Mission / Purpose

The mission of Student Financial Aid at the University of Alabama is to assist students in reaching their academic goals by serving as a primary advocate for students and families as we assist in removing barriers to receiving financial assistance. We work to meet these goals by embracing technology, reviewing and improving procedures, and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and institutional regulations.

Goals

G 1: Create Workflow for Student Financial Aid Imaging System
Create process workflow for Student Financial Aid imaging system that ensures proper entering of institutional verification data, minimizes employee labor requirements and batch posts data directly to the Banner operating system.

G 2: Implement 2013-14 Federal Regulations
UEH 1 and 2

G 3: Develop Updated Federal Work Study and Job Location and Development Web Presence
Redevelop student orientation materials for the Federal Work Study Program, mandated by regulation, to provide increased customer service and just in time consumer information. Rewrite the online job board for the Job Location and Development program using current technology and program language.

G 4: Develop and Implement 150% Lifetime Loan Limit Policies
Develop processes and procedures to insure compliance with regulations related to new Title IV mandate. This regulation limits students to receiving loans up to 150% of their academic program requirements.

Other Outcomes, with Any Associations and Related Measures, Targets, Findings, and Action Plans

OthOtc 1: Improve Document Imaging Processes and Procedures
Improve quality of imaging documents to enhance office productivity and audit compliance.

The workflow component will completely change the way institutional verification requirements are processed. The workflow process will include on-line institutional verification forms which will be submitted through the MyBama portal and stored in the OnBase imaging system. A signature page listing required supporting documentation will be produced to mail with required documents. In addition, data from the on-line forms will be passed to the Banner Financial Aid system. Email notifications will be generated out of OnBase regarding outstanding requirements and completion of the process. This will eliminate paper verification forms and incomplete supporting documentation being held in file cabinets thus resulting in more efficient and timely processing.

Related Measures

M 6: Improve Imaging Process Flow
By implementing workflow procedures for the imaging process, improve imaging process flow.
Source of Evidence: Efficiency

OthOtc 2: Create Period Based Cost of Attendance
Increase quality of customer service through the production of period based budgets that eliminate data processing errors, enable accurate awards based on attendance and eliminate manual calculations of summer awarding.

Related Measures

M 4: Increase Customer Service Offerings
Process notification by email has been increased to notify students of the completion of all aspects of the federal aid process. This enables students and parents to know the completeness of the application process without contact by our advisers or phone center. This increases customer satisfaction and reduces the cost of second party phone center charges.
Source of Evidence: Service Quality

OthOtc 3: Reduce Budget Complexity
This new functionality allows users to assign a budget group and components by period. The current functionality allows for one budget which is based on the full academic year and components are adjusted via aid periods to reflect enrollment. This makes summer awarding difficult and very time consuming. The new functionality will allow for a Fall/Spring budget and a separate summer budget. This will streamline the awarding process by reducing the number of budget groups and using algorithmic rules to calculate the amount of a budget component assigned to a student.

OthOtc 4: Reduce Number of Budget Groups
Reduce the number of budget groups (Federal aid COA) required for aid administration.

OthOtc 5: Insure Degree Progress by Limiting Loan Eligibility
Insure students are progressing towards degree requirements by limiting the period of loan eligibility to 150% of program time-frame.

OthOtc 6: Create Modern FWS/JLD Program Site
Create new online presence for the FWS/JLD Programs that are technologically superior to the current sites and offer increased customer service.

The enhancements to the Federal Work Study website will simplify access to:

- Online orientation session on the University’s website (secure site only) allowing FWS recipients access
- Federal Title IV regulations and institutional policies related to the work-study program
- Allow students to review online listing of positions available for employment
- Printable Personnel Forms required to participate in the work study program.
- Maintenance of database options (list of supervisors, contact information)

The enhancements to the Job Location and Development (JLD) Online Website will provide updates to:

- Access to employment opportunities for currently enrolled students
- Ability to post and store diverse selection of job openings
- Maintenance of database options (statistical data, list of employers, job descriptions)

Related Measures

**M 1: Create Continually Updated FWS Job Listing**
With the updated FWS website, a job listing will be created that is updated as positions are entered into Banner HR. Students will be able to view an updated job listing that will ensure the positions they are applying for are available. This process will ensure greater customer satisfaction though preventing students from attempting to apply for positions that are already filled.
Source of Evidence: Service Quality

**OthOtcm 7: Regulatory Compliance**
Title IV aid is highly regulated set of programs that mandates compliance for the continuation of institutional participation. Title IV aid provides in excess of 50% of all tuition payments to the University.

Related Measures

**M 7: Ensure Compliance with Title IV Regulatory Requirements**
Through the development and implementation of the 150% lifetime loan limit procedure, Student Financial Aid will maintain compliance with Title IV regulation.
Source of Evidence: Government standards
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Goals

G 1: Implement Hyland OnBase Imaging System
Implement On-base imaging system.

G 2: Evaluate staffing needs of Student Financial Aid
Under new administration, Student Financial Aid will undergo evaluation for staffing needs or any reorganization.

G 3: Implement 2012-13 Federal Regulations
Implement Banner functionality for lifetime Pell Grant limitations to 600% of full-time eligibility. Implement Banner functionality for limiting aid eligibility to students for repeating course only once by regulation.

G 4: Automation of Data Load Process
Create automated process to import FAFSA data into Banner.

Other Outcomes, with Any Associations and Related Measures, Targets, Findings, and Action Plans

OthOtcm 1: Improve Imaged Document Quality
- Scan and index documents into the Hyland OnBase system in-house resulting in high quality documents.
- Control the creation and authentication of documents imaged into the OnBase system.
- Manage storage of documents creating document classes that facilitate convenient and quick retrieval so OnBase clearly indicates where a particular document can be found, producing the document on demand.

Related Measures

M 6: Improve Imaged Documents
Measurements and Findings:
Documents were scanned and indexed into OnBase for over 6000 students.
Evidence supported the successful high quality images.
The document repositories and classification system established made for quick reference.
Additionally, search tools have increase the speed in finding documents, including finding all documents related to a particular student.
Source of Evidence: Service Quality

OthOtcm 2: Image

OthOtcm 3: Create an IT position and increase the number of Counselors
An evaluation comparing the Student Financial Aid department at UA staff to comparative institutions of like student populations. An IT position was determined as needed and an additional counselor needed to meet the needs of our student population. These two positions were filled.

Related Measures

M 3: Additional Advisor
Based on an increase in federal aid applications of XXX%, an additional Advisor was needed to provide the expected level of customer service.
Source of Evidence: Service Quality

OthOtcm 4: Reclassify the Counselor position to Advisor
An evaluation of the job description for Student Financial Aid Counselor will be completed by the Human Resource Department and determine the actual performance level of the position.

Related Measures

M 3: Additional Advisor
Based on an increase in federal aid applications of XXX%, an additional Advisor was needed to provide the expected level of customer service.
**Source of Evidence:** Service Quality

**M 4: Reclassify Counselors to Advisors**
Job descriptions for Student Financial Aid Counselors need to be evaluated to determine the appropriate job classification.

**Source of Evidence:** Service Quality

**OthOtcm 5: Implement Lifetime Pell Grant Regulation**
Implement federal regulation limiting Pell Grant eligibility to a cumulative 600% of full-time eligibility.

**Related Measures**

**M 1: Implement Lifetime Pell Grant Regulation**

1) Management staff reviewed new regulation and formed policy and procedures for implementation and processing.

2) Programming rules were added to the financial aid processing system to block the disbursement of funds to any student not eligible under the new regulation.

3) During 12-13, 404 students were tracked as Pell ineligible, and 617 were tracked with less than 1 year eligibility remaining.

4) Monitoring of the 11,755 Pell grant disbursements during 12-13 resulted in 19 payments being adjusted or cancelled by financial aid personnel.

**12-13 Implementation of Pell 600% Lifetime Limit Regulation**

**Notes:**

1) Banner system will not have hard code program capability to administer new 600% limit regulation until 13-14 year.

2) Work around will have to be developed for 12-13 processing to prevent pell overawards.

**Policies:**

1) Pell grant awards will not be disbursed in excess of 600% lifetime limit as determined by Common Origination and Disbursement System (US Dept of Ed).

2) Pell applicants currently in excess of 500.000% (determined by COD) will receive a prorated Pell award.

3) Campus based aid for students in excess of 600% limit as determined by COD will be awarded as follows:

   a. SEOG Grant – not available for awarding.

   b. Perkins – available on a case by case basis.

   c. Work Study – available on a case by case basis.

**Procedures:**

1) Set up tracking field on ROAUSDF (# 341) for LEU's near or over limit.

2) Download PLEU report from COD and populate ROAUSDF field 341.

3) Enter RORRULE under fundcode PELL to block disbursements of ineligible Pell amounts

**Source of Evidence:** Government standards

**Target:**
Goal of regulating Lifetime limit for Federal Pell Grant was successfully completed.

**OthOtcm 6: Implement Repeat Coursework Regulation**

- Evaluate UA policies regarding repeat course attempts. Classes eligible for repeat status are identified.

- The Registrar’s Office provides OIT with a file containing classes eligible for repeat status and graduate/professional classes. The database analyst at OIT completes a Banner data change and loads these classes on the Banner Financial Aid Repeat Course Exclusion Form. Classes on this form are excluded from the repeat coursework enrollment calculation. In addition to graduate and law courses, examples of courses that are included as legitimate repeatable courses are: Music-voice and instruments, dance, study skills, undergraduate research, contract learning in External Degree.

- The repeat coursework functionality is tested in Banner prior to moving to production. The current calculation is working correctly and classes that do not count toward financial aid eligibility due to repeat status are
being excluded from enrollment hours.

- Schools are aware of how it affects financial aid and are advising students in these situations that although the student can enroll in the class, the class will not count in enrollment hours for financial aid purposes.

**Related Measures**

**M 2: Implement Repeat Coursework Regulation**

Staff from Student Financial Aid, the Registrar’s office and Office of Information Technology worked as a team to implement the new Federal Regulation regarding repeat coursework requirements. The law indicates that an institution can pay a student for only one retake of any previously passed course or its equivalency. Graduate students are excluded.

**Measurements and Findings:**

- There are 3206 courses entered on the Banner Financial Aid Repeat Course Exclusion form.
- A total of 349 students are taking classes that are excluded from enrollment hours due to repeat coursework rules.
- A focus group from Student Financial Aid, the Registrar’s office and Office of Information Technology worked as a team to implement the new Federal Regulation regarding repeat coursework requirements.

**Policies**

- **Passed Courses Rule:** An institution can pay a student for only one retake of any previously passed course or its’ equivalency.
- **Failed Courses Rule:** An institution can pay a student when repeating a course (of its equivalency) an infinite number of times if all previous attempts were failures.
- A withdrawal status is not counted as a repeat attempt.

**Procedures**

- Classes eligible for repeat and graduate level classes are entered on the Banner Financial Aid Repeat Course Exclusion form.
- All courses that are excluded appear in the Repeat Number field on the Enrollment by Course Banner form.

**Source of Evidence:** Government standards

**OthOtcm 7: Decrease Instances of Suspended Records in Banner**

**Outcome/Objectives:**

- Create a process to facilitate the loading of duplicate ISIR records.
- Concatenate files by transaction number and load sequentially.
- Drastically decrease the number of transactions loading into suspense allowing data load to occur in a timely manner.
- Eliminate the need for staff to perform significant review to hand match and load records one at a time until all transactions are loaded.
- Improve the current manual process which is labor intensive, time consuming and prone to many errors.

**Related Measures**

**M 5: Automation of Data Load**

**Measurements and Findings:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2011-2012 February First Load</th>
<th>2012-2013 February First Load</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Transactions</td>
<td>10,489</td>
<td>10,644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number that went into suspense</td>
<td>3289</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of days to complete</td>
<td>Five Days</td>
<td>One Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request for Information Letters Printed</td>
<td>The Following Week</td>
<td>The Following Day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comparison Chart**
Policies

All ISIR records received from Central Processing System will be processed using the AppWorx concatenation process.

Records will be loaded based on transaction number in sequential order.

Procedures

Pull ISIR records from EDConn32

Run PARSER program to concatenate multiple ISIR files into one 1213esar.tap file for processing.

PARSER program places the concatenated file in the ESAR OUTPUT folder.

Create a folder and name it the aid year and date. i.e. 1213_02142012

Copy the 1213esar.tap file from the ESAR OUTPUT folder into this folder.

Open AppWorx

Request and submit the chain: USR_R_FAID_ESAR_DELETE_CHAIN

This chain deletes the esar.tap file from prior data load.

Request and submit the chain: USR_R_FAID_ISIR_FILES_CHAIN

This chain creates five files in the FTP folder. One with the total transactions and one for the 01, 02, 03 and 4 and higher transactions.

Review each file in the folder to determine total numbers.

The next step is to process each file beginning with the 01 transactions.

Request and submit the chain: USR_R_FAID_ISIR_01_CHAIN

In Banner, run RCBTP13, RCPMTCH AND RCRTP13.

Next, process the file with the 02 transactions.

Request and submit the chain: USR_R_FAID_ISIR_02_CHAIN

In Banner, run RCBTP13, RCPMTCH AND RCRTP13.

Repeat these steps for the the USR_R_FAID_ISIR_03_CHAIN and the USR_R_FAID_ISIR_04_CHAIN (transactions 04 and higher).

In Banner, run RCBTP13, RCPMTCH AND RCRTP13 after each chain.

Source of Evidence: Service Quality
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Other Outcomes, with Any Associations and Related Measures, Targets, Findings, and Action Plans

**OthOtcm 1: Concatenate FAFSA files by transaction number**

Concatenate Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) files by transaction number: Currently the Banner system cannot load multiple transactions that are submitted to us by Central Processing System in the same files. Multiple transactions load into suspense and the suspense files must be manually reviewed and loaded. This is an extremely burdensome task. This new procedure will decrease the number of transactions loading into suspense allowing data load to occur in a timely manner.

**Related Measures**

**M 1:** Calculate work hour and administrative burden savings

Calculate work hour and administrative burden savings related to reduction in workload by implementing concatenation process.

Initial data loads for this process typically consist of over 10,000 records. Of these 10,000 records, approximately 3000 (30%) were suspended and required 5 days of continual manual processing to resolve discrepancies sufficient for continued processing. Initial data load for the 2011-12 processing consisted of 10,644 transactions. Using the concatenation process, the suspended record count was reduced to 500 records and manual processing was reduced to a single day.

Source of Evidence: Activity volume

**M 2:** Feedback related to perceived benefits from other in-state Banner institutions

Provide professional feedback related to the perceived benefit from other Banner institutions within the state.

The creation of this process epitomizes process improvement beyond the scope of SCT's ability to provide solutions to national higher education institutions. The process was presented at the Alabama Banner User Group (ALBUG) annual meeting as an outstanding processing procedure. There was an overwhelming interest from other institutions with desire to implement the process. SCT representatives have indicated an interest in this process being offered as training at the national Banner conference (SUMMIT).

Source of Evidence: Service Quality

**M 9:** Reduced data processing workload and expedite loading of federal aid application data

Student Financial Aid created a process to facilitate the loading of duplicate ISIR records. OIT created a PARSER program to concatenate ISIR records in an automated format using AppWorx. This solution addresses several Requests for Improvement (RFIs) currently submitted to SunGard. Initial data loads for this process typically consist of over 10,000 records. Of these 10,000 records, approximately 3000 (30%) were suspended and required 8 days of continual manual processing to resolve discrepancies sufficient for continued processing. Initial data load for the 2011-12 processing consisted of 10,644 transactions. Using the concatenation process, the suspended record count was reduced to 500 records and manual processing was reduced to a single day. This creation of this process epitomizes process improvement beyond the scope of SCT’s ability to provide solutions to national higher education institutions. The process was presented at the Alabama Banner User Group (ALBUG) annual meeting as an outstanding processing procedure. There was an overwhelming interest from other institutions with desire to implement the process. SCT representatives have indicated an interest in this process being offered as training at the national Banner conference (SUMMIT).

Source of Evidence: Efficiency

**OthOtcm 2: Refine Call Center**

Refine our use of the newly added call center to achieve the most benefit from their services.

**Related Measures**

**M 3:** Call volume and context of questions statistics

Statistically evaluate the phone centers operational numbers related to call volume and context of questions asked.

Source of Evidence: Activity volume

**M 4:** Phone center question assessment/inadequacies of student financial aid knowledge
Assess the context of questions asked through the phone centers contacts and determine alternative consumer information related to inadequacies in student financial aid knowledge.

Source of Evidence: Evaluations

OthOtcm 3: Use of innovative products to enhance customer service

Increase the use of the latest technology to increase the services provided to our customers through innovative products.

Connected Document
Student Financial Aid Timetable

Related Measures

M 5: Just in time consumer information
Implement new Banner SSB to provide just in time consumer information to our customers

Source of Evidence: Efficiency

M 6: Implement Hyland Onbase Imaging System
Setup, training, equipment purchasing and installation of Hyland Onbase Imaging System has been completed and is scheduled to go live in August of 2012.

Source of Evidence: Administrative measure - other

OthOtcm 4: Adding tracking messages to values created in Banner for Veterans Affairs Benefit operating system

Student Financial Aid has created tracking in the Banner operating system to identify all requirements for the Veterans Affairs Benefit (VAB) programs. We will refine this process by adding tracking messages to the values created in Banner. The VAB program is a group of benefits outside the envelope of Title IV federal aid. By creating message classes in Banner financial aid, University staff will be able to identify and provide consumer information to our veteran benefit recipients concerning the status of their certifications.

Connected Document
Student Financial Aid Timetable

Related Measures

M 7: CVA feedback
Obtain feedback from the CVA related to the process and the effects on consumer information:

Student comments related to the implementation were overwhelmingly positive. The addition of these tracking requirements made it possible for all staff in Student Financial Aid to view the completeness of the file needed to certify benefits. Counseling and Consumer Information related to VA Benefits was greatly increased. Benefit recipients were surveyed in person during counseling sessions and 100% indicated that this practice would reduce confusion and provided much needed information related to the status of their certifications. Tracking requirements also insured audit compliance by enabling the staff to view mandated form completion needed to successfully pass government reviews with no findings.

Source of Evidence: Evaluations

M 8: SFA phone center call volume and customer satisfaction statistical data
Review statistical data from the SFA phone center related to call volume and customer satisfaction. Reviewing phone center data indicated a 61% decrease in escalated calls in need of additional information related to the certification of veteran benefits. The phone center is an external organization that handles phone calls to Student Financial Aid. Students that have issues that can not be handled by the external organization, forward these problems to our VA Certifying Official for resolution.

Source of Evidence: Document Analysis
Timetable: What Assessment Measures will be Administered When for Each Expected Outcome

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome #1</th>
<th>Outcome #2</th>
<th>Outcome #3</th>
<th>Outcome #4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concatenate Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) files by transaction number</td>
<td>Refine our use of the newly added call center to achieve the most benefit from their services.</td>
<td>Increase the use of the latest technology to increase the services.</td>
<td>Create tracking messages and instructions for the VAB program requirements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **September**
- **October**
- **November**
  - Provide feedback from ALABUG Conference attendees
  - Enter messages into Banner for MIL’s and Banner SSB
- **December**
  - Compare phone call volume with previous year to date
- **January**
  - Evaluate the consumer info for SSB for time sensitive products
- **February**
  - Install and activate new imaging product
  - Obtain feedback from CVA concerning the effectiveness of process
- **March**
- **April**
  - Calculate administrative work hour savings
  - Compile statistics related to phone center calls related to VA with previous year.
- **May**
- **June**
- **July**
- **August**
  - Review and compare reasons for calls

Optional Additional Narrative (Use this space to provide any additional detail concerning the 2011-12 Administrative Office Assessment Plan)