

# Annual Report

## Part 1

### Section A

#### Unit Information

**Unit:**Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships

#### **Mission Statement:**

The Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships is a service-oriented unit within the Division of Enrollment Services with primary responsibility to help students secure the funds necessary to pursue an education at Florida Gulf Coast University. Given this mission, the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships staff assumes a proactive role in reaching out to enrolled and prospective students regarding the availability of financial assistance at FGCU.

The Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships provides services to both traditional and nontraditional students pursuing either an undergraduate or graduate degree. Financial aid programs available for these students include scholarships, grants, loans, and student employment from federal, state, private and institutional sources of funding.

### Section B

#### Unit goals set within last year's (2003-2004)

#### Annual Report

##### Strategic Plan Goal

##### Unit Goal

With which 1 or 2 goals from the 8 current strategic plan goals does your 2004-2005 goal best align?

What were your unit level goals for 2004-2005 as contained in your [2003-2004 annual report?](#)

Strategic Plan Goal 8 - Ongoing Quality Improvement

Continue to review procedures to ensure compliance with state and federal regulations.

#### **What action did you undertake to achieve this goal?**

Monitor the administration of all Title IV and state programs to insure compliance with regulatory requirements.

#### **By what means did you assess goal achievement?**

The state of Florida audits the financial aid programs at the university each year to insure compliance. We worked closely with the audit team assigned to the university by the state. The recently completed audit reveals compliance with the regulatory requirements. Minor deficiencies that were identified were corrected.

**Describe the assessment results and the conclusions about goal attainment you inferred from them.**

Audit findings revealed two deficiencies which did not result in financial penalties for the university. The first involved more timely notification to students about the return of federal funds. The second found that the university was not reporting enrollment information to the National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS) within the required timeframe. Although this finding is related to the financial aid programs, another university office has primary responsibility for reporting enrollment data to NSLDS.

**What continuous improvement resulted from the use of the assessment data?**

The Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships has taken corrective action to provide required notifications to students within the required timeframe. The university has testing underway to send enrollment data to the National Student Clearinghouse in order to insure timely submission of enrollment data to NSLDS.

Strategic Plan Goal

**Unit Goal**

**With which 1 or 2 goals from the 8 current strategic plan goals does your 2004-2005 goal best align?**

**What were your unit level goals for 2004-2005 as contained in your 2003-2004 annual report?**

Strategic Plan Goal 5 - State of the Art Infrastructure

Work with Information Systems to complete Banner process projects initiated in 2003/04 for improved Banner.

**What action did you undertake to achieve this goal?**

The office staff worked closely with Information Systems staff to complete a project approved by the Banner Coordinating Committee. The project was to notify students about unsatisfied requirements for financial aid eligibility. The office staff identified the requirements, benefits and desired outcome of the project.

**By what means did you assess goal achievement?**

The office staff tested the process that was developed by Information Systems to insure that specified needs were met and that the appropriate students were sent the required information.

**Describe the assessment results and the conclusions about goal attainment you inferred from them.**

Students with unsatisfied financial aid eligibility requirements are now sent an e-mail informing them of these unsatisfied requirements as well as instructions on how to satisfy these requirements. When the completed project was first run in production, the office saw an increase in students contacting the office to submit the missing information.

**What continuous improvement resulted from the use of the assessment data?**

The completion of this project has helped the university stay compliant with federal regulations related to loan exit interview requirements. It has also improved the timeliness of responses from students in satisfying financial aid eligibility requirements.

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**Strategic Plan Goal**

**Unit Goal**

**With which 1 or 2 goals from the 8 current strategic plan goals does your 2004-2005 goal best align?**

**What were your unit level goals for 2004-2005 as contained in your [2003-2004 annual report?](#)**

Strategic Plan Goal 4 - A Talented and Dedicated Faculty and Staff

Arrange customer service workshops for OPS and student workers.

**What action did you undertake to achieve this goal?**

OPS and student workers didn't attend customer service workshops, but they did work closely with USPS staff members and members of the A & P staff. The goal is to instill a commitment to thorough and thoughtful service in all staff members.

**By what means did you assess goal achievement?**

Observation of interaction between OPS/student workers and students/parents.

**Describe the assessment results and the conclusions about goal attainment you inferred from them.**

Observed productive and service-oriented interaction between OPS/student workers and students/parents.

**What continuous improvement resulted from the use of the assessment data?**

The number of complaints and negative feedback from students and parents who interact with our front-line workers is minimal.

**Strategic Plan Goal**

**Unit Goal**

**With which 1 or 2 goals from the 8 current strategic plan goals does your 2004-2005 goal best align?**

**What were your unit level goals for 2004-2005 as contained in your [2003-2004 annual report?](#)**

Strategic Plan Goal 4 - A Talented and Dedicated Faculty and Staff

Attend workshops for professional development when available.

**What action did you undertake to achieve this goal?**

Access to professional training activities was made available to the staff throughout the year. All A & P staff members attended, or are scheduled to attend, professional development workshops this year.

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**By what means did you assess goal achievement?**

Professional development opportunities included workshops and conferences offered by Banner (both regionally and nationally), by state and regional financial aid professional associations, and by student loan lenders. Staff members who attended these workshops had access to information offered by professionals with expertise in their field. They also had the opportunity to share ideas and information with colleagues from other institutions.

**Describe the assessment results and the conclusions about goal attainment you inferred from them.**

Staff members who participated in these professional development activities returned to the office with updated information on various topical issues, shared this information with their colleagues in the office, and used this information in the performance of their duties.

**What continuous improvement resulted from the use of the assessment data?**

This exposure to professional development activities through workshops and conferences keeps the office up to date in its adherence to regulatory requirements, as well as office operations which result in improved service to students.

Strategic Plan Goal

**Unit Goal**

**With which 1 or 2 goals from the 8 current strategic plan goals does your 2004-2005 goal best align?**

**What were your unit level goals for 2004-2005 as contained in your 2003-2004 annual report?**

Strategic Plan Goal 4 - A Talented and Dedicated Faculty and Staff

Hire a person with strong technical skills to run processes and needed reports. Also will serve as liaison between financial aid and IS.

**What action did you undertake to achieve this goal?**

A request was made to the Vice President for Administrative Services to permit the hiring of a professional staff member in the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships who will have strong technical skills to support financial aid processing and information services.

**By what means did you assess goal achievement?**

The Vice President for Administrative Services recently approved this staffing request.

**Describe the assessment results and the conclusions about goal attainment you inferred from them.**

We will work with Human Resources to develop a hiring plan and move forward to complete the search for someone with appropriate qualifications and skills.

**What continuous improvement resulted from the use of the assessment data?**

Once we hire someone for this new position, we will be more effective in using Banner to run the required financial aid processes and reports necessary to effectively manage the financial

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aid operation.

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## Section C

### Program or Service Specific Assessments

#### **What program or service specific assessment occurred in the current academic year?**

The quality and effectiveness of communication with entering students was evaluated and was found to be inadequate.

#### **How were the results of the assessment used to improve programs or services?**

Entering students (freshmen, transfers and graduate students) are contacted via e-mail by the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships if an e-mail address was included on the admission application. They are advised to obtain a PIN from the U. S. Dept. of Education and to complete the FAFSA on the Web. If the timing is appropriate, they are also advised to complete the university's scholarship application.

#### **What program or service specific assessment occurred in the current academic year?**

The Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships assessed the effectiveness of financial aid's involvement in the orientation process.

#### **How were the results of the assessment used to improve programs or services?**

The content and the presentation of the information provided to new students at orientation has been enhanced. The Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships checks the Orientation Scheduling database to determine which students will attend each orientation session. Personalized letters are then prepared and distributed to students at orientation that provide the student with a summary of relevant information from their financial aid record in Banner. The information describing the financial aid process is presented in Powerpoint format and discussed during a question and answer period.

Laying the groundwork at orientation for an understanding of how the financial aid process and bill payment process work at FGCU enables students to focus more fully on academic activities once they are enrolled, rather than trying to negotiate an unfamiliar financial aid and bill payment process.

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## Section D

### Unit Contribution to President's Performance Measures

Please review the President's Performance Measures for 2004-2005. Did your unit contribute to any specific performance goals for the President? (If so, please indicate whether the measure set was attained and to what degree.)

Goal 26 of the President's Performance Measures addresses Enrollment Services Reorganization. A new director of financial aid was hired in August 2004 as part of this reorganization. The Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships, under this new leadership, has forged new linkages with the other units within Enrollment Services, including recruitment, admissions, first year advising and orientation and the registrar.

## Part 2

### Section A

#### Unit Goals for Coming Year (2005-2006)

<u>Strategic Plan Goal</u>	Unit Goal
With which 1 or 2 goals from the 8 current strategic plan goals does your 2005-2006 goal best align?	Goal for 2005-2006
Strategic Plan Goal 5- State of the Art Infrastructure	Fully utilize Banner and its capabilities to improve and automate financial aid office processes.
<b>What action(s) will you undertake to achieve the goal?</b>	
Participating in a university initiative to improve Banner functionality in the Enrollment Services areas. Working with Information Systems to achieve this goal.	
<b>By what means will you assess goal achievement?</b>	
Review each process that has been identified in this initiative as it is automated and run in Banner test mode.	
<b>How will you know if you have successfully attained each goal?</b>	
We will work with Information Systems to test each process that we have identified for improvement after the enhancement has been implemented.	
<b>How will the results of the above assessments be used to improve student learning or services?</b>	
Better utilization of Banner system capabilities will permit to more effectively manage the financial aid programs for which we are responsible and, consequently, provide more accurate aid award and disbursement information to students.	

**Strategic Plan Goal**  
**With which 1 or 2 goals from the 8  
current strategic plan goals does  
your 2005-2006 goal best align?**

**Unit Goal**  
**Goal for 2005-2006**

Strategic Plan Goal 5- State of the Art Infrastructure Improve the quality and presentation on the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships web site.

**What action(s) will you undertake to achieve the goal?**

We are currently reviewing all information presented on our web site. The information we present to visitors to our web site will be clearly presented, accurate and thorough.

**By what means will you assess goal achievement?**

Information on our web site will reflect current university and office practices and policies, as well as state and federal regulations.

**How will you know if you have successfully attained each goal?**

One of the measurement tools will be to track the number of hits on our web site to see how widely the site is being used.

**How will the results of the above assessments be used to improve student learning or services?**

Visitors to our web sites, including prospective and current students and their parents will be able to accurate, thorough, and clearly presented information from our web site 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In many cases, this will preclude the need for students and their parents to call or write the office for information.

**Strategic Plan Goal**  
**With which 1 or 2 goals from the 8  
current strategic plan goals does  
your 2005-2006 goal best align?**

**Unit Goal**  
**Goal for 2005-2006**

Strategic Plan Goal 5- State of the Art Infrastructure Improve the process for awarding FGCU Foundation scholarships.

**What action(s) will you undertake to achieve the goal?**

We have identified this goal among the necessary improvements that will be reviewed and accomplished as part of the FOREST project, initiated in conjunction with the FGCU Office of Information Systems. The number of applicants for FGCU Foundation Scholarships increased for 2005-06 by over 55%, from approximately 1,300 to almost 2,300. The number of Foundation scholarships remained relatively stable from 2004-05 to 2005-06. The task of screening applications and matching applicants with restricted scholarships has become much

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more challenging. Additional support from Information Systems is necessary to move this process forward.

**By what means will you assess goal achievement?**

A comparison of the efforts expended this year with next year in time and staff power to appropriately award available Foundation scholarship funds will be performed to assess goal achievement.

**How will you know if you have successfully attained each goal?**

We will have succeeded in improving the process for awarding Foundation scholarships if we are able to make all awards earlier in the year with fewer staff hours expended by use of a system that will pre-screen each application and automatically match scholarships with potentially eligible applicants.

**How will the results of the above assessments be used to improve student learning or services?**

Service to students will be greatly enhanced if we are successful in making Foundation awards earlier than we have in the past, and communicating these award decisions to students earlier. This will enable any entering students who are awarded scholarships to consider our offer of financial aid and scholarships when weighing the university's offer of admission.

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**Section B**

**Resources**

**What additional resources have you requested and received a commitment for during 2005-2006 from your area VP or the President that is based on your analysis of assessment data for 2004-2005?**

The Vice President for Administrative Services has given us permission to hire a professional staff member in the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships who will be a Banner and technical specialist and will help us maintain the information on the office's web site.

**What additional resource needs do you have for fulfillment of your goals that you wish for consideration from your area VP or the President that is based on your analysis of assessment data for 2004-2005?**

Redesign and renovation of the Financial Aid Office in order to create a more efficient workspace for staff and students.

Additional USPS staff to help with communication functions in the office (telephone and e-mail inquiries).

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## Section C

### Assessment Plans

#### What assessments are you planning to conduct during 2005-2006?

The Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships will continue to assess the effectiveness of our communication with prospective and currently enrolled students. Such communication includes information about applying for financial aid, the status of students' aid applications, financial aid award information, information about any unsatisfied documentation requirements, disbursement information, and satisfactory progress status.

We will also assess all the financial aid processes which have been included in the year-long FOREST project, conducted in conjunction with Information Systems.

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## Section D

### Coming Year - Strategic Plan Contributions

Goal 1 - 2.4

Goal 2 - 4.1

Goal 3 - 4.1.c

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