

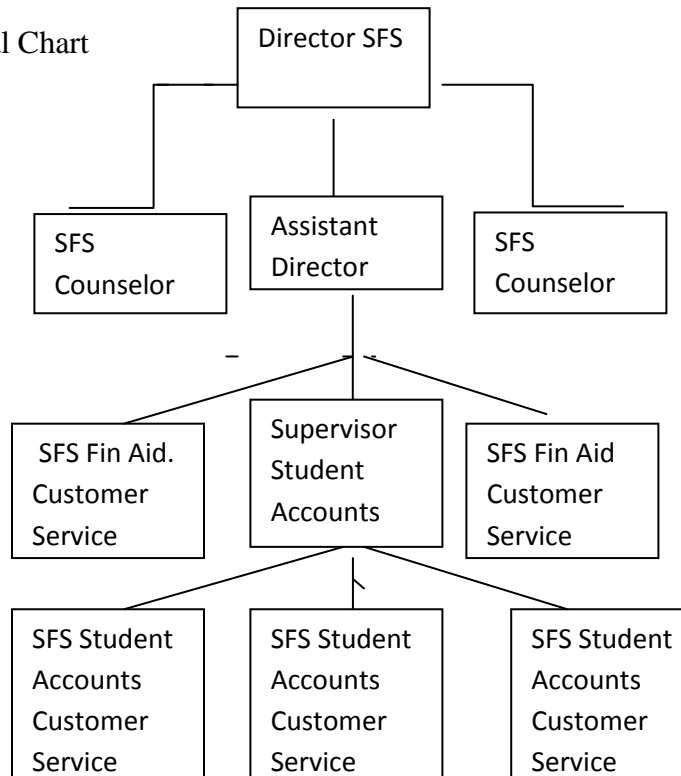
Student Financial Services Department Plan 2009-10 to 2012-13

SFS Mission Statement

The Student Financial Services (SFS) Office strives to provide excellent service to students and families in following areas: financial aid; student and parent loans; VA education benefits; billing; refunds; and financial counseling. Our overall mission is to support the University's goal of attracting and retaining quality students. Through creativity, productivity, efficiency, and accuracy, we endeavor to be looked upon by our many stakeholders as fundamental to the success of our students and, ultimately, the University.

FUNCTIONAL ORGANIZATION

a. Organizational Chart



- b. University Committees
 - a. Fiscal Management Committee – director is a member of committee that provides campus community an in depth synthesis of the fiscal matters of the university
 - b. Academic Policy Committee – director is a member. Committee is charged with reviewing, renewing and establishing new academic policies for the university. All academic policies changes start with this committee and eventually get acted on by the President’s staff.
 - c. ADCAC Committee – director and assistant director are members of the campus wide committee which attempts to steer the student management software for the campus.
 - d. Summer School Committee – assistant director serves on this committee. Committee is charged with overseeing summer school administrative and academic issues.
 - e. FOE – 4 members of SFS served on this committee, which did an in depth analysis of first year students and what effects them at the university. Director is part of the steering committee.

CURRENT ENVIRONMENT

The environment for student financial services is more challenging than in the past. There are numerous federal mandates concerning student aid. The most important mandate is Direct Lending. This is a ‘new’ or ‘different’ system for students to borrow Stafford loans. This is being forced onto universities who currently are involved in FFELP lending (using banks and other institutions as the lender of funds). If mandated the change at LHU will be cosmetic for the students (a loan is a loan) but it will alter the operational and procedural landscape for SFS. Essentially SFS will have to develop and use a different system for loan delivery and for loan follow up. This could result in the need for more staff to handle the additional workload.

The budget climate is very restrictive, for the third year in a row; LHU has had to cut operating budgets to help balance the budget. There will be no anticipated increases in the LHU appropriations for the next two years as per PASSHE. Also, tuition will probably not increase enough to cover increased cost of delivering our courses. Therefore there will be a tight money situation, the only way out is to grow enrollment.

Growing enrollment at LHU is difficult, as we are “locked “into a model that has declining enrollments. We keep on trying to enroll more and more high school students to take traditional based programming. This market is ‘drying up’ and has been for several years. We are not doing enough programming for the non-traditional student to make LHU a “choice” for them. LHU needs to offer more night and weekend courses and programs instead of all daytime

courses; this is true at main campus and Clearfield. Growing enrollments will bring other challenges to SFS. These include the focus of our major goals.

The major goals involve campus resources especially IT. The IT staff for administrative computing seems to be insufficient to complete all the goals of everyone on campus, including those of SFS. The SFS goals will both save time and money. The time saved can truly be used by SFS personnel to enhance the total customer service experience for all LHU students. The cost savings will enhance the overall budget picture for LHU and SFS.

GOALS FOR NEXT THREE YEARS

- a. Have Direct Lending in Place for Fall 2010
- b. Cut overall operational budget 3% in 2009, 3% in 2010, 3% in 2011.
- c. Train personal in financial aid and customer service yearly.
- d. Increase campus awareness of SFS.
- e. Increase student awareness of financial aid.

STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING GOALS

- I. Cut over all operational budget by 3% for each of the next three years.
 - a. This can be accomplished in part by doing the following:
 1. Establish Direct Deposit of refunds for students
 2. Do automated billing over the web.
 3. Automate financial aid award notification for returning students
- II. Train personal in financial aid and customer service yearly.
 - a. Offer seminar training to individuals on campus for workshops on customer service
 - b. Send personal to regional and area training, at least 3 people per year.
- III. Increase campus awareness of SFS.
 - a. Keep website updated with current information. SFS website is one of the best on campus. Information ranges from financial aid to billing and all points in between.
 - b. Use fall and spring term newsletter to alert campus to SFS activities.
 - c. Visit with individual departments, explaining billing and financial aid. First department meeting will be fall 09 with the counseling department.
- IV. Increase Student awareness of financial aid and financial management.
 - a. Offering web based program on financial management CASH COURSE and BORROW SMART. These are free to the students.
 - b. Increase student usage of the student portal to review financial aid and student accounts on line. Do this via advertising and communication.
 - c. Fully automate financial aid packaging. LHU has owned the module since 1993 and will fully utilize this module by fall 2012. This will cut down on the time and increase the efficiency and accuracy of doing financial aid awards.
- V. Be a Direct Lending Institution by Fall 2010
 - a. This is mandated by the DOE and Congress. SFS with support from IT will change how students receive student loans. Impact on students is minimal but the overall impact on SFS and IT is considerable. The entire loan system has to be redone. Jenzabar consultants hired to help with transition.

MAJOR PROJECTS

- I. Become a Direct Lending School For Fall 2010
 - a. Implementation date: March 2010
 - b. Rationale and benefit: This change is being mandated by the DOE and Congress. No cost savings is projected for the university. The change is necessary in order for LHU students to continue to have access to federal loans which amount to over \$30 million a year.
 - c. Cost to university is projected to be in excess of \$8,000. This cost includes direct cost of hiring an outside consultant from Jenzabar to help with the implementation and other personal cost of both the IT department and SFS.

- II. Automate returning students financial aid notification
 - a. Implementation date: May 2011
 - b. Rationale and benefit: SFS processes over 2000 financial aid award notifications for returning students. The cost to the university in supplies and postage exceeds \$3,000 annually. The sending award notifications by email and using the student portal will save the university direct cost and save cost on labor.

They system will be more efficient, as students will be able to see their awards the same day they are notified. Also, by the earlier notification, students will have more time to receive customer service from the SFS department as they will be able to contact SFS earlier.
 - c. Cost to the university is minimal. SFS has used direct email notification for the past three summers for all financial aid notification. The system works well. SFS plans on 'advertising' this change starting with notification on the spring term bill (goes out in December), putting information on the our website, sending email notifications to returning students and parents who do a fafsa, and advertising in the campus news papers. The other cost will be in set up and maintenance on the SFS website. This will be done internally with a small amount of support for the LHUP IT department.

- III. Direct Deposit of Refunds
 - a. Implementation date: Fall 2011
 - b. Rationale and benefit: SFS processes over 9500 refund checks each academic year for over \$15 million dollars. The cost to the university in materials and postage is over \$3,500 to do this. The time spent on this function by staff and students is also great; time not spent on this function can be utilized elsewhere in processing and other types of service issues.

Customer service issues abound with our current refund process,, as LHU is a day one refund school, each term LHU has over 1300 refunds checks which are ready to be picked up the first day of classes, this causes an enormous customer service issue in our office, as these students all try to get theirs at the same time. Doing direct deposit would stop this issue.

- c. Cost: No cost to university, this will be a no cost contract. There will be a bid process and the bid will be judged on services provided by the vender. The cost to the university will be implementation, as IT will be involved and will be the key factor in establishing this system.

The refund system would be enhanced, as SFS would be sending a file to a third party vendor who in turn would do all the necessary banking, depositing and student notification.

IV. Automated billing using the web.

- a. Implementation Date: Fall 2011, pilot project Summer 2011.
- b. Rationale and Benefit: LHUP uses Jenzabar as its student management system. Students currently can view their account on the web using the student portal. The cost to LHU for billing in supplies and postage is over \$16,000 each year. By developing and implementing this system, it will reduce the cost by at least \$10,000 per year. SFS will still be sending bills to first time students.
- c. Cost: The anticipated cost will be for developing a process and system that utilizes our current web based output. This will take time and effort by the IT staff and SFS. Material cost should be a minimum. Also, conversations will be held with Jenzabar to find out what other institutions are doing in this regard. If it is determined that a third party vendor is necessary (as some PASSHE schools currently do) a bid process will be done.

V. Fully automate student financial aid packaging and use web notification

- a. Implementation Date: Fall 2012
- b. Rationale and Benefit: SFS currently does all financial aid packages by hand. Each student is looked at and awarded. This process is very man power intensive. Also, the cost of materials and postage is over \$5,000 annually for this function.

LHUP has a packaging module in Jenzabar (since 1993) which has never been implemented. This module if like most modules will process financial aid awards for students in a more efficient and error free manner then those down by 'hand.' The cost of doing this will be in manpower cost for both SFS and IT. It will take building the module and then testing and more testing before implementation.

The benefit to students is that the process once implemented will cut down on the processing time for doing financial aid awarding. Also, SFS has for the past three years used the web to notify students of their financial aid awards, so it is felt that we are ready to do this for all terms, except for first time students attending LHU.

- c. Cost: The cost of doing this will be in manpower cost for both SFS and IT. It will take building the module and then testing and more testing before implementation. Dedicated time will be needed for both IT and SFS to accomplish this. LHU would finally be utilizing a module which it has paid for.