

Office Efficiencies

Creative, Innovative or Just
Common Sense

State of Affairs

- Increased Student Applications
- Direct or Indirect effect on office due to State budget cuts
- Changes in programs requiring more work or increased student advisement
 - Direct Lending
 - Year Round Pell
 - Improved programs or advisement for Veterans, Foster Youth
 - Increased vigilance due to increased instances of fraud

Change is the Mother of Invention?

- Hard times make for great opportunities for needed changes
 - At Carnegie Mellon graduation, Google CEO, Eric Schmidt, reminded people that hard times beget innovation.
- Administration and students may be more open to changes and new ideas when they promise fiscal or service improvements

Verification

- Number of students selected for verification rising
 - Foster Youth / Dependency Issues
 - Disabled / TANF selected more frequently

School A - One School's Solution to Increased Workload / Verification

- To accommodate the increase (in applications/students) and to try to reduce workload stress, I hired a team (three) part-time personnel.
 - Their job is to process the daily intake documents that were received throughout the day. That way, the daily intake is kept current and there is no backlog.
 - Once they are finished with the daily intake, they help process files (by the latest date) that are waiting for professional staff with large caseloads to process.
 - They process the caseload for the professional staff on vacation.

School A Suggestions (con't)

- We try to keep as up-to-date as possible but it isn't always easy. We are working towards doing anything and everything to automate our file review process, eliminate specific verification codes from review and eliminating steps to reduce looking at the same student file more than twice.
- We make every effort to maintain compliance and eliminate any steps that are not required by regulation. That has helped us but with all the new changes for 2009-10 and no new staff (hiring freeze), we don't always accomplish exactly what we want when we want it but look for new ideas do the same task with less effort.

School B - Another School's Suggestions

- Working on two main areas regarding trying to simplify our processing and increase our efficiency in being required to process 20-25% more students with essentially the same staff.

School B Suggestions (con't)

1. Eliminate all non-required verification items and reduce our verification to the 30% required by law. Specifically:
 - We will use the verification priority code on the FAFSA to choose the 30% of our students who most need verification and not verify the rest of the (selected) students. We wanted to implement this for 2009/10, but ran into some computer issues. We may still be able to put it into effect for this year, but certainly for 2010/11.
 - Beginning 2009/10, we chose to not verify any of the dependency questions, unless they are flagged on the FAFSA or we have conflicting information. In a recent program review we were actually cited for not simply accepting a student's checking of the orphan or ward of the court question on the FAFSA. We had made the student independent by professional judgment. The feds said that was unnecessary.

School B Suggestions (con't)

- Beginning 2010/11, we will no longer request a Student Information Sheet (our supplemental application) for students, unless they are/will be verified as part of 30%.
- Beginning 2010/11, we will no longer request a California drivers license of all our students.
- Generally, in these tight times, we no longer have the luxury of doing any processing beyond that which is required by law.

School #2 Suggestions (con't)

2. Improve our financial aid processing through PeopleSoft.
 - Implement the to-do list self-service, so students can see what is required to complete their files.
 - Create an interactive BOG Fee Waiver Form so that students can go online and apply for a fee waiver online and have the fee waiver post directly to the system.

at Chabot and/or LPC

- My goal is to remove as many repetitive, manual work as possible to free staff time
- Will require some investment of time and resources on the part of district, college and/or my office, but my job is to convince those who need convincing of the benefits to all involved

at Chabot and/or LPC

- Stronger campaign for students to use online/web for routine issues rather than stand in line at office
- Electronic BOG
 - Will probably go to CCCApply product, Banner product too far off for us

at Chabot and/or LPC (con't)

- SAP

- Run on all students after each semester's grades posted so staff and students know immediately academic eligibility before or after application for financial aid
 - Currently manual review required if has academic history but no continuous financial aid history
- Run at student's first ISIR load in between, for new students to default to eligible
 - Yep, currently manually done by staff

at Chabot and/or LPC (con't)

- Email communication
 - Save expenses/resources such as paper, printing, postage, staff and student staff time mailing out and dealing w/ returned mail
 - Pros: ecologically and economically friendly
 - Cons: change is hard! Getting students to transition will take some time

at Chabot and/or LPC (con't)

- Auto awarding
 - Non-verified files will not have "demo", our supplemental application
 - Will be referred to Banner Self-Service (Class Web/The Zone) to electronically sign FA checklist, including authorization to pay
 - Student loans?

Other Suggestions

- Shared Suggestions from Participants

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