



Who Should Read This

- Enrollment Managers
- Cabinet
- Financial Aid Directors

Financial Aid Strategy Self-Assessment

Audit the Effective Use of Financial Aid

Overview

Welcome to the Financial Aid Strategy Self-Assessment

Financial aid is a critical lever for achieving an institution's many enrollment goals, but many institutions have room to improve some aspect of financial aid allocation.

The diagnostic is structured as a survey and asks respondents to indicate 'yes', 'somewhat', 'no', or 'don't know' to a set of indicator questions about effective use of financial aid.

All 'somewhat', 'no', and 'don't know', answers indicate an area in need of attention.

Financial Aid Self-Assessment Elements

Centralizing Institution Financial Aid Strategy

Important Considerations:

- Alignment of aid allocation with strategic enrollment goals
- Stakeholder knowledge of and support for financial aid policy

Leveraging Enrollment Data with Financial Aid

Important Considerations:

- Target student populations
- Financial aid effects on yield
- Changes to admitted student populations over time

Endowed Scholarships

Important Considerations:

- Centralized management of endowed scholarships and applications
- Donor-institutions relationships

Pricing & Aid Communications

Important Considerations:

- Timing of aid awards
- Clarity of financial aid letters
- Admissions staff capacity to support prospective students
- Presentation of list price and student outcomes on webpages

Financial Aid & Student Success

Important Considerations:

- Registration holds
- Micro-grants
- Correlation of aid disbursement and successful student behaviors

Financial Aid Strategy Self-Assessment

Work through the following items using the 4-item scale (yes, somewhat, no, and don't know) to answer each statement. Make comments to the side when you come across any areas you notice need changes.

- This statement is **consistently** true.
- This statement is **somewhat** or **sometimes** true.
- This statement is **rarely** true.
- The answer is **unknown**.



Centralizing Strategy

	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Comments
Our institution has specific enrollment goals (targets and prioritization of headcount, net revenue, profile, diversity and student success)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Our aid allocation is aligned with our strategic enrollment goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
When the chief enrollment officer has reasonable confidence that changing aid allocation would make progress against enrollment goals, he/she has the power to enact those changes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Regardless of accounting rules, the stakeholders who shape aid policy conceptualize aid more like a discount than like an expense	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
The stakeholders who shape aid policy understand the significance of the discount rate and could explain to a third party why it is at its current level	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
The stakeholders who shape aid policy understand the mechanics of financial aid optimization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Our institution has enough financial aid that net cost is not the primary barrier for non-enrolled students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

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Financial Aid Strategy Self-Assessment (cont.)



Leveraging Data

	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Comments
We know last year's yield rate for every award type and every target population	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
We know how our yield rates (by award type and target population) have changed over the last three years	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
We can project how small changes in award size will impact yield for specific scholarships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
We factor expected changes to the admitted student population into our statistical model each year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
We blend the overall proportion of merit and need aid differently across different target populations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



Endowed Scholarships

	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Comments
Endowed scholarships are funded, distributed and managed by a centralized scholarship office and database.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Scholarship applications are collected and monitored by a single, standardized clearinghouse.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Our scholarship/financial aid office proactively checks student eligibility for donor-proposed scholarship restrictions before a donor agreement is signed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Scholarships are allocated with enough time to influence a prospective student's choice of attendance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Scholarships are allocated with enough time to influence a prospective student's choice of attendance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Student-donor interaction is tied to the financial aid process and disbursement of funds.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

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Financial Aid Strategy Self-Assessment (cont.)



Communication

We proactively reach out to prospective students and families to help them understand the cost of college

● ○ ?

Most students receive aid awards as soon as possible after their letter of acceptance

Students clearly understand the direct costs of attendance by reading the aid award letter

In award letters, aid is communicated together with information about the university's overall value proposition – i.e., why it's worth the cost

Admissions staff are capable of walking prospective students through an aid award letter

Students can read the website and understand that the list price is not what they will pay to attend

Webpages that discuss pricing and aid link the cost of college to expected outcomes

Comments



Student Success

We know every way a registration hold could be put on a student's account

● ○ ?

Students aren't prevented from registering for classes because of small balances

We have a micro-grant program to assist students with small unpaid balances

Our micro-grant program is targeted, delivering aid to students for whom finances are the major barrier to graduation

Receipt of aid is tied to behaviors correlated with student success (e.g., meeting with an advisor)

No students have major increases in net price as a result of lost merit aid



You have reached the end of the self-assessment.



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P 202-747-1000 | **F** 202-747-1010 | eab.com