



### New Classified Hiring/Position Justification

**Hiring Division/Department:** Enrollment Services/Financial Aid **Position Title:** Financial Aid Assistant

#### Classification

Position type: Permanent x Full Time 100 # of months 12  
Part Time \_\_\_\_\_ % of Full Time \_\_\_\_\_ # of months \_\_\_\_\_

Position: General Funds \_\_\_\_\_  
Allocation: External Funds\* \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

#### Budget Information

Grade 22A Step 1 Annual Salary \$ 51,816

### Justification

Please respond to the following questions in electronic format to the appropriate Dean, Manager or Vice President. Additional information may be provided as relevant for position justification.

1. Describe the specific needs for the position requested and the duties of this position in a brief statement.
2. Explain how this position aligns with and supports the mission and strategic goals of the college.
3. Explain how adding this position will strengthen the department or division.
4. Explain how this work will be accomplished if the position is not filled.

Please submit completed Classified Position Hiring/ Position Justification electronically to the responsible administrator in your division or department.

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**This position has been reviewed by the department or division and is recommended for hiring.**

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**Dean / Director / Hiring Supervisor**

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**Date**

1. Describe the specific needs for the position requested and the duties of this position in a brief statement.

The Financial Aid Department is seeking funding to hire a permanent fulltime Financial Aid Assistant. This important position is needed to provide consistent professional staffing at our front counter, support the administrative and clerical needs of the office and maintain and supplement our capacity to engage in the numerous initiatives across the campus and in our community where financial aid expertise is needed.

For several years, the Department has placed an over reliance on student assistant staffing to maintain front office coverage during the 43 hours per week we are open to the public. On average, we have one or two students working the front counter approximately half of these hours and then the technical staff rotate in and provide coverage as needed or are assigned “shifts” to be available to our student staff when questions arise that they are unable to answer or should not be answering given their level of training and scope of their responsibilities as student employees. This staffing model is inefficient and routinely distracts staff from their work or disrupts the work flow which often is associated with a time sensitive processing schedule that must be adhered to.

During the one-year period from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016, we had 7,940 students sign in at our front counter. Since the beginning of August, over 2,000 students have signed in seeking assistance. Having a fulltime Financial Aid Assistant assigned at our front counter will help us manage the volume, triage those who need more direct service and support, and reduce the number of times students return to our front counter because the information they received from a student assistant was incomplete. The ability to serve and support the diverse needs of our students often relies on the ability of the staff member to ask the right questions which is a skill derived from extensive training and experience which underscores the need for a Financial Aid Assistant, particularly as the first contact students and families may have with our office.

2. Explain how this position aligns with and supports the mission and strategic goals of the college.

The College is committed to providing an educational space that is transformative for the communities we serve. Having access to this social imperative is becoming more and more challenging for our highest need students as the cost of living continues to rise and families experience escalating financial stress. Having a professional staff member as a first point of contact is key for connecting our potential students with programs and services and strategies for success. This is in alignment with both Completion Objective 2.3 and 2.5 that affirms our commitment to orient students to the broad menu of the services we provide and connecting them to the most appropriate given their circumstances. The addition of a fulltime Financial Aid Assistant, much like other front line staff in Student Services, is needed to ensure students who come to our office are also being connected to EOPS, DRC, TRiO, Puente, the Dream Center, BTO, etc. as well as all of the other “matriculation” activities generally associated with student services.

**3. Explain how adding this position will strengthen the department or division.**

The addition of a fulltime Financial Aid Assistant strengthens our department by placing a well-trained staff member as the initial point of contact. There is a great deal of fear and stigma around financial aid. The addition of a permanent staff member who is able to build trust by providing consistent and complete information in an environment that is welcoming and supportive will help our department remove these barriers that would otherwise inhibit students from disclosing personal information that may increase their access to financial aid or other services.

We also benefit by having the front counter staffed with a fulltime Financial Aid Assistant who can review complex student data and respond fully to inquiries from our students who may have lost eligibility for the Board of Governors Fee Waiver, need assistance enrolling in one of the disbursement options or have stale-dated or lost checks and other administrative issues a student employee cannot address.

The addition of another permanent staff member also helps our department to be more responsive to the numerous requests we receive for participation in on and off campus initiatives. In addition to the multiple requests we receive through Outreach to present information sessions and deliver application workshops in our feeder high schools, the Financial Aid Department supports the Dream Center and Dreamers Task Force, Study Abroad, COLTS Academy, PEP, CBET, Proactive Registration, SparkPoint, Transfer Services, NSF/STEM Center Scholars, and more.

We recently entered into a multi-year contract with Financial Aid TV, an online service we will be using to provide financial aid content 24/7 to students and customized Satisfactory Academic Progress and Loss of BOGFW and Enrolment Priorities modules. The Financial Aid Assistant will be instrumental in helping students access and use these resources as part of their appeal and financial aid reinstatement and working with the STOP initiative and Retention Specialist to ensure students who are on academic probation and at risk of losing eligibility for the Board of Governors Fee Waiver utilize the materials.

**4. Explain how this work will be accomplished if the position is not filled.**

The current staffing model is unsustainable given the increasing demand for financial aid presence in the different initiatives both on campus and in our service areas. We are challenged in being able to provide adequate service when we have more than one person out of the office. Having a reliable and consistent Financial Aid Assistant in the office or involved in some of these initiatives will balance workload and maintain quality service at our front counter.

Without reliable front office coverage, we will continue to have staffing issues arise should a student assistant call in sick, need study time or change their class schedule. Any of these issues require an adjustment in everyone's schedule to accommodate coverage needs.

The level of service we would like to provide is inhibited by the lack of a permanent staff member at our front counter. Until such time as this is possible, this will continue to be a struggle and create a unavoidable disservice to our students and added pressure on the department.