

Southwestern College Financial Aid Director

JOB DESCRIPTION

REPORTS TO: Chief Financial Officer

SUPERVISES: Financial Aid Administrator, Graduate Assistants

PURPOSE: Serves as the chief administrator for the Office of Financial Aid and works closely in collaboration with Enrollment Services. Administers a student financial aid program consisting of federal funds (approximately \$2.8 million annually), and scholarship programs. The Director supervises the receipt, evaluation and approval of financial aid requests for all programs and establishes policies and procedures based on guidelines and national standards set forth by DOE and the college. Plans, organizes and supervises the Financial Aid department to administer federal, state, and institutional financial aid funds and services. Supervises the preparation of all required reports related to the operations of the office and ensures the college's use of funds and financial aid operations are in compliance with applicable state and federal regulations and serve the goals of recruitment and retention.

This position is also responsible for advising prospective and current students on all aid programs offered at SWC as well as reviewing, analyzing, determining and awarding financial aid from all federal, institutional and external sources.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS:

Operations and Oversight

- Contributes to the enrollment services recruitment and retention objectives of the college by recommending financial aid strategies within the framework of state and federal regulations that are consistent with the values and philosophy of the college.
- Develops a competent and productive staff by supervising and evaluating the performance of financial aid staff and student graduate assistants.
- Develops, implements and revises policies and procedures to ensure compliance with federal and state laws, regulations and college policies related to financial aid and scholarships.
- Manages all financial aid programs, ensuring compliance with all federal, state, and institutional financial aid regulations, policies, and procedures.
- Supervises the review of student aid applications and financial aid packaging for all qualified applicants including overseeing professional judgement processes and documentation.
- Oversees all aspects of the Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan programs and Grad Plus Loans including supervising the verification of student eligibility, awarding, reviewing, processing, and originating student loans as well as overseeing the refunds and repayments relating to Title IV process.
- Creates financial aid office communications with prospective and current students, including letter templates, preliminary and actual financial aid package communications and standard explanatory emails that are clear and consistent to ensure quality customer service.
- Maintains open and effective communication within the Enrollment Services Unit and with other offices/units within the college.

- Creates and oversees financial aid record keeping that is easy to access and store and relevant for auditing purposes.
- Oversees internal reconciliation efforts and reports to reviewing entities, such as auditors, program reviewers, and accreditation teams.
- Oversees and conducts the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) tracking which may include an establishing an appeals process related to SAP and special circumstances.
- Oversees the review of Cost of Attendance annually for both distance and on the ground programs using local and national data.
- Maintains, researches and submits information regarding budget as needed for the financial aid office.
- Oversees SWC's default management program including establishment of a default management team and creating relevant correspondence.
- Oversees all financial aid related information disseminated by SWC including ensuring that: a) the college website information is accurate and current; b) the College and Student Handbook is updated annually; c) the Financial Aid Guidebook is updated annually; d) financial aid and finance education informational brochures are created, current and relevant for prospective and current students and that information is being disseminated to current and prospective students; e) all updates and changes are filed with appropriate state and federal agencies.
- Oversees Honorary Scholarship committee and the quarterly Honorary scholarship application and award process including tracking quarterly awards and managing communications to students for this program.

Collaborations

- Works closely with the Enrollment Services Team and consults with the Director of Enrollment Services in the creation of systems and communications that can facilitate recruitment of prospective students where it relates to financial aid.
- Works closely with the Director of Student and Career Services pertaining to financial aid operations and services that can support the retention of students through keeping financial aid current for students who alter their program planner; take a leave of absence or are receiving academic action that impacts their progress in the program.
- Works with the Business Office and Enrollment Services to ensure accurate and timely exchange of information and awards between school information systems. Oversees and participates in reconciliation processes.
- In coordination with the Business Office, participates in the annual audit and provides leadership and direct communication with auditors concerning the single audit of federal funds.

Customer (Student) Services

- Creates policies and procedures that contribute to the ease of service to students while maintaining the quality and compliance needed. Provides training, information and guidance to college staff regarding financial aid information and processes.
- Researches, creates or recommends financial aid opportunities for current and prospective students that entail gathering information on eligibility and procedures to pursue these opportunities.
- Plans, organizes, coordinates and participates in outreach to prospective students including responding to financial aid inquiries by recruits and applicants,

- participating in meetings and workshops for applicants and managing new student advising/orientation.
- Oversees financial literacy program that may entail financial aid literacy workshops and “money club” meetings already established and documenting their success while creating new programs and information to assist incoming, current and graduating students on money and loan management.

Clearinghouse

Oversees the scheduled reporting to the National Student Clearinghouse according to the established schedule for NSLDS required reporting and Degree Verifications.

This process includes:

- Responding to error resolution of required items (items tagged in red) within 72 hours.
- Responding to Degree Verification requests for current and past students in a timely manner.

Professional Development

- Participates in trainings, webinars, and conferences with the purpose of developing and maintaining skills and knowledge of college financial aid policies, procedures, and programs. Learns, documents and advocates for “best practices” in financial aid management.
- Develops and maintains professional contacts with financial aid colleagues in New Mexico.
- Maintains local and national memberships in financial aid organizations.

Reporting

- Oversees and/or completes federal, state, and institutional reporting pertinent to financial aid functions. These include: financial aid reporting for IPEDS, HLC, NMHED, NMSEP and VA annual reports as well as Campus Crime Statistics for the Annual Safety and Security Report and additional internal reporting (i.e. Enrollment Services Monthly Report and/or Enrollment Services Quarterly Board Report).

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS:

- Master’s degree in a related field (business, higher education, etc.) and/or five + years of experience in higher education working in financial aid.
- Experience supervising others.
- Demonstrated skill in computer software programs, including Excel, Microsoft Word, etc.
- Ability to effectively utilize student database systems both to enter and retrieve information.
- Detailed knowledge and experience working with federal financial aid programs.
- Detailed knowledge and experience in financial aid reporting and record-keeping requirements.
- Knowledge of higher education processes.
- Strong interpersonal skills and student service orientation.
- General knowledge of accounting practices.
- Ability to communicate effectively verbally and in writing.
- Capacity for problem solving, systems design, and accuracy with details.
- Ability to work collaboratively as a member of a team and to lead others.

I have reviewed this job description and am able to fulfill all tasks and duties included in this job description.

Employee Signature: _____ Date: _____

Supervisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

July 1, 2021