

**Program Review
FY07**

Financial Aid Office

Staff Members

Stacey Hanson – Financial Aid Director
Steven Davis – Financial Aid Officer
Adrienne Plemel – Financial Aid Technician
Heidi Morreale – Financial Aid Assistant

Hours of Operation

Monday through Friday
8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Program Review Committee:

Stacey J. Hanson, Committee Chair

Steven Davis

Adrienne Plemel

Heidi Morreale

Kathleen Higgins

Rebecca Asplund

Dustin Conover

Natalie Lane

Table of Contents

Section I.	Overview of Program.....	4
Section II.	Assessment Related to Goals for Student Success.....	10
Section III.	Assessment: Regulations Compliance.....	19
Section IV.	Assessment: Staff Development.....	21
Section V.	Assessment: Program Facilities and Equipment.....	22
Section VI.	Review of Printed Material and Web Site.....	23
Section VII.	Recommendations from Previous Program Review.....	26
Section VIII.	Summary of Strengths and Limitations.....	27
Section IX.	Future Directions.....	28

Section I. Overview of Program

A. Description and Philosophy

The mission of the Financial Aid Office (FAO) is to provide students with access to higher education. The FAO's philosophy is consistent with that of the Department of Education (DE) in providing student aid under Title IV of the Higher Education Act. The family has the primary responsibility to pay for a student's education. Federal Financial Aid is intended to supplement the family's expected ability to contribute to the education of the student. Based on this philosophy, students are expected to pay for the expense of their education using either their own resources or self-help aid such as student loans and employment. Eligibility for gift aid is determined using Federal Methodology, FAO and institutional policies. Aid is intended for those expenses directly related to the cost of education. In accordance with federal regulations, aid is awarded in a manner that will allow as many students as possible to attend WWCC.

The goals of the FAO are:

- ◆ Provide funding information to students and parents in order to access higher education.
- ◆ Provide competitive award packages to students pursuing higher education in order to attract them to and retain them at Western Wyoming Community College.
- ◆ Remain in compliance and up-to-date with Federal, State and Institutional policies and regulations.
- ◆ Serve as a financial resource to post, current and prospective students; parents, high school counselors and other outside entities.
- ◆ Provide opportunities for students to develop the skills necessary to successfully deal with beauracracies.
- ◆ Provide excellent customer service that will assist students in achieving their educational goals.
- ◆ Work cooperatively with other campus entities to ensure the success of WWCC students.

The FAO is responsible for overseeing the Title IV grant, loan and work-study programs and all institutional and external scholarships and grant programs. The office coordinates resources with outside agencies including the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), Workforce Investment Act (WIA), State of Wyoming, Sweetwater BOCES, Evanston Regional Hospital, AmeriCorps, Veteran's Administration (VA), Wyoming Community College Commission (WCCC), Western Wyoming College Foundation and external scholarship donors. Each student's financial aid award package is monitored to prevent the over awarding of student aid from all sources.

The FAO provides the opportunity for as many students as possible to attend Western Wyoming Community College by educating, counseling, encouraging early application submission and awarding aid in a timely manner.

Categories of Financial Aid

Federal Financial Aid

Federal Pell Grants
Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG)
Federal Subsidized Stafford Loans
Federal Unsubsidized Stafford Loans
Federal Parent Loans for Undergraduate Students (PLUS)
Federal Work Study
Veterans' Educational Benefits
Veterans' Administration Rehabilitation Benefits
Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG)
Carl D. Perkins – Occupational Student Services Awards

Federal/State Financial Aid

Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership (LEAP)
Workforce Investment Act (WIA)

State Financial Aid

Combat Veterans' Tuition Program
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Waivers
Wyoming Investment in Nursing Program (WYIN)
SBOCES
Hathaway Scholarship
National Guard Educational Assistance Plan
Vietnam Veterans Tuition Assistance Program

Institutional Aid

Superior Student Scholarships
Honor Scholarships
Senior Scholarships
Excellence in Academic Scholarships
Division Scholarships
Competition Grants
Special Ability Grants
Athletic Grants
High School Concurrent Waivers
Senior Citizen Waivers

Faculty/Staff Waivers
Evanston Nursing Program Awards
Externally Funded Scholarships
Short-term Loan Program

Foundation Awards – Civic Grants

Anna Baird Williams Scholarship
Anna Baird Williams Emergency Fund
Civic Grants
Whisenand I and II Grants

Recent History of the Program

Changes and Accomplishments

The Financial Aid Office (FAO) has undergone numerous changes over the last five years. The primary changes relate to the changes in technology used to process aid. To communicate with students in a more consistent and timely manner regarding their financial aid application status, the FAO adopted the use of Datatel's Communications Management program. This allows the FAO to generate letters to students on a weekly basis which inform them of the missing data elements required to complete their financial aid file, rather than manually writing the letters, as was done previous to 2002. In 2004, the FAO ceased utilizing the EDEXpress software to communicate with the Central Processing System regarding Pell Grant origination and disbursement records. Datatel enhanced its product to provide this functionality to its end users. WWCC was the first community college in Wyoming to become a full participant with the Department of Education in this endeavor. Since then, the process has been enhanced to include the import of institutional student information records (ISIRs) and the ability to make changes to data elements on the ISIR, etc. In the spring of 2006, the Department of Education launched its web based Return of Title IV Funds (R2T4) product, which the FAO adopted. Prior to that, the FAO utilized the Department's R2T4 software to perform the R2T4 function for WWCC students.

The student loan process has also undergone significant electronically based changes over the last five years. The most significant being the electronic master promissory note (MPN), which was adopted in the summer of 2003. Currently 89% of all WWCC students receiving loan funds file their applications electronically. This allows a more timely submission of loan certifications compared to the paper process. Another change was adopting the USA Funds web based loan certification product OpenNet. Prior to its adoption, the FAO used the dial up product, WhizKid. The web based product allows for real-time submission of certifications and modifications to a student's loan funds. In the spring of 2005, WWCC became a pilot school for USA Funds Debt Manager program – a web based default management tool for post secondary schools. After providing input on the program, it was implemented on WWCC's campus in the fall of 2005. This has become a beneficial tool in managing students in a delinquent loan status, and a means

for working with them to correct the delinquency status before they default on their student loans. Letters are generated and sent by the FAO at various intervals – 15-60 days delinquent, 61-120 days delinquent, 121-180 days delinquent, 181-270 days delinquent and 271+ days delinquent. A number of students, after receiving letters notifying them of their delinquent payment status, have contacted the FAO and the loan officer has worked with them to come current on their student loan payments. This process has impacted our cohort default rate, as our current cohort default rate decreased by 2% from FY05. This is significant, as the other Wyoming Community Colleges and University experienced an increase in their default rates, as well as a national increase.

Reporting for the Veterans benefits programs has also become a web based process rather than a manual reporting process both for the school's certifying official and students that are receiving VA funding. Significant work has been done to improve the access to VA information. VA students can now access all of the relevant information on the financial aid web page.

The institutional scholarship program at WWCC has been greatly enhanced since 2001. The institution approved Women's Volleyball as an NJCAA sport in 2003 and Men's Soccer as an NJCAA sport in the fall of 2006. Along with the NJCAA status came additional dollars to award in scholarships for each sport. Women's club soccer was added in the fall of 2006 and also received funding to award stipends to students participating. In the fall of 2005, the book stipend for the Honor scholarship was increased by two hundred dollars, offering students a three hundred dollar book stipend each semester, rather than two hundred each semester. A new scholarship, the Excellence in Academics scholarship was created and implemented in the fall of 2005 to recognize those students that were not eligible for institutional scholarships upon high school graduation, but since attending WWCC have shown the ability to succeed academically at the collegiate level. In addition, the State Legislature approved two new funding sources, the Wyoming Investment in Nursing (WYIN) Loan program and the Combat Veteran's Waiver; and the Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG) was approved by the Federal Department of Education for implementation in the fall of 2006.

In March 2006, the Wyoming State Legislature approved a new State scholarship program, to be called the Hathaway Scholarship. This scholarship is available to students that graduate from a Wyoming high school and attend one of the seven community colleges in Wyoming or attend the University of Wyoming. The criteria are based on ACT scores and high school grade point average. Due to the inception of this scholarship program, beginning in FY08, a new scholarship program will be implemented at WWCC by the FAO. The college will be utilizing institutional dollars to enhance the Hathaway scholarships for which students qualify, in addition to adding several new categories of scholarships for various student populations.

Changes to the FAO general functions over the last five years include updating the office's satisfactory academic policies regarding the duration of eligibility and automatic probation for first time freshman within .25 of the required grade point average for various financial aid awards. The FAO has steadily worked to reduce the paperwork

required to apply for financial assistance and to provide a student friendly environment. At present, a student need only fill out the Free Application for Student Aid (FAFSA), to begin the financial aid process. In 2004 the FAO implemented online acceptance of financial aid awards for current students and in the spring of 2006 implemented electronic bookstore lines of credit for eligible students to purchase their text books by utilizing their financial aid funds. In the fall of 2004, the college embarked on a major gifts campaign – “Gifts for the Future.” This endeavor created a position for a development officer. During the 2004-2005 academic years, the FAO worked closely with the Development Office to define and refine roles and responsibilities relating to soliciting and accepting donations for the WWC Foundation.

The financial aid processed by this office has increased by 35% from FY02 to FY06, although enrollment at WWCC has not shown a significant increase. The number of students borrowing loan funds from the Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFEL) at WWCC has increased significantly over the last five years. In the 2005-2006 academic year, WWCC students accepted \$1,428,416 in student loans. This is a 39% increase in the actual dollar amount borrowed in 2001-2002 and a 43% increase in the number of loans certified during the 2001-2002 academic year. The Pell Grant program has shown a 3% increase in award amounts since FY02. In 2005-2006, WWCC students accepted \$1,110,785.00 in Pell Grant funds, up from \$993,980.00 in 2001-2002. Institutional and Foundation scholarships and grants awarded in FY06 totaled \$1,091,513.00. The FAO has requested a 25% increase for this funding source effective FY08.

On February 8, 2006, President Bush signed the Higher Education Reconciliation Act of 2005 (HERA), Pub. L. 109-171. This legislation included many changes to the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965, which affect the general provisions for the federal student aid programs authorized by Title IV of the HEA, as well as provisions on student and institutional eligibility. Specific changes include the new Academic Competitiveness and SMART Grants, academic year, distance education, need analysis and cost of attendance, program eligibility, return of Title IV funds, student eligibility, consolidation loans, disbursement of loans, false certification discharges, interest rates, loan limits, military deferments, PLUS loans for graduate or professional students, rehabilitation of defaulted loans and teacher loan forgiveness. These changes have impacted how the FAO does business and have been, or will be, implemented within the established timelines set forth by the Department of Education.

The FAO continues to meet the ever-changing demands of administering, processing and disbursing student financial assistance. While the funding amounts and sources of financial aid have increased yearly, the staffing level of the office has decreased by one full-time paraprofessional position. Innovation, creativity and hard work have been employed by the Financial Aid Office staff in order to adequately meet the needs of the students, while remaining in compliance with regulatory requirements. This is becoming increasingly challenging, however, considering the limited staffing resources of the FAO.

B. How the WWCC Guiding Principles are Reflected in Our Program:

1. Learning is Our Purpose:

The Financial Aid Office enables students to receive a post-secondary education by assisting with the cost of attending WWCC. Not only does the FAO provide students the opportunity to gain a college education, but they also provide opportunities to learn life skills such as budgeting, dealing with strictly governed agencies, filling out credit applications, and meeting deadlines. The FAO also contributes to educating the community/students/faculty and staff on the financial aid process through Financial Aid Nights held in all of our service area high schools, advisor training, and participating in recruitment events held on campus.

2. Students are Our Focus:

Students are the reason for the FAO's existence. Every service offered by the FAO, exists, in one way or another, to meet student's needs. We have a well-trained staff that is available to assist students with all aspects of financial aid before, during and after their time at Western.

3. Adapting to Change Defines Our Future:

It is not an exaggeration to state that the FAO experiences processing changes each academic year. These changes range from implementing new funding sources, to computer software enhancements to Federal regulation and policy changes. Staying on top of the many changes affecting the aid programs is a constant challenge in the area of Financial Aid

4. Ethical Standards Guide Our Actions:

Federal Regulations, institutional policies, laws and confidentiality must be followed in order to maintain the integrity of the Financial Aid program and continue WWCC's participation in Title IV funding programs.

Section II: Assessment Related to Program Goals and Goals for Student Success

A. Clients/Customers Served by the Financial Aid Office

Those benefiting from the services offered by the FAO include prospective college students, current WWCC students, past WWCC students, parents, WWCC Faculty and Staff, High School Counselors, WWC Foundation Donors, Lenders, Guarantor Agencies, the Wyoming Community College Commission and WWCC Outreach Center personnel. In the past, the majority of the customers served were seen in the office. With the implementation of an on-line application process, the FAO staff has contact now not only with those individuals physically present in the office, but also with the increasing number of individuals seeking its services on-line. In many cases, these contacts are more time consuming as they tend to require several correspondences in order to adequately answer questions, etc.

With the implementation of the Hathaway scholarship, the FAO staff has also seen an increased volume of application submissions for this particular funding source. The applications are presented both electronically and in paper format. Each qualifying applicant receives a provisional award letter, which has in turn increased the customers served by the FAO. The FAO also serves Veteran's of the Armed forces and has seen a 28% increase in the number of veterans attending WWCC since 2002. It is the belief of the FAO that this number will continue to increase as military men and women return from their tour of duty.

B. How Financial Aid Contributes to Student Learning

Approximately 74% of eligible full-time Western Wyoming Community College's students receive some type of financial aid, while approximately 33% of eligible part-time students receive financial assistance (part-time includes three quarter-time; half time; and less than half time students). Without the financial assistance many of these students receive, they would not be able to pursue higher education.

The goals of the Financial Aid Office address student learning in various ways. The table below demonstrates how the Goals for Student Success are addressed in the FAO program goals.

Financial Aid Office Goals:

- I. Provide funding information to students and parents in order to access higher education.

- II. Provide competitive award packages to students pursuing higher education in order to attract them to and retain them at Western Wyoming Community College.
- III. Remain in compliance and up-to-date with Federal, State and Institutional policies and regulations.
- IV. Serve as a financial resource to post, current and prospective students; parents, high school counselors and other outside entities.
- V. Provide opportunities for students to develop the skills necessary to successfully deal with beauracracies.
- VI. Provide excellent customer service that will assist students in achieving their educational goals.
- VII. Work cooperatively with other campus entities to ensure the success of WWCC students.

<u>FAO Goals</u>	<u>Communicate Competently</u>	<u>Develop Life Skills</u>	<u>Solve Problems Effectively</u>	<u>See Issues From Multiple Perspectives</u>	<u>Retrieve Information</u>
I.	X	X	X	X	X
II.	X		X		X
III.	X	X	X	X	X
IV.	X		X	X	X
V.	X	X	X	X	X
VI.	X	X	X	X	X
VII.	X		X	X	X

The Goals for Student Success are also reflected in the dealings that students have with the FAO in the following ways:

1. **Communicate Competently:** Students learn to communicate their needs to the FAO staff. In some cases they also learn to communicate their needs to the Department of Education, Lenders, and other government entities.
2. **Retrieve Information:** In order to fill out the Financial Aid paperwork, students must access information from various agencies including the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Social Security Administration (SSA), and Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). Students who choose to accept student loan funds also have exposure to working with lenders and guarantee agencies. Students learn to retrieve information through award letters, scholarship information, and civic grant information. For some types of aid, students are asked to provide letters of recommendation and intent. These

experiences provide opportunities in which students can strengthen the skill of retrieving information.

3. **Solving Problems:** By working through the financial aid process, students learn to solve problems by exercising time management and budgeting skills. They learn to be punctual and adhere to deadlines, which eliminate the problem of not being considered for types of aid that have specific deadlines. They must accept responsibility for receiving their funds and remaining eligible to receive financial aid.
4. **Develop Life Skills:** By applying for financial aid, students utilize a variety of life skills that not only assist them as they go through the financial aid process, but also in and out of the classroom in various settings. These skills include time management, budgeting, conflict resolution, responsibility, accuracy, and reading, questioning and understanding the documents that they read and sign.

C - F. Customer/Client Satisfaction Survey Results

The Financial Aid Office “College Employee” survey was electronically mailed to 315 full- and part-time employees (locally and in the outreach areas) on Thursday, April 19, 2007. Responses were accepted through 5:00 p.m. on April 27, 2007. Out of the 315 employees surveyed, 149 responded to the survey, resulting in a 47% response rate.

It was determined by the committee that a rating of 75% is considered favorable regarding awareness of services, program overview, aid availability and level of service (the 75% benchmark includes the SA and GA responses). The items that fell below the 75% benchmark over which the FAO has control will be areas of concentration for the financial aid office over the next few years. These include educating faculty and staff on the new scholarship program and financial aid policies and procedures; accuracy and timeliness of information provided in addition to communicating changes and deadliness in a more timely fashion.

Overall, the College Employee survey results were very positive. There were a number of responses indicating that the Financial Aid Office staff does a great job in fulfilling its role on campus. The majority of the responses indicate that faculty and staff want to be more informed on the new scholarship program that will be implemented in FY08.

FINANCIAL AID OFFICE COLLEGE EMPLOYEE SURVEY RESULTS

I am employed by Western Wyoming Community College in the following capacity:

27% Administrator/Professional 36.9% Faculty 35.6 Paraprofessional

I am employed at:

83.2% Rock Springs Campus 8.7% Green River Campus 8.1% Outreach Center

I am aware that the following services are available through the financial aid office:

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
FAFSA Assistance	88%	12%	No Action
Financial Aid Counseling	97%	3%	No Action
Scholarship Information Assistance	97%	3%	No Action
Entrance/Exit Loan Counseling	82%	18%	No Action
Bookstore Line of Credit for buying books	67%	33%	Improvement Needed
Online acceptance of financial aid awards	65%	35%	Improvement Needed
Veteran’s Benefits Assistance	82%	18%	No Action
Student Referrals	67%	33%	Improvement Needed
Class Presentations	54%	46%	Improvement Needed

Financial Aid Training (for advisors)	55%	45%	Improvement Needed
5=strongly agree 4=generally agree 3=neutral 2=generally disagree 1=strongly disagree NA=not applicable			

Program Overview	SA	GA	N	GD	SD	NA
1. This department contributes to recruiting students to attend WWCC	53%	37%	8%	1%	0%	1%
2. The image of this program in the college is favorable	36%	49%	10%	2%	1%	2%
3. The location and facilities of the financial aid office are adequate to provide necessary services	17%	46%	19%	9%	3%	6%

Aid Availability	SA	GA	N	GD	SD	NA
1. I am aware of the restructuring of the WWCC scholarship program	22%	38%	8%	19%	8%	6%
2. I have an adequate understanding of financial aid procedures	10%	41%	22%	19%	4%	5%
3. I am confident with my knowledge level of financial aid requirements, etc. when advising students	7%	19%	21%	22%	3%	28%
4. I am comfortable asking the Financial aid office questions	55%	34%	4%	2%	2%	3%

Level of Service	SA	GA	N	GD	SD	NA
1. Staff is courteous	54%	35%	4%	>1%	>1%	5%

2. Staff is knowledgeable	49%	38%	6.2%	0%	>1%	7%
3. Staff is responsive and efficient	45%	40%	6.2%	1%	0%	8%
4. Requests are handled in a reasonable time period	40%	32%	10%	1%	0%	16%
5. Information given is accurate	39%	35%	14%	0%	0%	12%
6. Office hours are appropriate	34%	45%	12%	1%	0%	8%
7. Staff are interested in helping students be successful	48%	38%	7%	0%	>1%	7%
8. Sufficient information such as deadlines and changes to procedures is given throughout the year and/or communicated from this office in a timely manner	22%	43%	20%	4%	1%	10%
9. Members of this department work cooperatively with members of other organizational components of the college	40%	39%	10%	0%	>1%	10%

The “Financial Aid Student Survey” was electronically mailed to 1096 students (enrolled in 6 or more credits during the spring 2007 term) on April 3, 2007. Responses were accepted through April 13, 2007. Out of 1096 students surveyed, 333 responded, producing a 30% response rate. There were technical issues with question number 5 on the survey (I am aware that the following services are available through the Financial Aid Office) for the first 159 respondents. They were not able to click multiple Yes/No responses. The problem was fixed for the remaining 174 respondents.

It was determined by the committee that a rating of 65% is considered favorable regarding awareness of services, program overview, aid availability and level of service (the 65% benchmark includes the SA and GA responses). This benchmark was set at a lower level than that set for employees, as the student body continually changes and the employee population tends to be more long-standing. Those services falling below the 65% benchmark are items that the Financial Aid Office will work to promote over the next few years. The area that presents the majority of topics not meeting the 65% benchmark is the “Financial Aid Awards” area, which consists primarily of policies and procedures related to the financial aid application and awarding process. This does present a challenge for the aid office, as the majority of this information is included in the award letters and other documents that students receive, sign and return to the Financial Aid Office. It appears that our students are not taking the time necessary to read and review the documentation to gain a clear understanding of their responsibilities as financial aid recipients

FINANCIAL AID OFFICE STUDENT SURVEY

I am a: [69%] full-time student (12 or more credits)
[12%] three-quarter time student (9-11 credits)
[18%] half-time student (6-8 credits)
[2%] less than half-time (fewer than 6 credits)

I attend the **majority** of my classes at : 68% Rock Springs campus 0% Green River campus
15% Outreach site 18% On-line

Age: [42%] under 21 [31%] 21-29 [15%] 30-39 [13%] 40 or over

Please check the types of aid you have received during your time at WWCC:

50% Federal Grants and Loans
3% Federal Work Study
30% WWCC Academic/Special Ability/Athletic Scholarships
17% WWC Foundation Grants
25% External Scholarships
16% Other
18% No Aid Received

I am aware that the following services are available through the financial aid office:

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
FAFSA Assistance	90%	10%	No Action
Financial Aid Counseling	82%	18%	No Action
Scholarship Information Assistance	83%	17%	No Action
Entrance/Exit Loan Counseling	67%	33%	No Action
Bookstore Line of Credit for buying books	49%	51%	Improvement Needed
Online acceptance of financial aid awards	69%	31%	No Action
Veteran's Benefits Assistance	47%	53%	Improvement Needed

5=strongly agree 4=generally agree 3=neutral 2=generally disagree 1=strongly disagree NA=not applicable

Financial Aid Awards	SA	GA	N	GD	SD	NA
1. The financial aid award that I received impacted my decision to attend WWCC	36%	22%	12%	6%	3%	21%
2. The financial aid awards received are reasonable in covering educational expenses (tuition, books, housing)	30%	31%	12%	6%	4%	17%
3. I understand the procedures for the awarding and disbursing of student financial aid	20%	40%	18%	9%	5%	8%
4. I understand the requirements for maintaining my financial aid	38%	39%	8%	2%	2%	10%
5. I am aware of the scholarships and grants available at WWCC	15%	37%	19%	18%	7%	4%
6. I have visited the financial aid web pages	YES 57%	NO 43%				

7. The financial aid information included on the web pages is helpful and clear	9%	27%	23%	5%	2%	34%
---	----	-----	-----	----	----	-----

Financial Aid Procedures and Availability	SA	GA	N	GD	SD	NA
1. Deadline policies for receiving financial aid have been clearly communicated	23%	38%	16%	13%	2%	7%
2. Information requested by the FAO (taxes, verification worksheets, transcripts, etc.) is clearly communicated to students	23%	43%	18%	6%	2%	8%
3. I am aware that financial aid appeal options are available	YES 59%	NO 41%				
4. The facilities and location of the Financial aid office are appropriate for serving students	27%	43%	17%	5%	2%	7%
5. The materials and resources available enable the staff to provide necessary services to students	19%	49%	20%	2%	2%	8%

Level of Service	SD	GA	N	GD	SD	NA
1. Staff is knowledgeable	34%	43%	15%	2%	>1%	6%
2. Staff is courteous	43%	40%	9%	>1%	2%	6%
3. Staff is responsive and efficient	37%	40%	11%	4%	2%	6%
4. Staff are interested in helping students be successful	38%	38%	16%	1%	3%	5%

5. Staff are able to assist when I need help	36%	38%	15%	3%	1%	6%
6. Information given is accurate	32%	42%	15%	4%	1%	6%
7. Requests are handled in a reasonable time period	31%	44%	15%	3%	1%	7%
8. Respect for confidentiality is exercised among students and staff	33%	43%	13%	1%	0%	9%
9. Office hours are appropriate	28%	47%	17%	1%	1%	6%

Overall, the results of the Student Survey results were very positive. There are certainly areas that need to be improved, primarily policy and procedure information, as referenced above, and enhanced communication regarding scholarship availability. The committee was very pleased with the results, considering that financial aid is a challenging area in which to work with regards to making students happy. Financial issues are always stressful for students and most of the time they feel that the assistance that they receive is “not enough.” Yet, the majority of the student’s comments reference that they feel the FAO does a very good job.

Section III. Assessment: Regulations Compliance

Student Financial Aid is governed by a number of regulations from outside agencies. The foremost of these can be found in the Federal Code of Regulations. This code provides the regulations regarding financial aid authorized under Title IV of the Higher Education Act. These regulations cover the Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant (SEOG), Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFELP), Leveraging Education Assistance Partnership Program (LEAP), the Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG), and the Federal Work-study Program. The Department of Education’s *Student Financial Aid Handbook* provides an abridged addition of these regulations. This is kept in the Financial Aid Office and is the main reference source concerning financial aid questions and issues. The Director is responsible for the administration of all Title IV programs. All of the Financial Aid Office staff is responsible for complying with the regulations governing student aid programs.

The Family Education Right to Privacy Act (FERPA) provisions are also followed in the Financial Aid Office. All staff and student workers are trained on FERPA compliance requirements. Refresher training is conducted both in the FAO and on campus.

Another abridged resource specifically related to the student loan program is the ***Common Manual: Unified Student Loan Policy***. This is an introduction to and overview of participation in the FFELP. This manual is derived from the Federal Regulations and is based on a partnership among schools, lenders, guarantors and the Federal Government. The Financial Aid Officer coordinates the Student Loan Program.

The FAO also provides aid from the Veterans Benefits Administration. There are a number of VA Chapters, each with somewhat different requirements. These include Chapter 30, 31, 32, 34, 35 and 106. The regulations are kept in the FAO and updates to the regulations are posted as they are received. The VA program also has two other abridged volumes that offer quick reference access to the regulations needed to certify VA students. These references are ***School Certifying Official's Quick Reference Guide*** and ***Certifying of Students under Veterans Laws***. Awarding provisions for federal student aid for VA students can be found in the Title IV regulations. The Financial Aid Officer serves as the Certifying Official and oversees the VA education benefits program in the FAO.

The Western Wyoming College Foundation also requires that the FAO comply with their guidelines for Civic Grants and Foundation aid. Requirements for Whisenand I, II and Anna Baird Williams grants have been established and must be met. In addition, each donor through the Civic Grant Program has set up criteria that the FAO must comply with when recommending awards to the Foundation. The WWC Foundation Board approves all recommendations made by the FAO for Foundation aid.

The Wyoming Community College Commission (WCCC) also requires compliance with a number of provisions. Most often these are requests for information for various programs and initiatives such as the Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership Program (LEAP), Wyoming Investment in Nursing (WYIN) Loans and the Combat Veteran's Waivers. In addition, compliance regulations must be followed with the National Guard. The FAO administers the allocation of these funds in accordance with state and federal regulations.

Section IV. Assessment: Staff Development

<u>Trainings attended by staff in the last three years</u>	<u># of Hours</u>	<u># Staff</u>
2004 RMASFAA Summer Institute	40 hours	2
2006 RMASFAA Summer Institute	40 hours	1
USA Teamworks Training (Fall '04)	5 hours	1
USA Teamworks Training (Spring '05)	5 hours	1
USA Teamworks Training (Fall '05)	5 hours	1
USA Teamworks Training (Spring '06)	5 hours	3
NASFAA Decentralized Training (Fall '04)	8 hours	3
NASFAA Decentralized Training (Spring '05)	8 hours	2
NASFAA Decentralized Training (Fall '05)	8 hours	2
NASFAA Decentralized Training (Fall '06)	8 hours	2
WyASFAA Spring 2004 Conference	20 hours	2
WyASFAA Spring 2005 Conference	20 hours	1
WyASFAA Spring 2006 Conference	20 hours	2
Microsoft Powerpoint Workshop (Fall '06)	8 hours	1
Veterans (VA) 2004 Training	8 hours	1
Veterans (VA) 2006 Training	8 hours	1
WSLC Aid Directors Round Table (Fall '04)	8 hours	1
WSLC Aid Directors Round Table (Spring '06)	8 hours	1
RMASFAA Fall 2004 Conference	24 hours	2
RMASFAA Fall 2005 Conference	24 hours	4
RMASFAA Fall 2006 Conference	24 hours	2
WSLC Spring '04 Training	8 hours	1
USA Funds Debt Manager Training	20 hours	1
USA Funds Webinar Trainings	3 hours	1
2004 Staff Retreat	4 hours	4
2005 Staff Retreat	4 hours	4
2006 Staff Retreat	4 hours	4
Datatel Colleague Training (Summer '05)	40 hours	1
Return to Title IV Training (Fall '04)	8 hours	2
Department of Education COD Training (Spring '04)	8 hours	2
Datatel Webinar Trainings (Spring '05)	6 hours	2
DE Usability Testing for FAA Access (Fall '04)	8 hours	1
Datatel Users Group Conference (Spring '04)	24 hours	1
Grant Writing Workshop (Fall '05)	24 hours	1

The FAO staff participated in 717 total hours of training opportunities from FY02 through FY06. These trainings adequately met the needs of the Financial Aid Office Staff. Training opportunities will continue to be utilized to keep abreast of the many changes affecting Student Financial Aid programs.

Section V. Assessment: Program Facilities and Equipment

A. Facilities

1. Is the facility appropriate for the program?

Yes, the facility is appropriate for the program. Ideally more space would be available, but considering the shortage of space on campus, the office space is adequate. 70% of students indicated on the student survey that they either strongly agreed or generally agreed that the facilities and location of the Financial Aid Office is adequate.

2. Up to date and properly maintained?

Yes. The facility is up to date and properly maintained. A renovation of the office was completed in the spring of 2006 which includes a student area with two kiosks available for student use and new carpet and paint throughout the office. This gave the office a much needed “face lift” in order to present a more welcoming environment in which to work with students and their parents.

B. Equipment

1. Is the equipment appropriate for the program?

Yes. The equipment is appropriate for the program.

2. Up to date and properly maintained?

Yes. The equipment is up to date and is properly maintained.

Section VI. Review of Printed Material and Web Site

A. Review of all printed information about your program

- Provide the population criteria of what constitutes a small town on the Civic Grant application.
- Make corrections to the typographical errors on the WWCC Short Term Loan Promissory Note and the WWCC Consortium Agreement forms.
- Define the criteria of being a Wyoming resident on the Senior Citizen's Tuition Grant form.

WWCC Financial Aid Paperwork and Forms

FAFSA	FAFSA on the Web Worksheet or paper form
Verification	Independent Verification Worksheet, Dependent Verification Worksheet, Non-Filer Statement, Low Income Form, Signature Sheet
Applications	Summer Aid Application, Hathaway Application, Institutional Application (Transfer, Part-time, Non-Traditional Student, Excellence in Academics), Institutional Academic (Non-Hathaway Eligible) Scholarship Application, Civic Grant Application
Loans	Master Promissory Note, PLUS Promissory Note, Preferred Lenders List, Entrance/Exit Loan Counseling Sign Off Sheet, Additional Loan Request Form, Short Term Loan Application, Short Term Loan Form
Veteran's Administration	Application for VA Educational Benefits 22, 1990, Application for Survivors and Dependents Education Assistance 22-5490, Request for Change of program or Place of Training 22-1995, Direct Deposit enrollment 24-0296, Veteran's Registration Form, VA Policy Certification Form, Monthly Certification Form, Wyoming Combat Waiver Form, Vietnam Era Veterans WS 19-6-106, National Guard Waiver Form, National Guard Certification

	Form, Combat Vet/Vietnam Vet Certification Form
Federal Workstudy	Federal Workstudy Application, Federal Workstudy Timesheet
Appeals	General Appeal Form, Student Special Circumstances, Dependency Override Form,
Wyoming Investment in Nursing	WYIN Eligibility Letter, WYIN Congratulations Letter, WYIN Rejection Letter, WYIN Master Promissory Note, WYIN Certification Form
Miscellaneous Forms	Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy Form, Dependent Care Form, Cost of Attendance Adjustment for Nursing Students, Consortium Agreement
Award Letters	Provisional Award Letter, Institutional Award Letter, Federal Award Letter
Correspondence	Missing Information Letter, Not Eligible Letter, No Aid Offered Letter, Appeal Beyond 96 Credits Letter, Disability Letter, Plus Loan Letter, Notification of no Master Promissory Note, Notification of Missing Signature on Master Promissory Note, Additional Loan Approval/Denial, Non Compliance VA Letter, VA Introduction Letter
Athletic	NJCAA Intent Contract, NJCAA Agreement Letter

Pamphlets/Flyers

- Most are well done, revised, appropriate, and easy to understand.

B. Review of Web Site developed for your program

- The picture of the girl on the homepage looks bored as she's filling out paperwork, and I would like to see her face. The picture is also backwards (look at the Pepsi Bottle). Maybe a shot of a student holding up a FAFSA and smiling/excited about it would be better.
- The priority funding deadline paragraph on the homepage still says "2005".

- The financial aid email address on the homepage is still the old one
- On the financial aid “Forms” page, there needs to be a link at the top that allows that user to download the Adobe Acrobat Reader, or they may not be able to open the forms when they click on the “Application for Summer Aid”, “General Appeal Form” & “Student Special Circumstances” links. The same needs to be done at the top of the “VA Forms” page.
- At the top of the “WWC Foundation” page, it needs to say “**WWC** Foundation” and not “**WWCC** Foundation”. Update the list of board members on that page.
- Other than that, the website looks great! Very informative and links well with many national federal aid sites (ie. fafsa.ed.gov, etc.)

Section VII. Recommendations from Previous Program Review

Following are the recommendations from the previous Program Review Committee and the actions that have been taken.

Recommendations

1. Update Web Page and paperwork as recommended.
2. Improve visibility of the Financial Aid Office and increase knowledge of students/faculty/staff regarding services provided.
3. Improve knowledge of Financial Aid at WWCC among faculty/staff.
4. Improve methods for distributing information to students and work to personalize communication with students in regard to their financial aid awards.
5. Increase storage space and purchase three fire proof filing cabinets.
6. Upgrade to Colleague Release 17 and provide training for staff on Colleague Release 17.
7. Purchase a laser printer for Colleague Release 17.

Actions Taken

1. Updates were made to the Financial Aid Web Page and paperwork as recommended.
2. The Financial Aid Office staff has worked to improve the visibility of the Financial Aid Office and the services provided by the office. The staff serve on several campus committees and participate in a variety of functions and events sponsored by the campus. According to the employee survey, the staff feel that they are aware of the services provided by the Financial Aid Office, the lowest being class presentations at 54%. Therefore, this recommendation has been successfully implemented with on campus employees. The success rate of improving the visibility of services among students has not been quite as successful. Students are aware of the majority of the services that are offered by this department, however only 49% of students are aware of the bookstore line of credit for purchasing books with their financial aid and only 47% of the students are aware that assistance with veterans benefits is available.
3. Based on the college employee survey results, approximately 50% of employees reported that they strongly agree or agree that they have an adequate understanding of financial aid procedures. The aid office staff have participated in various awareness efforts on campus over the last five years to improve their understanding of the financial aid opportunities available at the institution, such as advisor training sessions in conjunction with the advising coordinator and advisor training at in-service. In light of the new scholarship programs available at WWCC and the fact that this particular question fell below the benchmark established, opportunities exist to provide additional training for faculty and staff.
4. In 2002, the Financial Aid Office incorporated the Communications Management feature of the Datatel software to deliver personalized correspondence to financial aid applicants and recipients. This has been a tremendous improvement over the prior process that was utilized. In conjunction with the web site and Mustang Cruiser

announcements, this implementation has allowed for greater efficiency and timeliness in communicating with students and processing their aid requests.

5. The recommendation to increase storage space and purchase three additional fire proof cabinets was implemented. The aid office was allowed space in the storage room in the back of the Registration and Records Office for the three filing cabinets that were purchased with spend out funds.
6. Colleague Release 17 was implemented in the early spring of 2002. Training was provided on campus for the query builder component and the communications management component. Members of the Financial Aid Office staff attended these training sessions.
7. A laser printer was purchased in 2002 with spend out funds. This is the primary printer that is utilized for all of the tracking letters that are sent to students.

Section VIII. Summary of Strengths and Limitations

A. Strengths

- Good rapport with other campus departments and offices
- Director encourages staff in professional and personal development endeavors through classes, degrees, and workshops
- High number of students served
- Up to date equipment
- Competitive financial aid packages offered
- Aid offered to full-time, three quarter-time, half-time, and less than half-time students
- Institutional aid offered to International students
- Program is in compliance with Federal Financial Aid Regulations
- Wide range of services available to students, faculty, staff and community members
- Services offered enhance and encourage student recruitment and retention and support the Goals for Student Success
- Strong team approach by staff members within the Financial Aid Department
- Provide high school financial aid nights for parents, students and counselors
- Staff members serve on various WWCC committees
- Student aid is disbursed prior to the beginning of each semester
- Electronic application availability
- Electronic receipt of funds from loan agencies, WWC Foundation, WCC Commission
- Very low staff turn over
- Increased aid options for a variety of student populations

B. Limitations

- There is a lack of knowledge/understanding of Financial Aid services/policies/procedures among faculty and staff
- Awareness of services, aid availability and deadlines among students/faculty/staff needs to be improved
- Limited staff to effectively implement new aid programs

Section IX. Future Directions

A. Recommendations for Improvement

1. Non-fiscal:

- Update Web Page as recommended
- Update paperwork as recommended
- Knowledge among students/faculty/staff regarding new scholarship program and scholarship availability should be improved to meet our benchmark by the next program review
- Knowledge of Financial Aid services at WWCC among faculty/staff should be improved to meet our benchmark by the next program review
- Identify multiple means of assessment to be implemented in order to determine whether or not the Financial Aid program goals are being met

2. Fiscal:

- Increase staffing to adequately implement and administer the new aid programs available

B. Vision for the Future

The primary goals of the FAO are offering a full range of services to WWCC students in the area of financial aid and provide these services in a “high quality” manner. The staff also wants to continue offering competitive financial aid packages to our current and prospective students. It would be wonderful to increase staffing in the office by one full-time paraprofessional position so that the responsibilities and opportunities relating to financial aid could be fulfilled at the highest level. Many issues that relate to financial aid are currently being debated on Capitol Hill, so the future holds many unanswered questions for the financial aid profession. However, as decisions are made by the Department of Education and the institution regarding the future of Student Financial Aid, the office at WWCC will have the opportunity to implement these changes in a manner that will best suit the needs of our students and the institution.

APPENDICES

