INTRODUCTION

This report presents data regarding the increase in financial aid awards to students enrolling at College of San Mateo, 1999/00 – 2003/04. Financial aid data include federal Pell Grants, California Board of Governor’s fee waivers, federal work-study awards, and other forms of federal and state financial assistance. The context for this report is a U.S. Department of Education data set analyzing college students who did not apply for financial aid.

Using this information, the American Council of Education released its own study entitled, “Missed Opportunities: Students Who Do Not Apply for Financial Aid.” The ACE found that 50% of all college undergraduates failed to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the standard application used by the federal government, state governments, and colleges and universities to award financial aid. According to the ACE, of the approximately 8 million students who did not apply for aid:

- Large proportions of low-income students failed to complete a FAFSA because they thought their income was too high to qualify
- Community college students were far less likely to apply for aid than students attending four-year postsecondary institutions
- Approximately 850,000 students who did not file a FAFSA were likely to have been eligible for a Federal Pell Grant
- More than 50% of those students who filed a FAFSA did so after important deadlines had passed, decreasing their likelihood of receiving state aid

In light of these findings, CSM has placed considerable emphasis upon making students and their families aware of the FAFSA and other forms of available aid to assist students to attend college. In many cases, students simply were unaware of the FAFSA, submitted a FAFSA past college admission deadlines, or were unnecessarily intimidated by the support documentation required by the FAFSA.

Figure 1

Financial Aid Awards – Total Award Dollars

CSM

1999/00 - 2003/04
FINDINGS

Note: The data presented below does not include financial assistance from scholarships, employer reimbursement, institutional non-need-based aid, veteran’s and military benefits, vocational rehabilitation grants, and private grants and loans.

· In the five-year period between 1999/00 and 2003/04, the total amount of financial assistance disbursed to CSM students increased from $2.136 million to $3.455 million. This figure represents an increase of 61.8%. (See Figure 1)

· The total number of awards distributed to students increased 53.1%, from 3,388 to 5,186. (See Figure 2)

· During this five-year period, 12,329 students received 19,982 financial aid awards, totaling $12.656 million.

· Figure 3 displays the various types of federal and state assistance provided to CSM students, 1999/00 – 2003/04.

CONCLUSION

The data in this report clearly indicate an increase in the total amount of financial assistance awarded to CSM students as well as an increase in the number and proportion of students receiving some form of federal or state aid. CSM’s Office of Financial Aid continues its efforts to ensure that no student misses the opportunity for vital financial assistance because he or she lacks necessary information, is misinformed about the nature of student aid programs, or is unable to navigate the financial aid application process.

1: This report is available at: http://nces.ed.gov/pubssearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2004158
2: The full text of this report is available at http://www.acenet.edu/