Work Study – The NVC Work Study program provides paid work experience for students who are enrolled at least half-time. This program helps to prepare students for success in a demanding workforce. As students prepare themselves to earn a college degree, they also gain valuable work experience that will help create a professional graduate ready to enter the workforce prepared for its demands.
- NVC Promise Scholarship Program – pays enrollment fees and semester fees for CA Resident/AB540 first-time full-time students who recently graduated from high school. This scholarship may be available for a second year if the student maintains full-time enrollment and achieves a minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA in their first year.

3. **Recent Program Activities Promoting the Goals of the Institutional Strategic Plan and Other Institutional Plans/Initiatives:**
- Implemented Electronic Forms (DocuSign).

- Implemented Ocelot Chatbot for 24/7 service to general financial aid questions.
- Implemented Financial Aid Self-Service for 24/7 view of up-to-date financial aid status, awards, missing documents, and hyperlinks for electronic DocuSign forms for easy submission.
- Disbursed more than $4.1 million in Federal and State emergency grants to students to reduce financial hardship during the COVID19 National Emergency.
- Zoom Cash for College workshops conducted to provide financial aid awareness, answer questions, assist with FAFSA/CADAA completion to students, high school students, and parents.
- Utilized Cranium Café (ConexEd) to provide virtual services (lobby, video, phone appointments) to assist students.
- Participated in Student Affairs Enrollment Task Force monthly meeting.
- Kept office computer lab open for student use during the Pandemic, so they could view FA Self Service, submit the FAFSA/CADAA, print documents, and attend classes, etc.
- Assisted with Financial Literacy workshops in partnership with Travis Credit Union.

C. New Objectives/Goals:

- Increase in-reach efforts to bring greater financial aid awareness to students, especially in the underserved population, and to increase the number of financial aid applicants and recipients across the different financial aid programs and student population.
- Increase communication to the College Community using newsletters, social media campaigns, short videos of financial aid processes, and other media to inform students and the College community of financial aid events and services.
- Continue the development of the CCC Colleague Consortium CA State Grants Interface customization with Ellucian to include Cal ISIR imports and processing.
- Hire a Front Counter Receptionist to provide a friendly, welcoming atmosphere and provide additional supportive services. This position would also provide clerical support for the Scholarship program and other programs in the department as needed.
- Replace the Financial Aid Specialist position lost due to retirement to maintain administrative capability and perform essential duties within the Financial Aid unit.
- Work with the Career Center to integrate Work Study position recruitment into the Career Center jobsite so students searching for work are informed of available on-campus jobs through the Work Study program.
- Identify interventions that could lead to improved course completion rates for financial aid applicants (workshops, orientations, student handbooks, etc.).
- Participation College outreach efforts, and Student Affairs Enrollment Taskforce.
- Invite Counselors to brown bag lunch type meetings or provide annual "newsletter" to provide important information about financial aid student eligibility.
- Meet annually with Admissions & Records staff to coordinate related services to students and update each other on new information/processes/regulations.

D. Description of Process Used to Ensure "Inclusive Program Review"

- Discussed at all Staff meeting.
- Meeting with RPIE with staff from all areas of Financial Aid/EOPS/CalWORKs/Veterans to determine data type we would want to see for Program Review.
- Each staff member was asked to review the data and complete the program review.
- Each unit will then meet to review and discuss input before final Program Review is finalized and submitted.

I.   PROGRAM DATA

A. Number of Students Served by Program

	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	Change over 3-Year Period
Financial Aid Applicants	5,216	5,006	5,187	-0.6%
Promise	92	539	648	604%
EOPS	306	305	274	-10.5%
Work Study	105	102	72	-31.4%
Overall Veterans	578	583	467	-19.2%
Veterans	*289*	*262*	*202*	*-30.1%*
Dependents	*289*	*321*	*265*	*-8.3%*
CalWORKs	23	22	17	-26.1%
CARE	13	18	15	15.4%
Source: Data provided by Programs				

RPIE Analysis: Among the programs listed above, the majority of programs decreased over the last three years.

The following programs experienced a decrease of more than 10%:
- *Work Study (-31.4%)*
- *CalWORKs (-26.1%)*
- *Veterans (-19.2%)*
- *EOPS (-10.5%)*

The number of Promise Grant students and CARE students increased by 604% and 15.4%, respectively.

Program Reflection:

The Work Study program suffered a steep decline in 2020/2021, most likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic, when classes were moved from in-person to online. Many departments on campus no longer needed in-person student workers when the campus closed to in-person services, and student workers were less inclined to work on-campus due to childcare issues and concern for their and their family members' health and safety. The decline in Work Study may also be attributed to a vast number of classes being held remotely, thereby reducing the number of positions available due to the Pandemic. The current inflation rate, strong job market, current low hourly rate, and the decrease of student enrollment also contribute to the low levels of Work Study student numbers. However, work study numbers are expected to increase as students return to on-campus in-person learning.

Financial Aid resources for students expanded during the COVID19 National Emergency causing a slight increase in the previously declining applicant population. More resources from the Federal and State government, such as the Federal Emergency Grants (HEERF I, II, III), verification waivers, and eligibility flexibilities from the Department of Education were made available to students in need. However, these resources from the CARES Act of 2020, Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of

2021, and American Rescue Act of 2021, also created additional work for the Financial Aid staff due to the changing criteria and requirements necessary to process and disburse funds to greater numbers of students.

NVC Promise Scholarship recipients continued to rise as recent high school graduates chose to attend NVC and take advantage of the "First two years free" option for first-time, full-time students.

B. Demographics of Students Served by Programs, Three-Year Proportions

	Three-Year Proportion of Financial Aid Applicants	Three-Year Proportion of Promise	Three-Year Proportion of EOPS	Three-Year Proportion of Veterans	Three-Year Proportion of Work Study	Three-Year Proportion at the Institutional Level
Number of Students	9,052	1,076	890	513	188	13,827
Gender						
Male	*37.5%*	42.6%	41.0%	81.9%	39.9%	43.0%
Female	62.5%	57.4%	59.0%	*18.1%*	60.1%	57.0%
Race/Ethnicity						
Asian	*2.9%*	*1.8%*	2.7%	3.1%	8.0%	3.4%
African American/ Black	8.1%	*2.6%*	7.9%	6.7%	7.4%	5.3%
Filipino	10.9%	12.3%	8.6%	6.9%	10.6%	8.5%
Latinx/Hispanic	46.1%	53.3%	54.4%	*26.3%*	42.6%	42.0%
Multiple Race	7.5%	7.5%	5.7%	7.5%	8.5%	6.6%
Native American	0.3%	0.1%	0.2%	0.8%	--	0.3%
Other	*1.9%*	3.0%	*1.7%*	3.6%	1.6%	3.1%
Pacific Islander	0.6%	0.6%	0.2%	0.2%	--	0.6%
White	*21.7%*	*18.8%*	*18.6%*	44.9%	*21.3%*	30.2%
Age						
19 or less	*34.1%*	98.2%	37.5%	*4.8%*	*27.5%*	38.8%
20 to 24	*31.1%*	1.4%	39.0%	*18.5%*	50.0%	33.8%
25 to 29	16.2%	*0.2%*	10.7%	25.4%	12.3%	12.4%
30 to 34	7.6%	*0.1%*	5.7%	17.6%	3.4%	5.2%
35 to 39	4.8%	*0.1%*	2.5%	8.6%	1.7%	3.2%
40 to 54	5.2%	--	3.1%	15.0%	3.4%	4.2%
55 and older	*1.0%*	--	1.5%	11.1%	.7%	2.4%
First Generation	45.5%	*34.9%*	44.4%	36.6%	41.0%	39.3%
Source: Student data provided by programs						

RPIE Analysis: This section describes the three-year demographics among NVC students that accessed the five programs listed in the table above. Those programs include Financial Aid, Promise, EOPS, Veterans, and Work Study.

The following demographic groups accounted for a majority or plurality of Financial Aid Applicants, Promise, EOPS, and Work Study students during that period:

- *Females*
- *Latinx/Hispanics*
- *Students 24 or less*

Among students who accessed Veterans Services, males, White, and students ages 34 and younger accounted for the majority or plurality of students during that period.
*The following programs claimed a significantly lower proportion of a **gender** group compared to the population of NVC credit students over the past three years:*

- *Financial aid applicants (Males)*
- *Veterans (Females)*

*The following programs claimed a significantly lower proportion of **race/ethnicity** group compared to the population of NVC credit students over the past three years:*

- *Financial aid applicants (Asian, Other, White)*
- *Promise (Asian, African American/Black, White)*
- *EOPS (Other, White)*
- *Veterans (Latinx/Hispanic)*
- *Work Study (White)*

*The following programs claimed a significantly lower proportion of **age** groups compared to the population of NVC credit students over the past three years:*

- *Financial aid applicants (students 24 and less, students 55 and older)*
- *Promise (students ages 20 to 39)*
- *Veterans (students ages 24 and less)*
- *Veterans (Latinx/Hispanic)*
- *Work Study (students 19 and less)*

The Promise Program claimed a significantly lower proportion of first-generation students than the population of NVC credit students over the past three years.

Program Reflection:

- With 65% of all NVC students applying for financial aid resources and/or services, the data shown for this group somewhat reflects the College and community population and demographic. Eligibility criteria and certain program requirements may impact the program demographics as well.
- As a Hispanic Serving Institution, it is expected that the Latinx/Hispanic population in the financial aid programs would somewhat mirror the institution percentage for this demographic.
- The NVC Promise Scholarship is only available to students in the first two years immediately after high school graduation, so the age demographic for most students receiving this award is expected to be approximately 17-19 years of age, which is clearly supported by the demographics for this group.

- More focused outreach and in-reach (classroom presentations) could be conducted to reach underserved demographic populations.
- Outreach efforts outside Napa County are limited by jurisdiction and staffing, so outreach in those areas may be sporadic. However, partnering with other campus programs such as Camino Al Exito to coordinate outreach efforts, could potentially provide increased awareness of financial aid resources for underserved demographic populations.
- The proportion of White students in the Work Study program is representative of the overall financial aid applicant population, even though both are lower than the proportion at the institutional level. The same is true for the high percentage of Latinx/Hispanic that participate in the Work Study Program.
- Recent High School graduates may not understand or know about the Work Study Program or may prefer to focus on their classes until becoming more familiar with the rigor of college coursework.

C. Retention/Successful Course Completion of Students within Programs

	Number of Course Enrollments	Number Retained Course Enrollments	Retention Rate	Number of Successful Course Completions among Enrollments	Successful Course Completion Rate
Financial Aid Applicants	60,747	54,666	90.0%	45,796	*75.4%*
Promise Students	12,864	11,955	*92.9%*	10,050	*78.1%*
EOPS	7,294	6,604	90.5%	5,668	*77.7%*
Work Study	3,053	2,953	*96.7%*	2,798	*91.6%*
Veterans	2,168	1,984	91.5%	1,637	75.5%
CalWORKs	434	398	91.7%	330	76.0%
CARE	321	287	89.4%	242	75.4%
Institutional Level	--	--	90.3%		75.6%
Source: SQL Enrollment Files, Data provided by programs					
Bold italics denote a statistically significant difference between rates at the program and institutional levels.					

RPIE Analysis: This analysis examines three-year retention and successful course completion rates among students participating in the above programs. Retention and successful course completion rates at the institutional level are reported to facilitate comparison.

The retention rates of Promise students and students within the Work Study program were significantly higher than the institutional rate (by 2.3% and 6.4%, respectively). The retention rates among Veterans and CalWORKs students were higher than the retention rate at the institutional level. (The differences were not statistically significant.) The retention rate among CARE students was lower than the rate at the institutional level. (The difference was not statistically significant.) The retention rate among Financial Aid Applicants and EOPS students mirrored the retention rate at the institutional level.

The successful course completion rates of Promise students and students within the EOPS and Work Study programs were significantly higher than the institutional rate (by 2.5%, 2.1%, and 16.0%, respectively). The successful course completion rates among Financial Aid Applicants, Veteran, CalWORKs, and CARE students mirrored the successful course completion rate at the institutional level.

Program Reflection:

- The data shows that overall, financial aid applicants mirror retention and successful completion rates at the institutional level.
- Students in financial aid programs that require specific enrollment levels and completion rates to maintain eligibility in the program, like the NVC Promise Scholarship and Work Study, show higher retention and successful completion rates compared with students at the institutional level.
- Having additional resources from these programs may contribute to the higher retention and successful completion rates for students in these programs.
- Having work schedule flexibility to accommodate academic needs in the Work Study program may also contribute to the significantly higher retention and successful completion rates for this group

D. Retention/Successful Course Completion of EOPS Students, Pre-Pandemic Terms and During the Pandemic

	Three-Year Retention and Successful Course Completion Rates	
	Retention Rate	**Successful Course Completion Rate**
Pre-Pandemic	90.9%	79.6%
During the Pandemic	91.8%	***77.5%***
Source: SQL Enrollment Files **Bold italics** denote a statistically significant lower difference between rates of the two period groups.		

> *RPIE Analysis:* This analysis examines the retention and successful course completion among EOPS students pre-pandemic (fall 2018 through fall 2019) and during the pandemic (spring 2020 through spring 2021).
>
> Among EOPS students, the retention rates before the pandemic mirrored the retention rate during the pandemic (compare 90.9% and 91.8%).
>
> Among EOPS students, the successful course completion rate during the pandemic was significantly lower than the successful course completion rate before the pandemic (compare 77.5% and 79.6%).

Program Reflection:

E. **Retention/Successful Course Completion of Veterans/Dependents Receiving Benefits and Without Benefits**

	Three-Year Retention and Successful Course Completion Rates	
	Retention Rate	**Successful Course Completion Rate**
Veterans Receiving Benefits (n=2,120)	91.3%	*75.1%*
Veterans Without Benefits (n=738)	90.7%	79.4%
Dependents Receiving Benefits (n=776)	91.0%	*72.4%*
Dependents Without Benefits (n=3,177)	91.1%	78.9%
Source: SQL Enrollment Files **Bold italics** denote a statistically significant lower difference between rates of the two types of veteran groups.		

> *RPIE Analysis:* This analysis examines the retention and successful course completion rates of veterans and dependents – comparing those receiving benefits and those without benefits.
>
> The retention rate among veterans receiving benefits mirrored the retention rate among veterans without benefits. The successful course completion rate among veterans receiving benefits was significantly lower than the successful course completion rate among veterans without benefits (compare 75.1% and 79.4%).
>
> The retention rate among dependents receiving benefits mirrored the retention rate among dependents without benefits. The successful course completion rate among

dependents receiving benefits was significantly lower than the successful course completion rate among dependents without benefits (compare 72.4% and 78.9%).

Program Reflection:

II. CURRICULUM

This section does not apply to Financial Aid.

III. LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

A. Status of Learning Outcomes Assessment

Learning Outcomes Assessment at the Course Level

	Number of Courses with Outcomes Assessed		Proportion of Courses with Outcomes Assessed	
Number of Courses	Over Last 4 Years	Over Last 6 Years	Over Last 4 Years	Over Last 6 Years

Learning Outcomes Assessment at the Program Level

	Number of Outcomes Assessed		Proportion of Outcomes Assessed	
Number of Outcomes*	Over Last 4 Years	Over Last 6 Years	Over Last 4 Years	Over Last 6 Years

*Include all areas of study, degrees, and certificates associated with the program in the table.

Program Reflection:

B. Summary of Learning Outcomes Assessment Findings and Actions

Program Reflection:

IV.   PROGRAM PLAN

Based on the information included in this document, the program is described as being in a state of:

- ○ Viability
- ○ Stablility
- ⊙ Growth

*Please select ONE of the above.

This evaluation of the state of the program is supported by the following parts of this report:

FINANCIAL AID is in a state of <u>STABILITY</u>

- Supported with data from Institutional Advancement & I.C - The number of financial aid applicants remained relatively stable over the three-year period. The number of students awarded the NVC Promise increased 604% over the three-year period, since the program's inception in the 2018/2019 award year. The need for financial aid is increasing and is critical to a student's success in completing their educational goals.
- Supported with data from I.B - Sixty-five percent (65%) of students attending NVC applied for financial aid. Data shows that financial aid is serving a diverse group of students from different race/ethnicity, gender, and age groups. Although there are gaps within the populations served (assumed due to varying eligibility criteria amongst the different programs and past outreach practices and target groups), the need for financial aid remains. More in-reach and outreach efforts will be needed to bring awareness of financial aid resources to the underserved demographic populations. Due to the limited staffing and complex processes in the Financial Aid unit, the ability to perform in-reach and outreach activities is limited at this time.
- Supported with data from I.C - Although financial aid applicants overall mirror institutional level rates, students receiving financial resources from specific financial aid programs show a higher rate of retention and successful completion.
- Overall, the financial aid resources available to students have expanded and are in the state of stability. Electronic Forms through DocuSign, virtual (online video and phone) appointments and virtual lobby support through Cranium Café, Financial Aid Self-Service, Ocelot Chatbot, and Bank Mobile Disbursements were all implemented to provide more flexible services to students. Additional financial aid resources such as the Emergency Financial Aid Grants, Student Success Grants, expanded Cal Grant eligibility, NVC Promise, and flexibility in verification requirements make it possible for more students to receive aid. However, this placed a heavy burden on the limited number of Financial Aid staff available to administer these expanding programs with their unique and complex eligibility criteria. The Financial Aid staff are stretched to their limit with the duties and assignments they are asked to perform.
- As the Financial Aid programs continue to grow due to community awareness, outreach and in reach efforts, communications through Public Relations, High School awareness, additional financial aid resources made available by the federal and state government, and on-campus housing, additional staff will be necessary in the Financial Aid unit to support and maintain regulatory compliance and the level of services provided. Additional staff are needed in the Financial Aid unit to expand services to students and the community. Institutional

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Technology staff dedicated to Financial Aid are necessary to program critical processes and to maintain and implement updates to our system. That way, Financial Aid staff can spend more time assisting students, parents, and the community.

- Having adequate staffing levels to institute inter-departmental cross-training, would greatly increase our effectiveness and prevent overburdening employees when positions are vacated. Because our various grant programs and regulations are so complex, usually one person is specifically trained to manage one or two critical programs, such as managing the Work Study program or processing student loans, in addition to regular duties like application and verification processing, awarding, and student appointments.

Complete the table below to outline a three-year plan for the program, within the context of the current state of the program.

Program: Financial Aid
dPlan Years: 2022-2023; 2023-2024; 2024-2025

Strategic Initiatives Emerging from Program Review	Relevant Section(s) of Report	Implementation Timeline: Activity/Activities & Date(s)	Measure(s) of Progress or Effectiveness
Conduct more in-reach financial aid presentations to bring awareness to underserved demographic populations.	I.B	Fall 2022 & Spring 2023: Contact faculty teaching Counseling classes; special programs such as Umoja, Kasaysayan Pilipinx Learning Community, and EOPS; first year English learning community; and technical program classes such as Welding, Machine Tool Technology and Digital Graphic Design, to offer in- class presentation/awareness and/or workshops about financial aid. Fall 2022 & Spring 2023: Present financial aid info to those targeted groups/classes listed above.	Increase financial aid awareness and applicants to the underserved population. Request RPIE to provide data in 2023/2024 award year for 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 award years to measure financial aid usage across the different race/ethnicity, gender.
Develop short financial aid videos to educate students on how to use Financial Aid Self-Service more effectively, how to access information on the NVC	I.A	Fall 2022: Identify list of videos to be created and prioritized them.	Empower students to be more self-sufficient and informed

Financial Aid website, and Bank Mobile Refund selection so students are self-sufficient and encourage students to be more self-help.		Identity and hire contractor to produce videos. Summer 2023: Create the videos that are most critical to students for navigating/understanding financial Aid processes. Fall 2023/Spring 2024: Evaluate effectiveness of videos and update as necessary.	through the effective use of Financial Aid Self-Service and navigation of Financial Aid website for helpful information. Educate students on the importance of setting up Bank Mobile Refund Preference, so they have access to financial aid refunds quicker. Run reports in Bank Mobile to identify if there has been an increased number of students who have set up their refund preference who are scheduled for payments. Run reports in Colleague to identify the number of financial aid applicants whose file has been completed and awarded by completing verification, to

			determine if there has been an increase. Track numbers of student contacts relating to Financial Aid Self-Service usage, Bank Mobile, required forms, award info, SAP status.
Assess Staffing Needs for Financial Aid Unit and Reorganize Unit	I.A, I.B, I.C	Summer 2022: Assess staffing needs/shortages for financial aid unit and front counter. Develop report to identify staffing needs and plan for unit staffing requirements. Work with HR and VP Student Affairs to implement plan for the 2022-2023 academic year.	Hire one additional full time staff for front counter student services and clerical support to replace 2 part-time temporary clerical staff. Fill vacant positions created by retirements to maintain administrative capability within the Financial Aid unit.
Conduct Monthly Financial Aid Workshop for various topics	I.B	Spring 2023: Develop topics and schedules to cover at monthly workshop Fall 2023 & Spring 2024: Conduct the workshops. Evaluate effectiveness of workshops and adjust as	More students aware about financial aid and its processes. Survey students to identify

		necessary through student surveys. Fall 2024 & Spring 2025: Continue conducting monthly workshops	workshop effectiveness.

Describe the current state of program resources relative to the plan outlined above. (Resources include: personnel, technology, equipment, facilities, operating budget, training, and library/learning materials.) Identify any anticipated resource needs (beyond the current levels) necessary to implement the plan outlined above.

Note: Resources to support program plans are allocated through the annual planning and budget process (not the program review process). The information included in this report will be used as a starting point, to inform the development of plans and resource requests submitted by the program over the next three years.

Description of Current Program Resources Relative to Plan:

The Financial Aid Unit administers over $10 million in federal and state financial assistance to students each year, but the unit is currently understaffed and barely able to maintain regulatory compliance in its current state. The financial aid unit must have sufficient and appropriately trained staffing to maintain the administrative capability to perform the complex processes and comply with the varying regulatory requirements that make up the financial aid programs. The coronavirus pandemic brought additional burdens in the form of regulatory changes for regular financial aid programs and the ever-changing eligibility criteria required to award and disburse over $4.1 million in federal emergency financial aid grants to the entire student population.

The Financial Aid Department has been short-staffed for several years because of vacancies that were not rehired due to institutional funding concerns. The Financial Aid unit lost two full-time financial aid positions that were then combined into one – The first position was primarily responsible for outreach/in-reach, Foster Youth Liaison, processing files and verifications, and advising/assisting student/parents with the financial aid processes which includes but not limited to FAFSA/CADAA completion, SAP Policies, Appeal process, submitting documents to complete verification, refunds/awards, etc.; the second position was primarily responsible for coordination and processing of work study and advising/assisting student/parents with the financial aid processes which includes but not limited to FAFSA/CADAA completion, SAP Policies, Appeal process, submitting documents to complete verification, refunds/awards, etc. The duties of these two positions have since been assigned to one person, which makes it difficult to expand outreach/in-reach and limits student contact time that staff has available.

The Financial Aid/EOPS Program Analyst retired in December 2021, leaving a void for an extremely critical position. The task of the Financial Aid/EOPS Program Analyst is currently assigned to a Financial Aid Specialist (pay out of class), while the Senior Dean and other Specialists are performing the FA Specialist's duties. This has created an additional and significant workload burden on the entire unit. A new Financial Aid/EOPS Programs Analyst has been hired and will begin on July 1st, but will require several months of training.

At the end of May 2022, another critical Financial Aid Specialist position will be lost due to retirement. This position is responsible for the technical importing/exporting process for financial aid FAFSAs/CADAA from the Dept of Ed and WebGrants into the College ERP system; processing Dreamer files, awards, and CAL ISIRS manually; processing Financial Aid Appeals and Professional Judgement requests for Independent Status; student appointments; help with outreach/in-reach; processing financial aid files and verification process; general financial aid email duty day; Specialist on duty support for front counter. Part of this position job duties, FAFSA/CADAA import/export process and manual processing for Dreamers are being reassigned to a Financial Aid Technician (pay out of class), in anticipation of the Specialist retirement. This leaves the rest of this Specialist job duties to be reassigned to another Financial Aid Specialist or Financial Aid Officer, who already have duties of their own to perform.

Financial Aid staff are tasked to process and monitor millions of dollars in federal and state student financial aid resources each year, often with complex and sometimes contradictory eligibility and regulations with limited staff available.

Federal Student Aid Programs monitoring and process:
- Federal Pell Grant
- Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)
- Federal Direct Loans
- Federal Work Study
- Emergency Grants
- Veterans Educational Benefits

State student Aid Programs monitoring and process:
- Cal Grant A, B, C
- Student Success Completion Grant
- California College Promise Grant
- NVC Promise Scholarship
- Emergency Grants
- EOPS and CARE Grants
- Chafee Grants

Other programs monitoring and process:
- Scholarships
- District Work Study
- CalWORKs Work Study
- EOPS and CARE Book Awards
- Burton Book Awards
- Veterans Book Service
- Foster Youth Book Service
- Bookstore Advanced Authorization

V. PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

A. Recent Improvements

Financial Aid implemented the following to allow for flexibility and easy access to students:
- Paper Forms moved to electronic forms and online submission using DocuSign
- Live up-to-date financial aid status, updates, and forms links through Financial Aid Self-Service
- Electronic Forms Link (DocuSign) posted on NVC Financial Aid Website
- Utilized Cranium Café to provide virtual services through virtual lobby and virtual appointments (video and phone)
- Used Zoom for financial aid outreach/in-reach presentations and workshops
- Implemented Ocelot Chatbot for 24/7 general questions
- Implemented Bank Mobile Disbursements for electronic financial aid refunds (disbursements)
- Work Study: The program made sure the students were not negatively impacted by COVID-19 pandemic when it started; followed Federal guidelines to pay students during the beginning of the Pandemic since they had to stop working unexpectedly. Proper adjustments were made to the program because of the Pandemic. Work Study Employment packet and processes were moved and provided electronically. Hiring orientation is done by video appointment. Accommodation is done accordingly for supervisors that requested students to work remotely. Protocol and guidance for COVID-19 are still active.

B. Effective Practices

- Cranium Café to provide virtual services and appointments to students.
- Electronic Forms (DocuSign) for easy completion and submission.
- Zoom Cash for College Workshops to provide financial aid awareness, answer questions, and help with FAFSA/CADAA completion to students, prospective students, parents, and the general public.
- In-reach financial aid presentations to a few counseling classes, transfer event, and EOPS workshops via Zoom or in person to bring financial aid awareness.
- BankMobile to deliver financial aid refunds to students electronically and quicker access to their money.
- Ocelot Chatbot available to answer students' general questions, especially during closed of business hours.
- Self-service computer lab open for student use, even when the office was closed to the public, so students could submit the FAFSA/CADAA, check their status through FA Self Service, attend online classes and do homework, etc.
- Financial Aid Self-Service provided individualized self-help live financial status, awards, required documents, etc.
- Financial Aid Staff meets at least once monthly, or more as needed, via Zoom to go over updates, changes, and issues of importance.
- Attend online trainings and webinars provided by FSA, CCCSFAA, CASFAA, NASFAA, WebGrant, Ellucian, and the Chancellor's Office to stay up to date with regulatory changes, additional financial aid resources, processing issues, etc.
- Encouraged staff to attend online conferences/trainings to stay informed and connected with their peer communities and get the latest information.

- General Financial Aid emails respond within 24 to 48 business hours by Financial Aid Specialist.
- Presented numerous Cash 4 College workshops via Zoom, open to High School and College students and their parents, to provide guidance in submitting the FAFSA and CADAA applications. Used break-out rooms to assist students one-on-one.

Feedback and Follow-up Form

Completed by Supervising Administrator:

<div style="border:1px solid black; height:2em; width:35%;"></div>

Date:

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Strengths and successes of the program, as evidenced by analysis of data, outcomes assessment, and curriculum:

Areas of concern, if any:

Recommendations for improvement:

Anticipated Resource Needs:

Resource Type	Description of Need (Initial, Including Justification and Direct Linkage to State of the Program)
Personnel: Faculty	
Personnel: Classified	At least one full time front counter staff person to replace the two part-time temporary clerical staff. The office serves multiple programs and often has heavy student contact. The front counter staff is the first contact for students and guests entering the Financial Aid/EOPS/Veterans Services Office and must be greeted by a friendly and welcoming person to help them. Other staff have to juggle their work to fill in when there are gaps in coverage, which takes away from processing time and creates anxiety. Front counter is entry point for multiple support programs: Financial Aid, Veterans, CARE/CalWORKs/EOPS, and TRIO. They assist students with general questions and provide general support for all the programs listed. Currently, there is one permanent front counter staff and a 19-hour temporary staff, with a vacant 19-hour temporary staff position that needs to be filled. Financial Aid Specialists are tasked with a rotational schedule for back-up support to the front counter each day, which takes reduces the time available for critical processing. We have relied heavily on temporary staff for several years to help at the front counter, in addition to one permanent staff. This shows that there is a necessity for additional staff at the front for the Department to function effectively.

	Two additional Financial Aid Specialist positions are needed to fill the vacant positions due to retirement and the vacant positions that were never filled, because of institutional financial issues. The Financial Aid Specialists and Officer are stretched to their limit with their current duties and additional duties that were re-assigned to them. Assigning them additional duties, because of the loss of another position due to retirement, will result in cut-backs to: outreach/in-reach events; availability for student contacts and appointments; longer processing time of files and verification completion; longer processing times for Financial Aid Appeals, Direct Loan processing, awarding, etc., since more critical tasks need to be addressed first. Sixty-five percent (65%) of students attending NVC applied for and receive some type of financial aid, and millions of dollars are disbursed to students each year. Students depend on financial aid to offset some of their educational expenses to help them succeed and complete their educational goal. The financial aid resources available to students at the state and federal level are expanding, not shrinking. It would be a disservice to students if we had to cut back on financial aid services offered at NVC and delay students' financial aid refunds (disbursements) due to inadequate staffing in the Financial Aid Department.
Personnel: Admin/Confidential	Assistant Director Financial Aid – necessary for administrative capability and regulatory compliance
Instructional Equipment	
Instructional Technology	
Facilities	Office carpeting needs to be replaced. New Paint and ceiling tiles for office – paint different shades throughout the office and tiles are yellow, stained, and missing. Replace chairs in computer lab and lobby. Blinds for windows need deep cleaning.
Operating Budget	Continued District support for Work Study, MOE, staffing, training, and department needs.
Professional Development/ Training	Continued attendance at financial aid training conferences to keep abreast of changing regulations and maintain knowledge base.
Library & Learning Materials	