



# Co-curricular Assessment Report

Program/Department Name: Financial Aid & Academic Records

Year of CAR Completion: 2018

CAR Cycle: 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18

## Co-curricular Assessment Report

### **Organization of Program Review Materials:**

- ◆ Component I: Response to Previous Co-curricular Assessment Report
- ◆ Component II: Review of Assessment Data
- ◆ Component III: Criteria for Co-curricular Assessment Report
- ◆ Component IV: Recommendations and Executive Summary
- ◆ Appendix A: Co-curricular Program/Department Summary Work Plan

NOTE: Please spell out any acronym the first time it is used.

NOTE: Whenever possible, link answers to supplemental documentation that you are providing.

## Component I

### Response to Previous Co-curricular Assessment Report

**Based on your previous CAR review**, identify strengths, areas of improvement, opportunities, threats, and progress to date. *(Please enter NA in these areas if this is your first CAR.)* **\*\*If you are referring to supplemental documentation that you are including in this CAR, please identify that documentation clearly in your answers below.**

Program/Department: Financial Aid & Academic Records

Strengths:

1. We do a great job of having file completion for audit purposes.
2. Changes in management positions have allowed for a culture change where more faculty and staff are comfortable in reaching out to our office for assistance.
3. New and stronger academic policies and procedures are having a positive impact on our students as a whole.

Areas of improvement:

1. The 2014 Independent audit results showed that we had improved our processes and as a result we had no findings.
2. Looking ahead to the new 'One Stop' Student Services Center, we have begun to realign job responsibilities to improve customer satisfaction to the campus as a whole. In addition, we will be utilizing assessment tools and surveys to assist us with customer satisfaction.
3. The report indicated that the Financial Aid portion of the orientation was very helpful and one of the most needed aspects of the time spent. We showed a significant improvement in all categories.
4. We will continue to find ways to effectively communicate with students on the effects of financial aid due to specific actions.

Opportunities:

1. Better communication to our students regarding the application for aid and subsequent documents.
2. Review processes, communications, and equity in job responsibilities to assist with a quicker response to the college as a whole.
3. Creation and success of the Gateway Student Services

Threats:

1. Changes in the organizational chart and continued change for student success
2. Loan borrowing and increases in default rate

Progress to Date:

We implemented our Gateway Student Service Center and have seen a significant increase in our customer service to our college community. We implemented an online Chat service as well as a customer satisfaction survey once they have interaction with us either through Chat or face to face. We continue to refine our policies that support student access, success and retention. We contracted with a new Default management group, Student Connections, that will assist us with the reduction and management of our default rate. In addition, they have a financial literacy tool that will be available to our students and assist them with financial planning and decision-making.

## Component II

### Review of Previous Assessment Data

***\*\*If you are referring to supplemental documentation that you are including in this CAR, please identify that documentation clearly in your answers below.***

**1. What changes have been recommended that have had a positive effect on your program's outcomes? (Please be specific.)**

We have fully implemented Gateway Student services in order to effectively serve our students in a more comprehensive way. With that, we are meeting with the academic deans and department chairs to share our services, our issues as well as how we can better partner to serve the student populations. We also have representation of a Gateway Specialist at each division meeting to share concerns and ideas about student issues and success as well as learn what is happening within each division.

**2. What changes to your program/department were made based on findings from the previous CAR?**

Based on the findings, we found that we need to institute weekly meetings, refresher trainings and better communication with the staff so they are knowledgeable about what is happening around campus. In addition, we brought online CHAT to our area so perspective students, current students as well as the college community have access to our staff to answer any questions surrounding the college.

We also continue to review our academic policies as they relate to student access and success. In that, we introduced a Midterm Grade policy to assist with student success.

## Component III

### Criteria for Co-curricular Assessment Report

#### Criterion 1.0 Mission, Values and Goals

**Mission:** The mission of the Office of Financial Aid and Academic Records/Registration is to provide comprehensive expertise and specialized services to students in assisting them full academic success and assist in reducing financial barriers.

**Values:** To serve as a catalyst to bring together existing expertise across the college community, eliminating boundaries in order to enhance communication and our services.

#### Goals:

Goal 1: To provide information to the College community regarding “at-risk” students.

Goal 2: To enhance the accessibility and utilization of the student and financial aid components of the Banner system.

Goal 3: To assist students with self-sufficiency by promoting the use of mystarkstate and college email for general information and self-service.

Goal 4: To meet Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) HEI system and other reporting deadlines, ensuring data integrity.

Goal 5: To develop and implement a records retention plan by June 30, 2018.

Goal 6: To provide high quality, efficient, and courteous services to the College community.

\*Goals should align with current SSC Strategic Plan.

**\*Note if any changes have been made to the mission, values, and/or goals since the last CAR.**

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## **Criterion 2.0 Baseline Data**

### **1.) What baseline data has your Program/Department collected during this CAR term?**

During the CAR term, we use a number of reports to determine our baseline data. The main information we use is from our mid semester and end of term processes. This data allows us to monitor how our students are progressing through each semester. In addition to these processes, we use the responses/feedback collected via surveys.

### **2.) How is that data used to evaluate the Program/Department?**

The data is used to help the department determine if changes are necessary to facilitate student success. An example would be to determine if a student needs additional communication on processes and/or advising relating to academic policies and procedures. In addition, this information helps the department make better informed decisions relating to internal communication and processes.

## Criterion 2.0 Program/ Departmental Assessment Procedure and Action Plan

<b>Program/Department Name: Financial Aid &amp; Academic Records</b>
<b>Individual Completing Report: Amy Welty</b>
<b>Individual(s) Reviewing Report:</b>
<b>Date: 11/2/18</b>

### Program/ Departmental Assessment Procedure and Action Plan

#### **Purpose:**

To self-identify the status of Program/Department in the outcomes assessment process as well as the action-steps and timetable for the development of assessment processes.

Assessment Criteria

#### **Goals:**

Does the Department have specific student learning or academic/ student service goals which reflect the discipline or service area professional standards?

Yes  No

#### **Outcome Measures:**

Are direct and indirect outcome measures identified for each goal?

Yes  No

#### **Research:**

Is research systematically conducted to evaluate success or failure in achieving outcomes?

Yes  No

#### **Findings:**

Are research results analyzed and interpreted and findings determined?

Yes  No

#### **Review Process:**

Are findings discussed and reviewed by appropriate groups and individuals and recommendations made for action?

Yes  No

#### **Proposed Actions:**

Are recommendations acted upon?

Yes  No

#### **Improvements:**

Have actions resulted in documented improvements in student learning or academic/ student services?

Yes  No



## Assessment Measures Inventory

**\*The matrix should contain all goals as they pertain to the CAR.**

Assessment Measures for Goals (Outcome measures from assessment report)	Is trend data available for the measure? (Yes, No, NA)	Has a performance benchmark(s) been identified for the measure? (Yes, No, NA)	Type of performance benchmark - SSC (internal), State-level (OACC, OBR, Etc.), National (Professional Org., accrediting group, etc.) List all that apply
Goal 1: Reports checklist (e.g. NA, Early Alerts, mid-terms, grades, etc.)	Yes	Yes	SSC
Goal 1: Support Services Effectiveness Survey (Registration)	Yes	Yes	SSC
Goal 1: Financial Aid Wellness Survey	Yes	Yes	National
Goal 1: Financial Literacy (Default Rate) - SALT reports	Yes	Yes	SSC
Goal 2: student focus groups	NA	NA	
Goal 2: faculty focus groups	NA	NA	
Goal 2: Support Services Effectiveness Survey (Registration)	Yes	Yes	SSC
Goal 3: Withdrawal Survey	NA	NA	NA
Goal 3: Noel-Levitz SSI (Items # 35, 43, 73)	Yes	Yes	National
Goal 4: ODHE Financial Aid audits	Yes	Yes	State
Goal 5: Deadline met or not	NA	NA	NA
Goal 6: Alumni survey	Yes	Yes	National
Goal 6: Noel-Levitz SSI (Item # 5, 7, 13, 15, 20, 88)	Yes	Yes	National
Goal 6: Gateway Student Services Survey	Yes	Yes	SSC
Goal 6: Support Services Effectiveness Survey (Registration and Call Center)	Yes	Yes	SSC
Goal 6: Independent Financial Aid Audit	Yes	Yes	SSC

### **Criterion 3.0: Assessment Results Report**

#### **Purpose:**

The report is a summary compilation of key assessment methods, findings, review processes, actions, and improvements related to the academic/student service or learning goals of the Program/Department on an annual basis. As an historical record of assessment activities, the report provides for and supports the *systematic* assessment of academic support outcomes.

#### **Instructions:**

Enter the outcome measure in the space provided. Please note that for each goal it is expected that a mix of quantitative and qualitative as well as direct and indirect measures are employed.

Provide a brief summary of baseline data collected by the Program/Department and how that data has been used during the current CAR cycle.

Provide a brief summary of *key findings*, either as bulleted points or in short paragraph form.

Provide a brief summary on the review committee/review process (for example, Findings are reviewed by the Director and staff on a per term basis and recommendations are forward to the VP for further review).

Provide a brief summary of any proposed actions for the next term/CAR cycle. Please note that not all findings result in actions.

Provide a brief summary of any improvements from the previous CAR cycle (this does not apply to new measures the first year).

**Goal 1:** To provide information to the College community regarding “at-risk” students

Outcome Measure 1: Reports checklist (e.g. NA, Early Alerts, mid-terms, grades,etc.)

Terms of Assessment: Fall  Spring  Annual

#### **Findings:**

It is evident the policies changed three years ago continue to move our students successfully from start to graduation. Students are proving to understand the importance of their education.

#### **Review Committee/Review Process:**

The continued communication to our students proves to be successful by the declining academic dismissals and probations. In addition, the campus community has embraced the importance of communicating early with our students.

#### **Improvements:**

By communicating earlier, students have an opportunity to seek assistance through tutoring or instructor “one-on-one” meetings.

## Outcome Measure 2: Support Services Effectiveness Survey (Registration)

Terms of Assessment: Fall \_\_\_\_\_ Spring X Annual \_\_\_\_\_

### **Findings:**

The Student Services Effectiveness Survey was offered to all employees during spring 2017. This survey sets the tone for the internal customer services. It is evident our continued communication via email and meetings amongst all areas on campus, we are continuing to move our service from a B rating to a B+.

### **Review Committee/Review Process:**

This survey provides our office with information that we still need to be cognizant of the importance of internal customer service.

### **Improvements:**

We realize it is equally important to address the needs within our internal partners as they may be assisting our students. Through continued evaluation of job responsibilities within our office, we will be able to improve our internal customer service.

## Outcome Measure 3: Financial Aid Wellness Survey

Terms of Assessment: Fall \_\_\_\_\_ Spring 2017 Annual \_\_\_\_\_

**Findings:** It is evident by the results that many of our students who took the survey have not had any financial counseling, financial preparation for college or any type of personal finance sessions.

**Review Committee/Review Process:** In reviewing the report, many of our students are not aware of financial options available to them. This is a concern specifically for those students who are borrowing student loan money, we need make sure that we offer them the correct tools to make informed decisions about financing and paying back debt, especially as it relates to our default rate.

**Improvements:** We have an opportunity to better educate our students on financial awareness and wellness. We need to push our new financial literacy product 'WhichWay' to our students and introduce them to Student Connections so they have a reliable financial resource.

## Outcome Measure 4: Financial Literacy (Default Rate) - SALT reports

Terms of Assessment: Fall \_\_\_\_\_ Spring \_\_\_\_\_ Annual x

**Findings:** We did not find that students utilized the financial literacy tools within SALT. There were spikes in enrollments and usage of the site during the beginning of each semester as students enrolled in the SSC 101 class were required to register on the site and utilize the tools.

**Review Committee/Review Process:** We became unsatisfied with the tool and how little students were using it. In addition, we did not see that outreach we expected to our students in

repayment of their students loans and thus the cure rate of the defaulters was less than impressive.

**Improvements:** We have partnered with Student Connections and are looking to enhance and increase the student interaction as well as reduce our default rate more significantly. We are just in the beginning stages and have a plan to roll out the financial literacy piece to students by Fall 2018.

**Goal 2:** To enhance the accessibility and utilization of the student and financial aid components of the Banner system.

Outcome Measure 1: Gateway Student Services Survey

Terms of Assessment:            Fall   X      Spring   X              Annual       

**Findings:**

It is evident from the survey results, the creation of the “one-stop” center has proven to be very beneficial to our students.

**Review Committee/Review Process:**

The survey results allow us an opportunity to review areas needed amongst all staff within the Financial Aid/Registration area. In addition, we are able to share with campus executives the importance of allowing students an opportunity to meet one-on-one with individuals trained to answer students’ questions in a timely professional manner.

**Improvements:**

Although the results are overwhelmingly positive, there are definite areas where training and coaching is very important. The students are very vocal on their needs and continue to seek advice from our staff, which is demonstrated by the detailed responses.

Outcome Measure 2: Support Services Effectiveness Survey (Registration)

Terms of Assessment: Fall           Spring   X              Annual       

**Findings:**

It is evident through the survey results, we are continuing to improve our willingness to assist our campus community in a timely manner.

**Review Committee/Review Process:**

We find supporting one another amongst all areas of the campus, we are building relationships needed to encourage a positive and knowledgeable community. Through these relationships, we are building a culture that encourages continued communication.

**Improvements:**

Although the survey results have improved, there is still plenty of room for improvement. We need to share with the campus community all of the contacts available to them within our office.

**Goal 3:** To assist students with self-sufficiency by promoting the use of mystarkstate and college email for general information and self-service.

Outcome Measure 1: Withdrawal Survey

Terms of Assessment: Fall \_\_\_\_\_ Spring \_\_\_\_\_ Annual \_\_\_\_\_

**Findings:** The survey was not conducted after the initial AQIP Action Project, therefore data are not available and the measure will not be included in the next assessment cycle.

**Review Committee/Review Process:** NA

**Improvements:**

Outcome Measure 2: Noel-Levitz SSI (Items # 35, 43, 73)

Terms of Assessment: Fall \_\_\_X\_\_\_ Spring \_\_\_\_\_ Annual \_\_\_\_\_

**Findings:**

The Noel-Levitz survey revealed our students are beginning to recognize the importance of the processes as it relates to financial aid and registration (add/drop/withdraw).

**Review Committee/Review Process:**

The results are trending above the national standards which demonstrates the compassion amongst our campus faculty and staff by providing our students with the tools necessary to be successful.

**Improvements:**

Although the results are trending above the national standards, we are still below the importance determined by our students of the understanding of policies and procedures, adding/dropping classes, and financial aid accessibility. We need to utilize our campus systems/software to better assist our students. In addition, continual communication is key to student access and success.

**Goal 4:** To meet Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) HEI system and other reporting deadlines, ensuring data integrity

Outcome Measure 1: ODHE Financial Aid audits

Terms of Assessment: Fall \_\_\_\_\_ Spring\_x\_\_\_\_\_ Annual \_\_\_\_\_

**Findings:** We had audits conducted in the spring of 2016 and 2018. In both of the audit reviews, we had zero errors and zero findings.

**Review Committee/Review Process:** We need to continue to monitor our current practice of processing state aid and insure that we maintain integrity, accuracy and consistency.

**Improvements:** Keep up to date on training and communication related to changes in the state aid programs to insure we maintain clean records and accurate processing of state aid.

**Goal 5:** To develop and implement a records retention plan by June 30, 2018.

Outcome Measure 1: Deadline not met

Terms of Assessment: Fall \_\_\_\_\_ Spring \_\_\_\_\_ Annual \_\_\_\_\_

**Findings:** Given that the deadline was not met, a new goal and deadline will need to be developed and the plan will need to be prioritized.

**Review Committee/Review Process:** Amy Welty and Pam Arrington

**Improvements:**

**Goal 6:** To Provide high quality, efficient, and courteous services to the College Community

Outcome Measure 1: Alumni survey

Terms of Assessment: Fall \_\_\_\_\_ Spring\_x \_\_\_\_\_ Annual \_\_\_\_\_

**Findings:** There is not much reference within the survey related to our area. For the most part, the comments and perception is very high amongst the alumni. It is important that we continue to provide positive interaction with them in the future.

**Review Committee/Review Process:** While we do not have much interaction with alumni, we will continue to strive to provide them with the best service possible when it comes to serving their needs.

**Improvements:** Review and maintain good relationships with the alumni.

Outcome Measure 2: Noel-Levitz SSI (Item # 5, 7, 13, 15, 20, 88)

Terms of Assessment: Fall \_\_\_\_\_ Spring\_X \_\_\_\_\_ Annual \_\_\_\_\_

**Findings:**

Overall, the Noel-Levitz survey results are trending above the national standards. The students surveyed indicated the staff are helpful in explaining the financial aid and registration processes.

**Review Committee/Review Process:**

Through further review of the overall survey results, we need to take our services one step further to better assist our students. The more informed our students are relating to the financial aid and registration processes will allow them to be more successful while obtaining their educational goals.

**Improvements:**

The survey results, although positive, provide us with information needed to educate our staff with the tools and additional knowledge needed to ensure our students are given accurate information.

### Outcome Measure 3: Gateway Student Services Survey

Terms of Assessment: Fall  Spring  Annual

#### **Findings:**

It is evident the creation of the “one-stop” center has given our students the access needed to help make them successful as they navigate the financial aid and registration processes.

#### **Review Committee/Review Process:**

Through continued surveys and focus groups, we can continue to enhance our services to our students.

#### **Improvements:**

Although our survey results are very positive, we need to investigate other ways to effectively and efficiently educate our students how to be successful. We need to continue our team meetings allowing us to share information amongst the staff. This will empower the staff to be more confident when interacting with the students, thus allowing our students to become more successful.

### Outcome Measure 4: Support Services Effectiveness Survey (Registration and Call Center)

Terms of Assessment: Fall  Spring  Annual

#### **Findings:**

The results from the Support Services Effectiveness Survey indicate the need for our call center to be more empathetic to the needs of our campus community.

#### **Review Committee/Review Process:**

After a thorough review of the results, it is evident we need to encourage addressing the needs of those contacting our office. We need to spend time training our staff not only on the processes within financial aid and registration, but the importance of taking care of one person at a time. The staff need to be more focused on the queues to ensure those contacting our office are being served in a professional and timely manner.

#### **Improvements:**

Through continued training, we will be able to increase our customer service skills to become the campus resource for our campus community.

### Outcome Measure 5: Independent Financial Aid Audit

Terms of Assessment: Fall  Spring  Annual

**Findings:** For the 2015-2016 Audit, we had two opinions that we had to correct for the future and this was corrected in our procedures. For the 2016-2017 audit, we did not have any findings or opinions.

**Review Committee/Review Process:** Each year as we set up and begin processing the next award year, we review new regulations, current practices, websites, forms, and any

communication we have with students. Through this process, we strive to clarify and improve upon any communication to be sure students know exactly what they need to do for the next award year in order to obtain financial aid.

**Improvements:** We will continue to improve upon the financial aid delivery process, communication with students and awarding of aid to make sure we are in federal, state, and institutional compliance.



**Criterion 4.0 Program/Department members are qualified by professional background, experience, and continuing professional development and meet the needs of the Program/Department.**

Yes	No	DNA		
x			<b>4.1</b>	Employee (full-time and part-time) credentials meet the program, college, state, and national accreditation requirements.
x			<b>4.2</b>	Annual Employee Performance Evaluations are on record in Human Resources.
x			<b>4.3</b>	Employees (full-time and part-time) are involved in professional organizations, presentations, and/or other scholarly works.
x			<b>4.4</b>	Employees are involved in the development of program/department initiatives that support the College Mission.

3. Additional Comments: (Please explain any “No” selections.)

Reflective Narrative Questions:

1. Describe how Performance Evaluations are being used to enhance the Program/Department. During the performance evaluations, we look for opportunities on how we can support the overall college goals and objectives in serving our students with access and success.
2. Describe how professional development benefits the program. Professional Development opportunities, trainings and conferences are attended so we can stay abreast of federal and state regulation changes. In addition, we attend to ensure we are engaging with institutions that offer best practice ideas for us to consider to quality improvement.
3. Describe how employees are involved in the development of program/department initiatives that support the College Mission. The management team allows and encourages each staff member to share concerns and ideas related to quality improvement.

**Criterion 5.0 Program/Department is responsive to changes in current technology and adequate resources.**

Yes	No	DNA		
<b>x</b>			<b>5.1</b>	Program/Department changes are consistent with technological and scientific advances, and Program/Department content incorporates new developments in the field.
<b>x</b>			<b>5.2</b>	Employees work with supervisors to ensure adequate and current resources available for the Program/Department.
<b>x</b>			<b>5.3</b>	Employees work with information technology staff to ensure availability of appropriate software and hardware components.

Additional Comments: (Please explain any “No” selections.)

Reflective Narrative Questions:

1. Explain the changing conditions within the field.  
 We work closely with IT to ensure all programs that we utilize integrate with our Student Information System(SIS). We are required to work with and utilize systems within the Department of Education, Ohio Department of Education as well as third party servicers, these need to be integrated with our SIS system. It is necessary for us to consistently examine and evaluate for upgrades and new releases.
2. How are these changing conditions addressed within the Program/Department? Through email communication as well as our weekly team meetings.
3. Explain how employees work with information technology staff to ensure availability of appropriate software and hardware components. We evaluate our needs, work with the IT staff to determine timeframes and availability of man power to work out an implementation schedule.

## Component IV

### Recommendations and Executive Summary

**Based on the results of this current CAR,** list your strengths, areas of improvement, opportunities, threats, and recommendations.

Program/Department: Financial Aid and Academic Records

#### Strengths:

- Knowledge of staff and years of service and experience
- We now have proper staff in positions necessary to effectively serve the college community.
- Implementation of the Gateway Center and a more comfortable environment to serve student needs.
- ODHE audits have been clean over the last few years.
- With the implementation of reports, we are able to keep the data clean in the Banner system which allows for IR to submit files to HEI in a timely manner.

#### Areas of improvement:

- Over the last two years, we have made changes to academic policies that have resulted in students performing better.
- Realignment of job responsibilities to support better service of our customers, both internal and external.

#### Opportunities:

- While we have seen a slight decline in our default rate, we have an opportunity to see it decline more with the partnership of Student Connections.
- We have an opportunity to provide more clear and consistent information to our student body.
- We need to be more proactive on our approach with students and reach out to them more often rather than expecting them to call us to resolve their issue.
- Utilizing assessment tools to obtain customer feedback.

#### Threats:

- The default rate is a threat as well.
- Confidentiality

**Priority Recommendations:** *(For each area listed below, please number all recommendations as they will be prioritized on the [Summary Work Plan - Appendix A](#). Sufficient support for the recommendations must be included, either by reference to responses in the components or specific Criterion or by additional information included with this program review.)*

**Additional Information.** On occasion, some programs may have additional documents that they feel should be included to complete the self-study. Supporting documents may include such things as program self-study reports, case study reports, survey statistics, focus group data, etc.

All supporting documentation must be dated within this CAR period. Please list below the additional documents that you will be adding to this CAR in support of your recommendations.