

**OFFICE OF STUDENT FINANCIAL AID
STRATEGIC PLAN**

Mission

The Office of Student Financial Aid provides financial assistance to students who, without such assistance would not be able to pursue higher education.

Vision

The Office of Student Financial Aid will utilize continued service and technological advances to provide students every opportunity in pursuing and continuing their education while maintaining behaviors and standards of professional conduct.

Values

Based on the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFA), the financial aid professional shall:

- Be committed to removing financial barriers for those who wish to pursue postsecondary learning.
- Make every effort to assist students with financial need.
- Be aware of the issues affecting students and advocate their interests at the institutional, state, and federal levels.
- Support efforts to encourage students, as early as the elementary grades, to aspire to and plan for education beyond high school.
- Educate students and families through quality consumer information.
- Respect the dignity and protect the privacy of students, and ensure the confidentiality of student records and personal circumstances.
- Ensure equity by applying all need analysis formulas consistently across the institution's full population of student financial aid applicants.
- Provide services that do not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, age, or economic status.
- Recognize the need for professional development and continuing education opportunities.
- Promote the free expression of ideas and opinions, and foster respect for diverse viewpoints within the profession.
- Commit to the highest level of ethical behavior and refrain from conflict of interest or the perception thereof.
- Maintain the highest level of professionalism, reflecting a commitment to the goals of the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators.

Goal 1: Access and Diversity: An ongoing goal is to improve service to students and other customers by continued improvements.

Benchmarks

- Report liaison position activity related to customer service.
- Report professional development and training sessions attended.
- Report developments to student access.

Strategies

- Modify a current position to a liaison position for Financial Aid and Student Business Services, specifically related to student account resolution. In addition, the position allows for additional notification to students of upcoming cancellation dates and outstanding balance.
- Continue the highly successful practice of staffing a financial aid advisor housed at the Law School to address the specific financial aid issues for law students.
- Continue to successfully utilize a position with the responsibility to review and award all TEXAS Grant and B-on-Time student loans.
- Initiate the loan certification process three weeks earlier.
- Evaluate and streamline forms and data collection documents for students selected for verification.
- Continue to provide online access for all student and parent forms.
- Continue our efforts to provide multiple professional developments and training sessions. This includes staff update on FERPA and other related requirements. Utilize Senior Advisor position for training initiatives, including training topic as well as quality customer service.
- Continue addressing federal default rates, borrower concerns and student loan indebtedness.
- An alternative loan comparison site has been added to our website so students and parents can compare terms and interest rates before borrowing additional funds.

Goal 2: Human Resources and Infrastructure: Increase efficient communication through the implementation of knowledge base/email management software.

Benchmarks

- Monitor call volume after implementation to verify the reduction of calls and increase in web site visits.
- Monitor “walk in traffic” to verify the reduction of office visits and a subsequent increase in web site traffic.

Strategies

- Completion of a comprehensive searchable knowledge base that will allow 24-hour a day access to financial aid information.
- Implement knowledge based software to the advisor's email accounts. This will allow advisors to quickly respond to student email inquiries, issue tracking numbers to ensure complete follow up, and provide consistency of responses across departments.
- Reduce the incoming call volume and office visits by students through the use of technology by addressing frequently asked questions quickly and easily thus allowing advisors to spend more time with students and parents with unusual and special needs and circumstances.

Goal 3: **Teaching and Learning**: Provide more efficient scholarship administration.

Benchmarks

- Review processes after the 2009-2010 award cycle.
- Test implemented procedures against other interfacing and impacted groups: Institutional Advancement, Accounting, and students.
- Evaluate success of events through student and donor feedback.
- Test implemented procedures against other interfacing and impacted groups.
- Review processes after 2009-10 award cycle.
- Develop customer evaluation instrument to measure acceptance/effectiveness.

Strategies

- Examine and streamline management of pooled merit scholarship accounts.
- Identify funding sources, accounting practices, and funding shortfalls to determine optimum methods for student/donor matching and merit scholarship offering. This will be done by a Senior Accountant.
- Implement an improved method for matching merit donors to students, and then tracking that information in Banner and the Scholarship Tracking System.
- Establish annual university-level scholarship events.
- Utilize Unit Coordinator of Stewardship to develop, plan and organize university-level student scholarship recognition events to encourage donor engagement in Texas Tech University.
- Utilize Unit coordinator to develop profile data collected from events for student and donor communications.
- Support institutionally identified strategic recruitment and retention targets.
- Renaming of Merit and Competitive Scholarships for greater ease of communication and to assist in recruiting.
- Publicize new merit scholarship values and eligibility criteria through www.scholarships.ttu.edu, printed media, admissions recruiters, and college coordination.

- Develop web resources for external scholarship searches to support retention of enrolled students through value-added scholarship packaging approaches.

Goal 4: Engagement: Increase the level of communication with students and parents. Increased collaboration with admissions to retain and recruit student to Texas Tech University.

Benchmarks

- Report student and parent attendance at sessions and events attended.
- Report student transactions in Student Financial Center.

Strategies

- Addition of two additional New Student Orientation sessions, and provide an in-depth “Paying the Bill” presentation at each for students and parents.
- Provide information sessions for prospective students and parents at the semi-annual University Day.
- Student Financial Center was open for service the weekend that the dorms opened to allow parents and students to receive assistance from Financial Aid and the Billing office prior to parents leaving campus.
- Expand use of media including newspaper, e-mail, and paper notification to encourage early financial aid application.
- Conduct call campaigns to freshmen and transfer students concerning financing options.

Goal 5: Partnerships: Increase Outreach and External Partnerships.

Benchmarks

- Report outreach events attended.
- Report website data on aid calculator.

Strategies

- Continue to work closely with Admissions to begin a prospective student communication flow, and encourage prospective student interest.
- Conduct financial aid workshops with college departments, high school counselors and area high schools to promote college accessibility.
- Provide access to Red Raider Guarantee to incoming Gateway students who began as TTU students in Fall 08, and otherwise met all RRG eligibility requirements.
- Conduct outreach in Dallas, Houston, San Antonio, El Paso, and surrounding areas in conjunction with Admission Office.
- Development of online scholarship and financial aid calculator to assist families in making decisions concerning how to finance education for their student.

Goal 6: Complementary: Adhere to the NASFAA Statement of Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct.

Benchmarks

- Report training, support, professional development and continuing education attendance by staff.

Strategies

- Provide training, support, professional development and continuing education for staff to ensure all areas for student success with regard to state, institutional and federal levels are attainable.
- Maintain behaviors and standards of professional conduct.
- Ensure staff disclosure to appropriate personnel regarding conflict of interest issues.
- Incorporate and follow-through ethical principles and ethical bonds within the institution as well as those institutions and entities we collaborate with.
- Communicate with conference schools and sharing policies and procedures for the benefit of a better system of protocol for all institutions while at the same time strengthening bonds for utilizing services and technology to its fullest potential.