

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### FINANCIAL AID OFFICE REVIEW Academic and Enrollment Services

The Financial Aid Office participated in a self-study and review during 2006-2007, culminating in an on-campus peer review in May 2007. In summary, here are audit and review outcomes for the period 2002/03 through 2006/07; a summary of the reports of the outside reviewers; and a timeline for addressing the recommendations made by the reviewers.

#### Audits and Reviews

The Financial Aid Office is audited annually for compliance with federal regulations and good practice by the University's outside auditors as part of the A133 single audit. For the period FY02 through FY07, there were no findings and no comments related to the administration of the federal student financial aid programs and the policies and procedures administered by the Financial Aid Office.

The Financial Aid Office annually completes and submits the Fiscal Operations and Application to Participate (FISAP) to the U.S. Department of Education. The FISAP reports on administration of the Federal Campus-Based Student Aid Programs and applies for new funding. Included in the report is the calculation of the Federal Perkins Loan cohort default rate and Federal Work-Study community service percentage. For the period FY02 through FY07, the University's Perkins cohort default rate and FWS community service expenditures met Federal requirements for continued funding and participation. All other requirements for campus-based program participation were met as well.

In 2006 the Financial Aid Office completed the renewal process for the U.S. Department of Education's program participation approval, demonstrating continued administrative capability. Program participation approval and the Eligibility and Certification Approval were granted in September 2006.

The University of San Francisco participates in the Federal Family Education Loan Program as a lender (School as Lender). In 2006, EdFund, the California state guarantee agency, performed a compliance review. No exceptions were noted for the policy, procedure and administrative responsibilities assigned to the Financial Aid Office.

## External Peer Review

### Reviewers:

S. Lynn Fox, Associate Dean of Enrollment and Director of Financial Aid,  
University of the Pacific

Carrie Steere-Salazar, Director, Student Financial Services, University of  
California, San Francisco

James White, Associate Provost for Enrollment Services, Seattle University

### Campus Visit:

May 29-30, 2007

Before their visit, members of the review team were directed to the University's Vision, Mission and Values statement and the Financial Aid Office web page. They were provided with a summary of the results of audits, reviews and the University's current participation in federal and state student aid programs. They were not asked to perform a compliance review though the staff of the Financial Aid Office were prepared to answer any questions about the administration of the student financial aid programs. There was conversation about the rushed implementation of three new federal financial aid programs in 2006/07 and the challenge that presented to the staff. The implementation of the One-Stop Student Service operation and its impact on the Financial Aid Office was discussed and considered. The reviewers met with the Aid Office staff, the Associate Provost/Dean of Academic and Enrollment Services, Undergraduate and Graduate Admission staff, the Directors of Student Accounts and One Stop Student Services, the Associate Directors of University Records, staff and graduate program directors from the Schools and Colleges, the Senior Director of Regional Campuses and Regional Campus Directors, and general stakeholders.

### **1. How did the external review committee rate the quality and reputation of the services provided by the Office of Financial Aid?**

The reviewers found that the managers and staff of the Financial Aid office enjoy an outstanding reputation among everyone they spoke with and are recognized as dedicated professionals. "Such universal respect from an entire campus community is extraordinarily rare." The staff are extremely knowledgeable and experienced and have an over-riding commitment to student service. The results of annual audits and reviews demonstrate a thorough understanding of University, federal and state policies, procedures and regulations and substantial success in compliance and "it is readily apparent that a significant number of 'Best Practices' are in place."

**2. What are the most important issues that emerged from the external review process?**

- a. The staff of the Financial Aid Office is very small for an institution the size of USF and for the number and complexity of the aid programs administered. It is not presently staffed to build and maintain a sophisticated software system.
- b. The increased technical demands made by the aid programs and the Banner software implementation present a serious challenge. The implementation schedule requires an extremely aggressive effort. Two reviewers suggested that the March award letter go live date be extended.
- c. While the aid office and Undergraduate Admission share a common vision and purpose and work very well together, there continue to be challenges in providing the special attentions and services desired by the graduate programs and regional campuses. Limited staff resources may make it necessary to consider alternative ways to provide some of what is asked for.

**3. What specific recommendations were made by the external review committee to the Senior Associate Dean?**

- a. Re-evaluate staffing levels in the financial aid office, paying particular attention to staff for the technical areas.
- b. Carefully evaluate progress toward Banner implementation at every step to assure that there will be no delays in providing award notices for 2008/09. Consider extending the deadline for award letter go live.
- c. As FAO staff levels do not provide for the special attention and services desired by the graduate programs and regional campuses, consider alternative ways to support graduate programs and regional campus staff and provide well-defined information to graduate students.

**4. In the opinion of the external review committee does the financial aid office reflect an understanding of and commitment to the University's Vision, Mission and Values?**

"There is an obvious and extraordinary commitment to the overall Mission, Vision and Values of the University." "... the Financial Aid Office at the University of San Francisco does a wonderful job of living out the mission of the University by providing excellent service to students and colleagues."

**5. In what way does the Financial Aid Office contribute to achieving the goals of the University?**

- a. The Financial Aid Office is a careful steward of the federal, state and University resources entrusted to it.
- b. The Financial Aid Office provides excellent service and substantial resources to a diverse pool of applicants and a diverse student body, and is committed to making best uses of resources to assist those with greatest need.

**6. What is the timetable to respond to the external review recommendations?**

- a. The FAO contributed to the AES request for additional resources, specifying technical support for Banner.
- b. The FAO will evaluate staff needs in the context of additional requirements for implementation and administration of the Higher Education Reconciliation Act and the College Cost Reduction and Access Act. Once regulations are published staff will prepare a recommendation.
- c. The first go-live milestone for Banner implementation is in January 2008 and involves the loading and tracking of 2008/2009 aid applications. The success of the go-live will be assessed to determine if other go-live deadlines can be met.
- d. The FAO will consider all suggestions and recommendations for additional services and support for the regional campuses and graduate programs. Those that can be implemented will be dealt with as efficiently as possible and in the context of changing regulations.

**7. What general issues are crucial to understanding the reviewers' report?**

The reviewers all agreed that the aid office is modestly staffed and will be taxed by customer demands, regulatory changes and technology implementation.

3/2/2009