

Spring 2017 Commission Meeting

WSSSC Report: Financial Aid Council

Submitted by: Christina Castorena

The winter FAC meeting took place March 9 - 10, 2016, at Rainbow Lodge in North Bend.

In response to the WSSSC Work Plan 2016-2017 Strategy, "Decrease institutional FAFSA, WASFA and financial aid process barriers for students," the FAC Work Plan includes the following strategies:

- Create system-wide efficiencies to simplify the application process; gathering suggestions and agreement from FAC membership for standardization of processes and centralization of documents.
- With ctcLink conversion, look at piloting the elimination of Data Sheets and mass package files that are not selected for verification.
- Collaborate with SBCTC-IT and WSAC to make the financial aid/WASFA application process easier to understand and consistent at each college.

I asked if any of these strategies are contingent on ctcLink. FAC members voiced concerns that they will not be included in decisions around business process standardization to minimize customization in PeopleSoft. They indicated that changes to practices may effect enrollments, ability to do mass auto-packaging, and that what works for one campus may not work for another. They will provide a letter to WSSSC with their concerns and call for support.

We also had discussion on concerns that DREAMers/DACA students may not feel safe completing the WASFA application based on the current national climate. FAC is committed to promoting WASFA, encouraging students to apply, and awarding SNG and State Work Study to students who qualify (if funds are available, and in the case of work study - they have work authorization). Some colleges reported that they are hearing that people outside of the college are discouraging students from applying for DACA status and they think students are also interpreting this to mean they should not apply for WASFA.