

Departmental Goals and Assessment Results 2016 – 2017

Department Name: Financial Aid Office

Departmental Goals for 2016-2017 (not all of these have to be assessed)

1. Implement the SLCC Promise program
2. Implement the Book Voucher program

2016-2017 Implementation of SLCC Promise Program

Strategic Goal:

In partnership with Academic Advising and IT, plan and implement the new SLCC Promise program for full-time Pell eligible students whose Pell Grant is insufficient to cover all tuition and fees.

Methodology:

After preliminary meetings with several other departments on campus, Michelle Walton was tasked with determining how to make the SLCC Promise program work for students. A required part of this program is that continuing students meet with Academic Advising to create a degree plan that would then be locked in Degree Works. The Financial Aid Office created a list of requirements and expectations for students who qualified for the Promise funds. Once the student had a locked degree plan and returned the signed agreement, funds could transfer to the student's account.

Results/Findings:

1. There was an issue in identifying new students versus continuing students for the purpose of requiring a locked degree plan.
2. Students would meet with Academic Advising, but seldom told the advisor why they were meeting with them.
3. The locked degree plan description must match the program of study maintained in Banner. This was not always the case.
4. Students were awarded SLCC Promise funds, but were later awarded institutional scholarship funds or received outside scholarships. This required a determination of how scholarships could be used (room and board or only tuition and fees) and manual adjustments had to be made. Conflicts with VA benefits. There was a misunderstanding that VA benefits must be recognized prior to SLCC Promise funds.
No response from students who had been awarded small amounts of SLCC Promise.
No response from students until after the awards had been canceled.

Actions Taken

1. Many meetings and much discussion were held with representatives from the Financial Aid Office and Academic Advising to find solutions to the problems with degree plans. Students are now asked up front if they are visiting Academic Advising concerning a Promise award as that will take longer. Academic Advisors were given a list of valid program codes to use when entering the degree plan description.

2. Originally, Promise funds were an all or nothing award. This policy was reassessed and certain scholarship funds that are cash-based can be paid in addition to the awarding of SLCC Promise awards. These scholarships are limited to three types: STEM Scholarships, the Ibarra Scholarship and Student Life and Leadership.
3. VA students had not been identified prior to awarding and disbursing SLCC Promise funds. Michelle Walton worked with Darlene Head, Manager of the Veterans Office, to locate areas in Banner where these students are identified so awards can be adjusted as veterans are identified.
4. Although students were notified of a deadline, many did not pay attention to that and contacted our office after the funds had been cancelled since the student had not done a Degree Plan or provided a signed agreement. The Financial Aid Office now sends out a weekly reminder to those students who have not completed the requirements to have the SLCC Promise funds disbursed.

Other Notes:

SLCC Promise Data

May 10, 2017

	Fall 2016	Spring 2017	Annual
Students Awarded	n/a	n/a	1,193
Students Paid*	581	567	780
Final Students Paid	537	545	729
Dollars Paid	\$ 407,184.75	\$ 418,650.00	\$ 825,834.75
Degree Plan Locked	480	493	637

*Includes students who had Promise paid and then cancelled.

2016-2017 Implementation of Book Voucher Program

Strategic Goal:

In partnership with the College Bookstore and Cashier Services, implement a Book Voucher program that would be made available to all students.

Methodology:

The Financial Aid Office met with staff in the College Bookstore and Cashier Services to determine how best to create and implement a Book Voucher program that would take the place of the Short-Term Emergency Loan program.

Two financial aid staff members, Emma Jackson and Jolie May, were assigned the task of creating a "promissory note," or promise to pay, that students would need to complete prior to receiving a Book Voucher. In addition, a work group was formed to determine how to coordinate with the College Bookstore (notification of eligibility for the book voucher and the amount) and Cashier Services (entering the amount on student's account to ensure payment by the end of the term).

Results/Findings

1. The Book Voucher application was reviewed by the SLCC attorney to determine if it was appropriate. Originally, the student did not sign the voucher until they went to the bookstore to purchase their books.
2. The allowable purchases were not restricted and students were buying items other than educational materials for classes. In addition, there was not a time restriction on how long the voucher could be used and students continued to use the voucher for purchases throughout the term.
3. Notification to Cashier Services was not always timely and remainder checks were issued prior to bookstore charges being entered on TSAAREV.

Actions Taken:

1. It was crucial that employees from the Financial Aid Office, Cashier Services and the College Bookstore met together to discuss issues or problems with the Book Voucher program.
2. Students are now required to sign the Book Voucher when they meet with a Financial Aid Office representative. The original copy of the Book Voucher is hand carried to the College Bookstore.
3. Immediately after meeting with the student, the Financial Aid Office notifies Cashier Services that the student is receiving a Book Voucher. A hold is placed on the student's account so no funds are released to the student prior to determining the total amount owed from the purchase of books and materials.
4. A copy of the voucher is given to the student and the student is instructed to check in at the Sponsored Student Desk in the College Bookstore to receive assistance in purchasing books and other materials.
5. Students are restricted to purchasing only books and materials required for the classes. Purchases must be completed by the day AFTER the last day to add classes. However, accommodations are made for students who must wait for books or materials that are not available until a later date.
6. Once a purchase has been made, Cashier Services is notified and updates are sent based on continued purchases. Once the student's financial aid is disbursed to the student's account, Cashier Services notifies the Bookstore and the Financial Aid Office that the voucher should be closed and no further purchases should be made.

Other Notes:

Currently, students must come to the Taylorsville Redwood Campus to apply for the Book Voucher. The College Bookstore works with these students to allow them to pick up their books at the other locations. However, there is still discussion about allowing students to apply for the program at other campuses. We will be meeting this summer to continue the discussion and determine if changes should be made. We have not received complaints from students about this issue.

SLCC Book Voucher Data

	Fall2016	Spring2017	total
Number Processed	71	16	77
Vouchers Cancelled	6	1	7

