



## **Office of the Vice President for Enrollment Management & Student Affairs**

### **Unit End of Year Report**

**Unit:** Financial Aid

**Director:** Dr. Kimberley Willis

**Assessment Team Representative:** Deidre Strutz

### **Unit Overview**

#### **Unit Mission:**

The Financial Aid Office at SUNY Brockport assists potential students, current students, and their families in obtaining the necessary financial resources to attend SUNY Brockport. This includes the proper financial advisement of students and their families, processing and facilitating the financial aid application process and providing sound strategies in budgeting, alternative aid sources and debt management both during and after college. The ultimate goal for the Financial Aid Office is to minimize the financial concerns of our students so that they may concentrate on and maximize their opportunities for success.

#### **Unit Functional Goals:**

- Effectively communicate with students about financial aid requirements processes and provide excellent customer service in order to expedite the awarding process and reduce barriers to access and continued enrollment. (Divisional Goal 2, College Goal 1.C)
- Implement the future award year process and notify students of their awards prior to the close of the current calendar year, in order to enhance the admissions process and retention of existing students. (Divisional Goal 2,3, College Goal 1.C)
- Complete financial aid self-assessment tools to evaluate the institution's administration of the financial aid programs, ensuring compliance with federal laws and regulations. (Divisional Goal 3 College Goal 1.C)

### **Section One: 2021-2022 Unit Strategic Annual Goals**

**Unit Strategic Annual Goal 1:** Facilitate regular DEI trainings at monthly staff meetings (Divisional Goal 2, 3, 4, 6, College Goal 1.1, 1.8, 4.2, 4.5)

- Outcome/Status: Goal Met

**Unit Strategic Annual Goal 2:** Continue to build upon the implementation of CampusLogic's StudentForms platform by utilizing other options (features) available in the system for student and financial aid office staff use (Divisional Goal 2, College Goal 1.1)

- Outcome/Status: Goal Partially Met, updates are in the testing environment, will move to production during summer 2022

**Unit Strategic Annual Goal 3:** Train two new professional staff members to provide more timely aid processing and improved customer service and workflow. (Divisional Goal 2,3, College Goal 1.1, 4.1, 4.5)

- Outcome/Status: Goal Not Met

**Unit Strategic Annual Goal 4:** Provide cross training for Financial Aid Office staff (Divisional Goal 2,3, College Goal 1.1, 4.5)

- Outcome/Status: Goal in Progress

## **Section Two: 2021-2022 Assessment Plan**

**Unit Goal 1:** Continue to build upon the implementation of CampusLogic's StudentForms platform by utilizing other options (features) available in the system for student and financial aid office staff use

**College Mission Alignment:** The Financial Aid office is a key component in students' education. Strong campus partnerships, tools available to students and staff and positive customer service enhances the experience for the student and will lead to an increasing number of positive outcomes related to retention and persistence.

### **Outcomes and Criteria:**

- Implement appeals option in platform
- Implement Dependency Override feature in platform

### **Data Sources and Methods:**

- Review of implementation materials and internal procedures
- Studentforms test environment "sandbox"

### **Assessment Data:**

- Goal Partially Met.
- The appeals platform in Studentforms was created and moved to the test environment. It is slated to head to the production environment to go live for use before the close of the fiscal year.
- The platform has been tested in the "sandbox" environment; FAO will be meeting to discuss final set-up before training staff
- Training plan and materials have been created for staff

### **Closing the Loop**

#### **Resources Used:**

- Human resources were used including representatives from the FAO and campus partners

### **Key Findings:**

FAO is close to successfully launching the appeals feature in Studentforms for the student and staff use. This will allow students to submit appeals through the platform. The upcoming year will be the first year utilizing this feature, after the upcoming year we will be able to obtain assessment data to evaluate the effectiveness of this feature. Implementation has been difficult with changes at CampusLogic with unanticipated platform changes and staff turnover of main points of contact at CampusLogic.

### **Dissemination/Discussion of Key Findings:**

The results are shared with FAO Senior Staff and the Assistant Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs

**Summary Sentence for EMSA Divisional Report:**

The Financial Aid Office is working to successfully implement the appeals feature in Studentforms for financial aid office use.

**Unit Goal 2:** Facilitate regular staff participation in DEI trainings and discussions within monthly staff meetings

**College Mission Alignment:** Training is important for office operations because it provides an opportunity for an office to reflect on current processes, evaluate and determine possible areas of improvement. Staff participation and attendance at DEI trainings and events improves office awareness and also supports the College's DEI mission.

**Outcomes and Criteria:**

- Continual trainings and professional development
- Provide training opportunities to staff that are in-line with the College's DEI goals

**Data Sources and Methods:**

- Staff feedback and participation in discussions
- Staff participation in monthly article assignments and facilitating article discussion

**Assessment Data:**

- **Goal Met**
- Watched Vides during our Staff Meetings [stevefund.org/webinars](https://www.stevefund.org/webinars) (Responding to Bias on Campus and Intersectionality and Mental Health)
- Read "From Equity Talk to Equity Walk" and discussed divisional book reads with the entire team
- Working Towards Equity: Biden Harris Administration Priorities for Higher Ed – Session at FSA Conference 12/2/21
- Diversity Session – 10/26/21 – NYSFAAA Conference - Join us as we speak to our professional panelist to discuss what Diversity, Inclusion and Equity looks like at the workplace, and in society. We will explore communication approaches, access, outcomes, and more
- Staff also participated in several DEI related trainings, courses and organizations throughout the year
- Dr. Willis and Nora Bell-Owens serve on the NYSFAAA DEI Committee and are members of the Faculty and Staff of Color Interest Group

**Closing the Loop**

**Resources Used:**

- Resources from the DEI Office, campus community members, Senior Staff and outside professional associations were used to meet this goal.

**Key Findings:**

Financial aid office staff participated in several DEI activities during the 2021-2022 academic year. Continued participation and opportunities for these trainings is both welcomed and looked forward to by staff. Staff

participation in DEI related activities also extends outside of Brockport to our state aid association (NYSFAAA), where two members of our staff are members of the NYSFAAA DEI Committee.

**Dissemination/Discussion of Key Findings:**

Director of Financial Aid and FAO Senior Staff. EMSA Directors and Assistant Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs.

**Summary Sentence for EMSA Divisional Report:**

The Financial Aid Office staff actively participated in several DEI activities in the 2021-2022 academic year.

### **Section Three: CAS Review**

**Unit Goal**

Complete CAS Review Phase 1 to include required standards and development of appropriate action plan to improve department services and programs as well as address gaps as appropriate.

**College Strategic Plan Alignment:** Goal 1, Objective A

**Standards under review:**

Part 1: Mission

Part 2: Program

Part 3: Organization and Leadership

Part 6: Law, Policy and Governance

Part 12: Assessment and Evaluation

**Summary of Initial Findings**

Describe conclusions (description of what you learned that was significant)

- FAO leadership ensures staff is aware of regulatory changes and practices to ensure compliance with administration of financial aid programs.
- Increased partnerships and collaboration across the College to fulfill college priorities and increase student experience
- Despite limited human resources, FAO is able to maintain service to students and meet expected divisional/College deliverables
- Demonstrated disconnect between FAO staff and FAO leadership, multiple changes in leadership over the last few years has attributed to low staff morale
- FAO has wanted to do more assessment of individual federal programs and practices/procedures, however staffing/human resources coupled with increased changes due to the pandemic and changing college priorities have impacted the ability to do this
- Increased transparency is needed with staff regarding assessment practices within office

Describe meaningful limitations to completion of the program review (such as if you could not score all of them and why or if you lacked data/evidence) and why:

- At times FAO found it difficult to properly evaluate FAP due to significant federal regulations that guide administration of FAP. This offers limitations to certain aspects of FAP as the context is transactional for students/parents and staff and can be difficult to measure (for example SLO's)

Describe the primary strengths of the functional area and how have these changed over time.

- The Financial Aid Office complies with laws, regulations and policies as it relates to financial aid programs as documented in a number of successfully completed audits and reviews conducted by federal and state agencies.
- Staff regularly accesses federal and state systems to review regulations and ensure that student records are processed correctly. SUNY Brockport is also an active member in a number of professional organizations that provide resources and training to members.
- The Financial Aid Office mission supports the SUNY Brockport and EMSA divisions mission by providing essential services to the Brockport community in an effort to minimize the financial barriers of our students so that they may concentrate on growth, engagement, and becoming their best selves.
- Assessment results from the annual report are used to guide the subsequent year's departmental goals. Information obtained from the KPI data also influences the approaches the office uses as it establishes/changes KPI's.

Describe the innovative programs/services/practices that the functional area has initiated with respect to "best practices" in the field:

- Increased communication to students through the use of SLATE, enhancing communications with the Office of Student Accounts on student billing notices
- Implemented CampusLogic StudentForms which provides students/families with a platform to upload and electronically sign documents. The platform also used email and text reminders for students with outstanding document requests
- Increased participation in ASC workshops to provide FAFSA presentations and Q&A
- Increased participation with EOP and Admissions programming in NYC to assist with document collection and student financial aid advisement

## Recommendations

- Increased collaboration with campus departments to build upon existing structures to enhance student experience
  - Timeline: ongoing (2022/2023-forward)
- Update/edit "who does what" document for staff use for "go-to" resource
  - Timeline: Start in 2022/2023 and moving forward
- Increased transparency with FAO staff regarding annual report share out and participation, KPI and SLO review and measurements
  - Timeline: Start in 2022/2023 and moving forward
- Review mission statement annually to ensure it aligns with college goals and professional association goals
  - Timeline: Start in 2022/2023 and annually in conjunction with annual report timeline
- Implement cross-training for FAP
  - Timeline: Start in 2022/2023 and moving forward
- Re-start the Peer Advisor program (as part of our student learning outcomes to be measured)

- Timeline: Start in 2022/2023 and moving forward
- Add team-building practices and exercises to staff meetings in an effort to improve office morale
  - Timeline: Start in 2022/2023 and moving forward
- The National Association of Financial Aid Administrators offers a compliance engine platform with evaluation checklists for financial aid programs, FAO would like to begin incorporating one to two of these as a part of the office assessment process annually
  - Timeline: Start in 2022/2023 and moving forward

## **Section Four: Student Learning Outcomes**

### **Institutional Student Learning Outcomes**

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Written and Oral Communication | 4. Critical Thinking and Information Literacy |
| 2. Quantitative Reasoning         | 5. Civic Engagement                           |
| 3. Intercultural Competence       |   |

### **Departmental Learning Outcomes:**

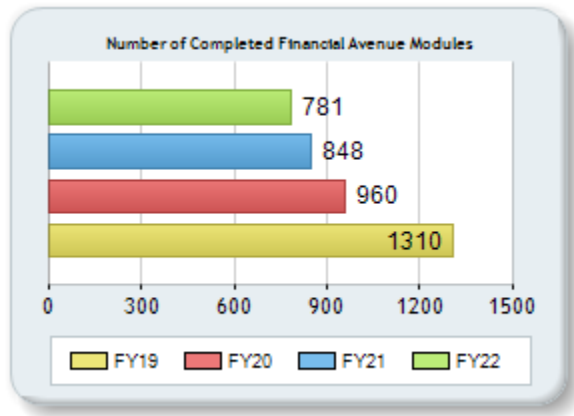
1. Train student Peer Advisors on Federal financial aid regulations, customer service techniques, and policies and procedures to allow them to be able to disseminate financial aid information to student and parents in a professional manner either on the phone, at the front desk, via emails or campus sponsored events.
  - a. 2021-2022
  - b. Institutional student learning outcomes 4 and 5
2. Through information provided by the Financial Aid Office from various printed and electronic communications, the prospective student and their family will understand the types, sources and amounts of financial aid available, the applications required and deadline dates.
  - a. 2022-2023
  - b. Institutional student learning outcomes 4 and 5
3. Students who take out loans will be able to recognize and understand the requirements, rights and responsibilities and repayment obligations associated with acquiring a federal student loan.
  - a. 2023-2024
  - b. Institutional student learning outcomes 4 and 5

### **Departmental Learning Outcome Measured in 2021-2022:**

The student learning outcome that FAO was scheduled to measure for 2021-2022 was SLO #1. The peer advisor program that is run by FAO was suspended during the pandemic. At the beginning of 2021-2022 FAO posted a job for student employment, unfortunately with the financial limitations (lack of temporary service funds), the applicant pool of work-study eligible students was small. We were able to hire one student worker, however FAO did not restart the peer program during the calendar year. The intention is to bring the program back with the start of the 2022-2023 academic year. The student FAO was able to hire in 2021-2022 will be returning to FAO for 2022-2023.

## Section Five: Unit Key Performance Indicators

**Key Performance Indicator:** Number of Completed Financial Avenue Modules

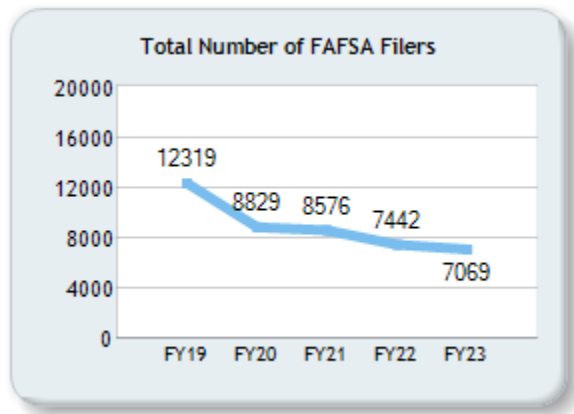


### **Analysis:**

The number of SUNY SMART TRACK Financial Avenue modules completed are down from the previous year (FY21). This decrease can be attributed to a few factors. The first would be the declining enrollment numbers from previous years. It is also likely attributed to the lingering aftereffects of distance education due to the pandemic coupled with the transition back to formal in-person learning for the 2021-2022 year.

Our team continues to work with other areas on campus and the SUNY Financial Literacy Task Force to increase usage for the 22-23 academic year.

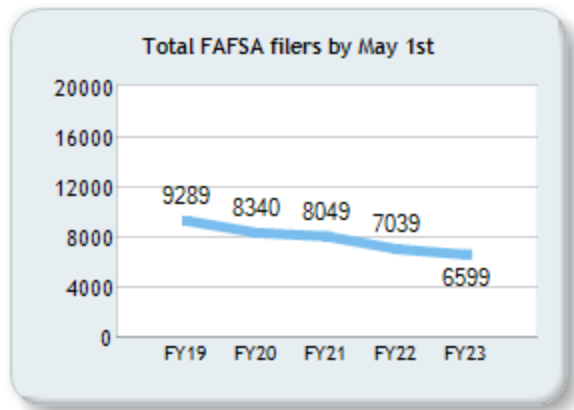
**Key Performance Indicator:** Total Number of FAFSA Filers



### **Analysis:**

Like many colleges, Brockport is also experiencing the alarming growing downward trend of student's not completing FAFSA applications. This decrease could be attributed to the declining enrollment numbers from previous years.

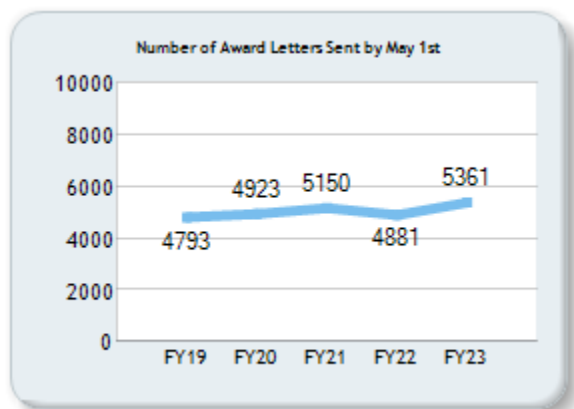
**Key Performance Indicator:** Total FAFSA Filers by May 1st



**Analysis:**

In FY23, 76% of the total students who completed a FAFSA had award letters sent by May 1st compared to 66% in FY22.

**Key Performance Indicator:** Number of Award Letters Sent by May 1st



**Analysis:**

Despite the total number of FAFSA filers decreasing, award letter completion increased from the previous year.



## **Section Six: 2022-2023 Unit Strategic Annual Goals**

### **Strategic Annual Goal 1:**

- Provide cross training for Financial Aid Office staff (Divisional Goal 5, College Goal 4.A)

#### **Action Plan**

- Implement training plan. Train employees. (this goal has been rolled forward from previous year)

#### **Timeline**

- July 2022-June 2023

### **Strategic Annual Goal 2:**

- Increase collaboration with other offices within EMSA. Through collaboration engage current and prospective students to further support enrollment and retention. (Divisional Goal 3, College Goal 1.C,4.A,4.D)

#### **Action Plan**

- Arrange cross-departmental activities and projects to enhance student experience

#### **Timeline**

- July 2022- June 2023

### **Strategic Annual Goal 3:**

- Facilitate regular staff participation in DEI trainings and discussions within staff meetings (Divisional Goal 1, College Goal 4.D, 4.E)

#### **Action Plan**

- Provide DEI training opportunities for staff to participate in. Incorporate trainings and discussions of trainings into staff meeting.

#### **Timeline**

- July 2022- June 2023

## **Section Seven: 2022-2023 Assessment Plan**

**Strategic/Functional Annual Goal 1:** Provide cross training for Financial Aid Office staff (Divisional Goal 5, College Goal 4.A)

**Outcomes and Criteria:**

- Continual training and professional development

**Data Sources and Methods:**

- Staff feedback
- Practical application of training

**Resources Needed and Individual(s) Responsible:**

- Financial aid office staff
- Senior staff to coordinate the training schedule

**Action Plan:**

- Develop training timeline
- Staff to create desktop procedures for their areas of responsibility to be used in training
- Update/edit “who does what” document for staff use

**Goal Rationale:** Cross training is important to ensure that there are additional individuals who can assist with processes within the office.

**Strategic/Functional Annual Goal 2:** Facilitate regular staff participation in DEI trainings and discussions within staff meetings (Divisional Goal 1, College Goal 4.D, 4.E)

**Outcomes and Criteria:**

- Continual trainings and professional development
- Provide training opportunities to staff that are in-line with the College’s DEI goals

**Data Sources and Methods:**

- Staff feedback and participation in discussions
- Staff participation in DEI trainings, modules and other recourses provided by senior staff

**Resources Needed and Individual(s) Responsible:**

- Senior staff to coordinate trainings
- DEI Office
- BizLibrary
- <https://www.stevelfund.org/>
- NYSFAAA and NASFAA trainings/resources
- Brockport campus community members certified to provide approved DEI trainings

**Action Plan:**

- Identify training opportunities and provide to staff
- Coordinate discussion for staff meeting

**Goal Rationale:** To be more in line with the College's DEI goals and strategic plan, it is important that these trainings be offered to the staff. These trainings also reinforce the suggestion that came from our self-assessment of our CAS assessment on DEI.

**Strategic/Functional Annual Goal 3:** Complete financial aid self-assessment tools to evaluate the institutions administration of the financial aid programs, ensuring compliance with federal laws and regulations. (Divisional Goal 3 College Goal 1.C)

**Outcomes and Criteria:**

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**Data Sources and Methods:**

- NASFAA Compliance Engine Evaluations (National Association of Financial Aid Administrators)

**Resources Needed and Individual(s) Responsible:**

- Senior Staff to coordinate self-assessment
- NASFAA Website and Compliance Engine portal
- Individuals responsible: Senior Staff

**Action Plan:**

- Determine 2 financial aid programs to evaluate for the 2022-2023 year
- Use NASFAA compliance engine to obtain evaluations for 2 programs selected and establish a timeline and plan to evaluate the programs following the NASFAA guide

**Goal Rationale:** To maintain federal aid compliance to ensure that we continue to deliver federal financial aid in alignment with federal regulations

## **Section Eight: 2021-2022 Points of Pride and Accomplishments**

Goal 1: To be a Great College at which to Learn Points of Pride

- Tonia Risse collaborated and presented with Admissions for prospective students and families
- Thomas Hickey participated in EOP week in NYC with the Admissions Office
- Increased FAO collaboration with Admissions and ASC

Goal 2: To be a College Engaged with its Community Points of Pride

- Dr. Willis was appointed Chair of the DEI Community for the New York State Financial Aid Administrators Association
- Dr. Willis presented at the National Association of Financial Aid Administrator's Leadership conference
- Dr. Willis presented at the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators conference
- Deidre Strutz serves on the Board of Directors for Rochester Education Foundation
- Dr. Willis serves as a facilitator for Senator Brouck's Student Mental Health Town Hall

Goal 4: To be a Great College at which to Work Points of Pride

- Financial Aid Office received a Certificate of Appreciation from the Office of Undergraduate Admissions
- FAO members participated in Commencement
- FAO members participated in Corporate Challenge 5k