

Division	Enrollment Management & Student Affairs
Department	Financial Aid

1. **What are the main objectives of your unit, and how do you measure success in achieving them?**
 - a.
 - b. To provide funding opportunities to both prospective and current SOU students. To work alongside students and their families to understand the cost of education at SOU and the options available to them via federal grants, loans, scholarships and veteran benefits. To continue to provide the guidance and compliance needed for SOU to continue to receive Title IV funding.
 - c.
2. **What are the services that your unit provides and to which customers (students, faculty, staff, donors, others)?**
 - a.
 - b. The Office of Financial Aid provides funding to students. We also work with faculty to stay in compliance per regulatory items requested by the DOE. The Office of Financial Aid also assists staff throughout the campus community with student issues, compliance items and other needs requested. The Office of Financial Aid also works with the Office of Advancement and outside donors to provide other funding opportunities to students.
 - c.
3. **List each position in your unit, and briefly describe the responsibilities of each. Include part-time and work-study student hours. Indicate if functionality of the position is tied to federal, state, or institutional compliance.**
 - a. **Director of FA-** The Director of FA main role is to keep the institution in full compliance with both Federal and State regulations. The DFA works to make sure that all processes and procedures are maintained and that the University stays in compliance with all Title IV regulations.
 - b. **Assistant Director of FA-** The ADFA works closely with the DFA to ensure that compliance is maintained for both Federal and State requirements. The ADFA focuses mainly on the University Scholarship portal and the SIS system set up and working processes. The ADFA is the back up to the DFA as needed.
 - c. **Benefits Navigator-** The Benefits Navigator position is a state grant funded position focused on providing both resources from SOU and the surrounding community to students in need. This position works closely with campus partners to identify the students who are in need of financial resources or housing assistance. This position is located in the Office of Financial Aid as a place where students come when they need extra assistance.
 - d. **Scholarship Coordinator/VA Certifying Official-** The Scholarship and VA position focuses on the SOSA process from open to close, and is in charge of certifying our veteran and dependent students chapter benefits.
 - e. **Financial Aid Processors-** The Financial Aid Processors are the backbone of the financial aid office. This position processes all aid for students, meets with students as needed

about the Financial Aid process, counsels students on FA options, responds to all emails and questions as needed. This position also provides presentations around the community as needed and to departments as needed.

f.

4. Do you see needs and demands for services that your unit cannot currently meet? If so, what are they, and how do they relate to the university's mission?

- a. Outreach is needed, students are not as receptive to emails. Many times we feel that we can reach out to students that we can't do. Wellness checks-we need to do better. Students want to have access to FA and be more welcoming than just going to a front counter. We can start utilizing Navigate more to connect with students. Such announcements can be used for SAP emails, appointment reminders, FAFSA push etc.
- b. Going to students in their spaces- go to where the students are. We can't find the time to go to where they are. Less intimidating when we are in the students' space. Continue to build our partnership with AASOU on working directly with students.
- c. Exit counseling and helping students know the next steps of repaying loans. The demand for extra help for students to understand repayment options, loan servicers, accessing NSLDS etc is being pushed on the FA Office, but we cannot meet with students for that in depth conversation.
- d. Financial Literacy- we are constantly asked to present on borrowing, credit and other ways to afford college.
- e. How to set up our students to be good and accountable and help them become better friends and partners (Alumni) of the University.
- f. We need more assistance to help explain why students need to visit the FA office. Emails are not always clear.
- g. Students need educating and outreach- students are so confused on the affordability of college.
- h.

5. How could the university help your unit do its job better?

- a. Embracing that we are all a team, even though we have different segments and coming together and not everybody knows everything and there is a lot of separation of "that's your job" and not helping each other.
- b. Using access that is granted by the FAO office. Certain access has been granted to offices but utilization is inconsistent.
- c. Reducing barriers for students. Use the tools that we have to help students. Knowledge tests on FA information to continue with knowledge.
- d.

6. In what ways does your unit relate to other units of the university, academic and non-academic? For example, what services do you provide to other units? What services do other units provide to you? On what tasks do you collaborate with other offices?

- a.
- b. The office currently provides resources to other units as a means to conduct outreach to students as needed. We provide presentations to groups of students and faculty. Other units provide us with needed data as needed. The OFA collaborates with other offices for SAP appeals/ Medical Appeals/ SB process/ Gainful Employment/ Program

Adjustments/Audits/ Case and Collaboration cases/ Budget and Remissions planning/
Scholarship planning and awarding/ Veteran affairs

c.

7. What skill sets and resources does your unit possess that can be shared with other units at slack times?

- a. We currently do not have slack times.
- b. We do a lot of data pulls that are shared with other departments.
- c.

8. Which individuals in your unit are cross-trained and in what areas?

- a.
- b. Currently the Office of FA is not cross trained with any other office. However, both the DFA and ADFA are both trained in reading and responding to Maxient reports from the Dean of Students Office. Our Scholarship Coordinator/VA Certifying Official is also trained to process verification files if needed.
- c.

9. What resources do you need to improve your services to a superior level?

- a. A chat feature would be helpful for students to get basic questions answered. 85% of the email questions are extremely basic questions that could be answered via a auto chat function
- b. Virtual Advisor- option? Will this be an option moving to Workday?
- c. Intern for grad students
- d.

10. What technologies are available to you to provide your services better? What training do you need to be more effective users of the technology?

- a. Chat-
- b. Outsourcing Verifcation - \$40K
- c. Workday-a system that can help eliminate manual reports.
- d. Moodle- utilizing specific specialized outreach. More workshops with students. On demand workshop presentations.
- e. Social Media outreach- student employee.
- f. FA TV
- g. Enhance outreach with video tutorials
- h.

11. What one thing do you wish you could do differently to improve your effectiveness but have not had the opportunity, time, or resources to do?

- a. NASFAA blue con- consulting
- b. Policies and Procedures Consulting
- c. Talk to students more- about FA and more hands on.
- d. Bilingual opportunities- need more of a FA focused approach.

12. How do you review and evaluate your department's yearly performance?

- a. See KPI's document: See KPI sheet for more in depth information.

13. Explain how your unit could function with:

- a. A 10 percent reduction to staff- We would be slower at processing times, staff would have to take on duties outside of normal job descriptions. May have to re-write job descriptions to fit the needs of the University.
- b. A 20 percent reduction to staff- The same as above, duties would have to be distributed in a different way to meet the needs of SOU/ Students. This reduction would put us at risk of processing timely and awarding FA.
- c. A 30 percent reduction to staff- We would be below required staff per the DOE regulations.
- d. A 10 percent reduction to non-personnel resources- We would be able to function normally.
- e. A 20 percent reduction to non-personnel resources- Training and memberships would possibly take the cut and lack of training and development would suffer.
- f. A 30 percent reduction to non-personnel resource- I am not sure what is left to cut. We currently are just using BANNER and NASFAA and Campus Logic. All are required for us to remain in compliance.
- g. What would be the consequences or other effects on service delivery in each case?
Reducing personnel will cause a back log in processing times. We currently process at a week out, losing processors will delay that process. Meetings with students will also take a back seat as processing will become the priority. Our entire service level will decrease due to the many demands of what each staff member would be responsible for.
- i.

14. What opportunities exist for greater collaboration and team approaches in the delivery of services?

Currently we have merged back together using the One Stop model. This will help us continue to provide the services needed to students who have questions or concerns about financial aid. The hope that those who have FA BANNER access will continue to utilize the knowledge and information to help students understand the FA process and assess the current situation when meeting with students. More hands on approach with those that grant funds would also be beneficial to assisting our office.

15. How many “middle managers” do we have? Are there opportunities to reduce middle state in the organization and expand the span of control?

Currently we have one- the ADFA. The ADFA is crucial to the success of the Financial Aid office. The position runs the entire SIS system, produces reports to staff, sets up and closes the SOSA (Scholarship Application) yearly.

16. What technological improvements could be made that would result in labor savings?

- a. If we could outsource verification, that would free up more time for reports, and student meetings. The cost of outsourcing verification is almost the same as one in person processor. The Verification would be processed in 24 hours versus the two to three day window it is now.
- b. Having more videos available for students to view would assist with the questions that we are asked. We could eliminate the time needed to answer the basic questions and free up time for more complex questions.

17. How can a service be more efficiently delivered?

The OFA can utilize TargetX and Navigate to efficiently deliver messaging to parents and students- both current and prospective.

18. What processes do we have that can be streamlined or eliminated to improve service delivery?

Currently we have streamlined everything that we can. With the implementation of Workday we hope to have 99% of FA streamlined. There is nothing we can eliminate at this time. We have cut back everything that is not a compliance concern.

19. Restructuring: What efficiencies might be gained by consolidating similar entities?

- a. We could absorb more Financial Processors and more entry level financial aid staff that could assist us with students.
- b. We could also use the help in back office processing with reports and audit preparation.
- c. We can also use help for all things student related such as outreach

20. Personnel: Have we worked around or structured around non-effective personnel and other personnel issues, and is this the time to stop indulging and start confronting the issue(s)?

N/A

21. Outsourcing: Are there other opportunities to outsource non-mission-critical services to private contractors who could do it better, faster, cheaper?-

FSA Services- verification and a financial aid chat feature that can handle the basic questions. Both of these features would assist in allowing the FA counselors to meet with students more and work on outreach.

22. Customer focus: How might our services be structured or delivered to meet the needs of students, faculty, staff, donors, and others better?

23. Benchmarking: Compare your unit with similar units at other institutions or national norms.

We are currently understaffed with Financial Aid Counselors. We currently have just two full time financial aid counselors who also perform all of the processing as well. We need at least three to four full time processors/counselors to assist with the student demands and to stay operating if someone is sick or on vacation. Nationally, all FA offices are short staffed but also use other tools to assist and help with this.

24. What can we stop doing?

Currently there isn't much that we can stop doing. With the current size of our staff, we are doing the bare minimum as required by the DOE right now. We could pull back on some of the outreach/wellness checks or limit student appointments- but those are all important tools to both our success and our student's success.

25. How and where might we apply an EDI lens to this cost management discussion?

Financial Aid has identified that we are not able to communicate effectively with our Spanish speaking students or students where english is not their first language. We need access to translators to help us communicate information to all of our students.

Financial Aid KPI						
	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	# awards	\$ Spent	# awards	\$ Spent	# awards	\$ Spent
Pell	1,320	\$ 5,683,827	1,214	\$ 5,238,209		
SEOG	376	\$ 337,001	512	\$ 450,494		
Work Study	117	\$ 416,310	143	\$ 438,013		
Total Federal Grants	1,813	\$ 6,437,138	1,869	\$ 6,126,716	-	\$ -
Subsidized Loan	1,205	\$ 4,776,399	1,084	\$ 4,220,951		
Unsubsidized Loan	1,595	\$ 10,462,127	1,451	\$ 9,687,945		
Parent Plus	150	\$ 2,395,195	125	\$ 2,112,597		
Grad Plus	96	\$ 887,343	90	\$ 715,308		
Sub Total Loans	3,046	\$ 18,521,064	2,750	\$ 16,736,801	-	\$ -
Oregon Opportunity Grant	649	\$ 1,938,903	740	\$ 2,102,182		
OSAC	91	\$ 384,774	88	\$ 484,474		
VDFR	8	\$ 28,284	8	\$ 29,326		
Oregon National Guard Tuition Waiver	30	\$ 76,473	18	\$ 140,152		
Ford Family Foundation	30	\$ 345,468	36	\$ 368,278		
Athletic Fee Remission	145	\$ 341,234	148	\$ 395,764		
Housing Remission	18	\$ 42,000	25	\$ 68,000		
Diversity Remission	96	\$ 266,562	100	\$ 265,496		
SOU Foundation	566	\$ 1,313,230	595	\$ 1,380,511		
Raider Aid	1,389	\$ 4,550,543	1,773	\$ 1,254,340		
Total Aid	7,881	\$ 34,245,673	8,150	\$ 29,352,040	-	\$ -
FAFSA's	18,715		15,565		12,167	
Average Unmet Need	\$ 16,066.00		\$ 15,076.00		\$ 11,109.00	
Scholarship Applications	6043		6384		9670	