



Unit Plan Annual Narrative 2007-08

Directions: Use the "Unit Plan Narrative Guide Sheet" to complete this planning form. Be sure that under each section, you write a narrative which discusses all elements listed under each heading. If a particular element does not apply to your area, note that within your narrative. Again, this form should be completed as a narrative, not bulleted.

Department/Unit: Office of Student Financial Services

Unit Administrator: Cassandra Matthews-Byrd

Date: July 15, 2008

A. Unit Description

The Office of Student Financial Services administers all federal and state financial aid grants and work-study programs. These Programs include, but are not limited to, Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Grant, Federal Work-Study and the Tuition Waiver Program.

The Office of Student Financial Services is also responsible for disbursing and monitoring institutional scholarships, special grants and other external scholarships in order to ensure compliance with federal regulations. In as much as ensuring compliance, SFS is responsible for monitoring and interpreting all federal, state, and college regulations, guidelines and policies.

The mission of the Office of Student Financial Services and Veterans Affairs is to promote and enhance a "comprehensive office" that provides financial assistance to those students with financial barriers while simultaneously providing a comparable level of quality customer service through outreach and technology.

The Financial Aid Unit's mission is aligned with the mission of the College. Assisting current and prospective students to establish and maintain their eligibility for financial aid and processing financial aid applications in a timely and efficient manner aligns with the College's commitment to serve all segments of society through its open-access policy.

Accurate processing of applications in accordance with Federal, State, Alabama Department of Postsecondary, and institutional regulations, guidelines, policies and procedures aligns with the College's open access policy that offers equal and fair treatment to all students in that all financial aid eligibility and award decisions are made according to regulations, guidelines, policies, and procedures.

B. Unit Effectiveness

The Office of Student Financial Services has qualified personnel to serve students. The Office of Student Financial Services consists of the Director, Assistant Director, two full-time financial aid specialists, two secretarial clerical staff persons and a part-time consultant.

The Office of Student Financial Services works in collaboration with the Administrative Services as well as the Instructional Services Division to provide financial support services to LSCC students.

During the 2007-08 academic year the Office of Student Financial Services awarded approximately Seven million dollars to qualified students. Over 60 percent of LSCC students received some type financial assistance in meeting the cost of education. The Office of Student Financial Services plays a major role in assisting these students thereby positively effecting enrollment at the college.

Student Financial Services personnel is committed to providing the maximum level of customer service to our students. According to the latest compiled survey results 82.4 percent of graduates indicated that the financial aid staff was knowledgeable and helpful.

C. Value Added

The Office of Student Financial Services implemented many initiatives that enhance services to students. Among these are: implementation of academic competitiveness grant; development of an intra communication system to show all imports of financial aid data from EdExpress on both campuses.

A major strength of the office is the ability of the staff to work collaborative across campuses for the best benefit of the students. Electronic processes and communication sharing procedures have allowed the staff to more effectively and efficiently serve our students.

D. Projections

The primary need for the student financial services unit is additional staff on both campuses; in order to continue to upgrade and enhance services to our students it is imperative that more staff be assigned to the unit. Funds for training opportunities are continually needed.

The need to upgrade facilities and equipment specifically the development of a user friendly financial aid lab is paramount to leveraging new technology to provide increasingly improved services. Students must be empowered and equipped to learn the process and manage the financial aid process in order to remove barriers and disparities. Funds have been requested in the 2007-2008 budget to expand and upgrade the financial aid self help lab.

Institutional Effectiveness Unit Plan (Phase I) for 2007-2008

Directions: Use 9 point font when completing this form. First, complete columns A-D. Make sure your Unit Outcomes are targeted, essential and measurable. Columns E & F (which serve to assess whether your goals were reached and how you intend to use the results) will *not* be completed until the end of the cycle in the spring.

Unit : Office of Student Financial Services **Unit Administrator:** Cassandra H. Matthews-Byrd

Unit's Mission: The mission of the Office of Student Financial Services is to promote and enhance a "comprehensive office" that would provide financial assistance to those students with financial barriers while simultaneously providing a comparable level of quality customer service through outreach and technology.

Number each Outcome in each column	A. Unit Outcomes (3-5) Should be measurable. Use percentages where possible. <u>Be brief.</u>	B. Outcomes Link to Institutional Goals & Strategic Indicators List the goal numbers and the corresponding Strategic Indicator letters (i.e., Goal 1; Indicators B & C; Goal 2; Indicators A-C, etc.)	C. Methods of Assessing the Outcome List what methods you plan on using to measure each outcome (i.e., exit exam results, portfolios, surveys, board exams, etc.)	D. Budget Implications If your outcome has budget implications (costs that will exceed \$499), list them here.
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the digital imaging system throughout Student Financial Services and a minimum of 1500 files by June 30 each year. Review institutional, state, federal and DOE regulations, polices and guidelines to insure compliance with each financial assistance program. Increase to 40% the number of eligible students who complete the financial aid update process during the designated pre-registration period. Based on baseline data from spring 2006 there will be a 10% increase in financial aid awareness activities. Currently enrolled students should begin the process of reapplying promptly in order to facilitate their financial aid eligibility. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Goal 2; Indicator C&E Goal 3; Indicator D Goal 2: Indicator A,E Goal 4: Indicator A, B, C, D, F Goal 6: Indicator A,B,C,D, F Goal 2; Indicator A, E, F Goal 4; Indicator B, E&F Goal 1: Indicator B Goal 2: Indicator A, B, E, F 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Raw data relating to number of scanned documents Annual audits, monthly financial reports for the AS400 and EdExpress. AS400 data Seminar/workshop attendance rosters 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> \$14,000 None noted. None noted. None noted.

Unit Plan--Part II: Directions: As noted on page one of this plan, complete columns E & F at the end of the planning cycle in the spring. As you report under each column, be sure to carry over the numbers which represent each outcome you are addressing.

E. Actual Results Obtained—When you assessed and measured your stated outcomes, what results did you find? Be clear and concise in your reporting.

Preliminary information presented....

1. Process is ongoing; both campuses are scanning; supporting data or percentage efficiency not available at the time.
2. 2007-08 Audit results pending; internal audit conducted monthly to insure accuracy of data.
3. Twenty-eight percent of students eligible for the financial aid update completed the process during the designated pre- registration period based on dates entered in the ACCESS system.
4. Spring 2006 yielded 195 participants; spring 2007 yielded 235 students exceeding the 10%gain. The results from spring 2008 failed to meet the 10% growth Requirement and fell below the count for the baseline year. The count was 95 participants.

F. Use of Results—Now that you have your results, how do you intend to use these results or, if implemented early, how have you used these results to improve your overall unit for the upcoming academic year? **NOTE:** After you list how you intend to use these results, be sure to include such improvements in your new Unit Plan for the upcoming academic year.

1. Scanned data improved efficiency in referencing data on customers during questions and answer process. Offices on both campuses will continue to scan data for the current year; all data for 2008-0 will be scanned as reported to respective offices.
2. Results from the Annual Audit from the State Examiner of Public Accounts will be addressed and concerns and or citations resolved
Completing monthly internal audits greatly reduced the chance of problems arising during the state audit.
3. Much progress was made during the current year in getting students to update financial aid information during the pre-registration period. More effort will be made during the upcoming year to communicate the process to students and staff as well.
4. Results show the need for better organization of the weekly events as well as more effective means of communications with the students and staff. The timeline for the week's events will be developed earlier in the year and disseminated by the end of the fall semester.