November 9, 2020

MEMORANDUM

TO: Erika Lacro, Vice President for Community Colleges

FROM: Project Charter Team – Financial Aid
Executive Sponsor: Tammi Chun
Project Manager: Cathy Bio
Chancellor Lead: Lui Hokoana
VCSA Lead: Judy Oliveira

SUBJECT: Financial Aid Project Charter - Progress Update

The UHCC Organizational and Resource Planning document proposed centralization of financial aid functions as a way to streamline policies and processes, create efficiencies, and improve the student experience. The Financial Aid Project Charter outlines the approach we are taking to achieve these goals. There are two components to the project, which are being run simultaneously:

1. An implementation plan that aims to align policies and procedures that support UHCC strategic priorities
2. Centralized processing of back-end functions of financial aid, starting with a group of pilot campuses.

The Project Charter has been vetted with campus financial aid staff over the last two weeks. To date, the following milestones have been accomplished:

1. Financial Aid Project Charter was submitted for approval.
2. Pilot campuses have been determined (Campuses who volunteered and/or needed immediate support): HAW, MAU, WIN
3. CFAO Work group was established:
   a. Project Team to include Chancellor and VCSA Leads
   b. Working group to include Core Team and additional sub-groups
   c. Communication of purpose and timeline with key stakeholders (VCSAs, Financial Aid staff)
4. FA Functions Document (Draft) was developed as a starting point for an implementation plan. The document aims to:
   a. Identify financial aid functions that can be centrally administered at the system level to create consistency, equity, efficiency and to ensure compliance;
b. Identify financial aid functions that should remain at the campus level to provide an appropriate level of support to students; maintain campus-level expertise required to support other departments in financial aid matters; and ensure compliance. The document is intended to help campuses in evaluating workload and position descriptions to create efficiency and effectiveness and improve the student experience.

Review of FA Functions Document Draft: Description by Tabs:

1. **By Location**: Functions sorted by proposed location processing. This view demonstrates what functions we propose transitioning from Campus to Central.
2. **By Phase**: Functions sorted by implementation. This view demonstrates how the work is being staggered:
   a. Phase 1: Centrally administer and process Tracking, SAP, Budgeting and Packaging for pilot campuses, Target May 2021. Requires timely implementation of SAP, Budgeting and Packaging, and Verification.
   b. Phase 2: Centrally administer identified Phase 2 functions, Target Oct. 2021: Requires further discussion and planning. See Action Items column (In Progress).
   c. Phase 3: Centrally administer remaining Phase 3 functions, Target Dec. 2021: Requires discussion about policies and processes external to financial aid (e.g. Admissions/Registrar, Academic Affairs, UH System, etc.). See Action Items column (In Progress).
3. **Pilot Phase 1**: This information demonstrates what action items and support will be needed to launch the pilot (In progress):
   a. Work plan outlining action items needed to begin centralizing processes for pilot campuses by May 1 (for Fall awarding).
4. **Positions**: This information will help campuses in planning discussions:
   a. Inventory of current positions at UHCC and at campus;
   b. Financial aid functions proposed to remain at the campus;
   c. Work plan for campuses to begin planning for roles and position types needed at the campus and how restructuring will impact the student experience.

Based on our research and planning discussions, the Project Team and work group have the following recommendations and feedback:

1. **Commitment to timely awarding for Fall**: In order to launch the centralization pilot by May 1 (and avoid delays to Fall 2021 awarding), we will need support and advocacy from ITS and Administrative Services to timely launch and complete SAP, Budgeting and Packaging, and Verification implementation. We are currently 3-4 weeks behind schedule in securing a contract for Budgeting and Packaging. A contract for Verification should be secured no later than the first week of Dec. 2020.
2. **Commitment to appropriate staffing for CFAO**: In order to perform back-end processing for pilot campuses (May 1-Phase 1; Oct 1-Phase 2; Dec 1-Phase 3), we should advertise and fill the
vacant UHCC position (PBB) no later than Oct 1. To accommodate staffing for Phase 1, we will continue using temporary reassignment from campuses.

3. **Possible delayed savings/cost reductions:** We may not be poised to provide an accurate projection of staffing needs at CFAO or campuses until the centralization pilot is fully implemented. Our current target date is December 2021. It may also be difficult for campuses to make staffing decisions about financial aid until planning for Admissions, Recruitment and Onboarding has progressed further.

4. **Approach in evaluating workload and positions:**
   a. The Project Team and working group will provide a detailed outline of the functions and skill sets that will be required to appropriately serve students and maintain compliance at the campus.
   b. Project Team will facilitate initial conversations about the FA Functions Document Draft with campus financial aid leads. Message will be:
      i. Centralization of back-end processing is intended to increase efficiency and streamline processing for students. These changes will significantly reduce workload at campuses and will also create opportunities to rethink ways in which the financial aid office can contribute to enrollment management and student success;
      ii. Changes will likely impact campus staffing structure, which may include descriptions of job duties, shifting of responsibilities, and doing work differently;
      iii. We encourage campus financial aid leads, in coordination with campus leadership, to have open conversations about what kinds of changes centralization may bring to current campus staffing.
      iv. Final decisions about staffing will be led by Chancellors and Vice Chancellors, using the information provided by the Project Team. We recommend financial aid staffing decisions should be made in coordination with discussions taking place in other areas of the campus.

**Longer term outcomes include:**

1. Streamlined policies and procedures and centralized back-end functions for consistency, equity, and efficiency.
2. Reduced workload at campus, creating opportunities for redesign and improved student experience.
3. Increased enrollment
4. Increased first-year momentum
5. Increased retention
6. Increased completion and completion in a timely manner
7. Reduced gaps in attainment for underrepresented populations in support of equity goals