

College Action Project Worksheet for CAP Projects – March 18, 2016 Update

CAP: 1.2.4 Reduction of Financial Barriers for Students

Champion: Ann Isackson

1. CAP Team Members: Ann Isackson (Financial Aid), Brune Garcia (Student Life), Brynne Roberts (Financial Aid/Foundation), Chris Allen (Student Employment), David Selmon (Lakeshore Campus), Ennis Young (Faculty), Jane Mohr (Cashiers), Lori Cook (Admissions/Enrollment Center), Mary Reed (Foundation), Paul Doane (Financial Aid).

It has been difficult to recruit student representation on our CAP this year. Therefore, we are seeking input from Enrollment Center, Student Employment Services and Financial Aid student employees on a case-by-case basis.

2. Describe the **purpose** of this project including a description of the associated activities. (100 words or fewer)

To assist students in achieving their educational and career goals by helping to eliminate financial barriers to student success. This will be accomplished through the development and implementation of new scholarship and student employment opportunities; expanded financial literacy education; and the identification and reevaluation of institutional policies that inadvertently create additional financial obstacles.

3. Describe the **goals** of this Action Project (in 100 words or fewer) **(Wildly important goals)**
 - Reduce Barriers to Completion
 - Increase available need-based scholarship funding/financial incentives for persistence
 - Improve utilization of scholarships and work-study
 - Evaluate/modify application/awarding/management processes related to work-study and scholarships
 - Develop/implement solutions that reduce obstacles to completion that arise from our institutional policies and practices
 - Increase Loan Indebtedness Awareness*
 - Increase scholarship funding, student employment opportunities, and financial literacy awareness
 - Educate students regarding loan repayment and default

* *Goal was changed from Reduce Loan Indebtedness. While in time financial literacy and the move to more need-based awarding will likely impact borrowing habits and reduce loan indebtedness, we do not currently have sufficient institutional funds or other forms of financial assistance available to significantly reduce or eliminate a student's need to borrow.*

4. What **measurable criteria** will be used to determine this project's success? (Lead measures)

- Scholarships
 - Scholarship dollars available/disbursed to students each year
 - Number of students who apply/are awarded scholarships each year
 - Merit vs. need based scholarships available
 - Completion rates for recipients
 - Student loans accepted*
- Work-Study
 - Work-study awarded/utilized
 - Completion rates for recipients
 - Student loans accepted*
- Institutional Barriers
 - Return of funds calculations performed
 - Financial holds preventing registration
 - Students dropped from classes through enrollment cancelation
- Financial Literacy
 - Student touch points
 - Student loans accepted*
 - 3-year institutional cohort default rate

* *Changed from Student Loans Awarded. Since we currently auto-package student loans for all financial aid applicants who are eligible, data related to accepted loans provides a better indicator of student borrowing patterns.*

5. Please provide the **results of your lead measures** to date (either tables or charts) (Compelling scoreboard)

Lead measure data collected and illustrated in the graphs and charts that follow serve as a baseline to measure CAP 1.2.4 progress in the areas of Scholarships, Work-Study, Institutional Barriers, and Financial Literacy. The barriers that CAP team members are attempting to address are complex and will require time to implement and to assess outcomes. The CAP sub teams are still in the process of gathering additional data. A review of work initiated and data collected by each CAP 1.2.4 sub team follows:

SCHOLARSHIPS

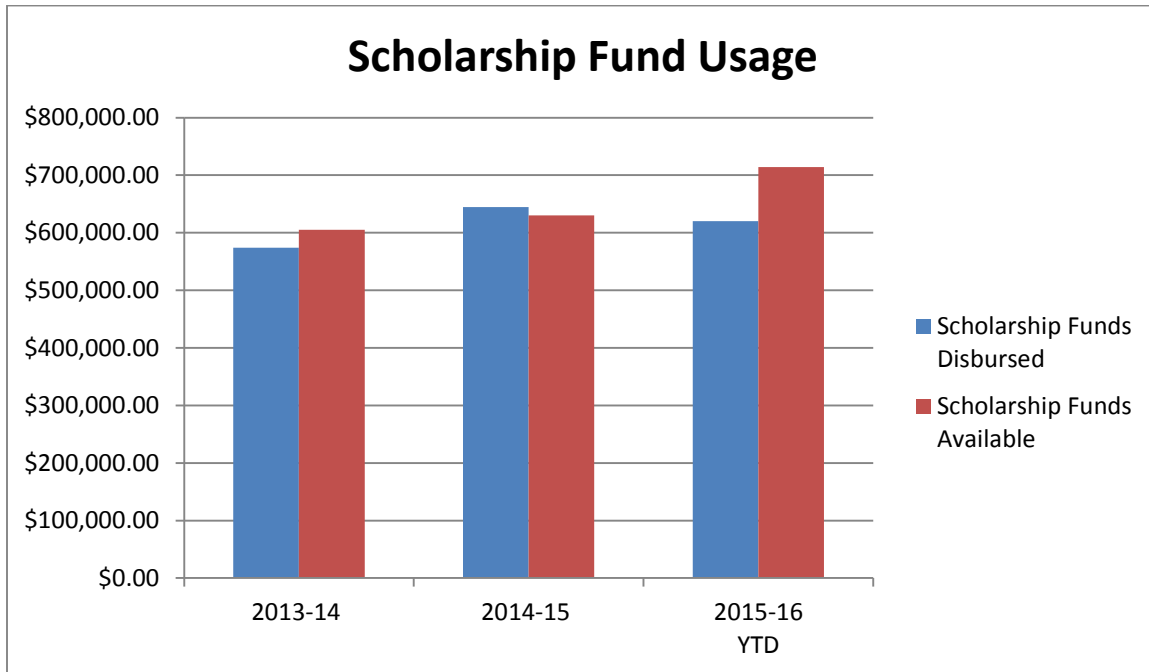
Sub team members engaged in the following activities:

- Implementation of Academic Works scholarship software
 - Coordination with the Foundation Office to create a contingency fund available to assist students on a case-by-case basis
 - Identification of 42 students whose classes were repeatedly dropped for balances owed prior to the Winter 2016 semester. These students had no additional eligibility for federal or state financial aid. \$28,645 in unrestricted, discretionary funds were disbursed to the accounts of these students to cover outstanding balances, allowing them to retain their classes and helping to stabilize our Winter enrollment. All students have received first attendance confirmation in their classes. Outcomes for these students will continue to be tracked.
 - Testing and roll-out of online scholarship application. New application included a question to identify DACA students to aid in the awarding process. 25 DACA students were identified. Multiple communication campaigns were sent to prospective, new and returning students, as well
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as to high school counselors. 1374 scholarship applications were received, which is 74.5% more than the previous year.

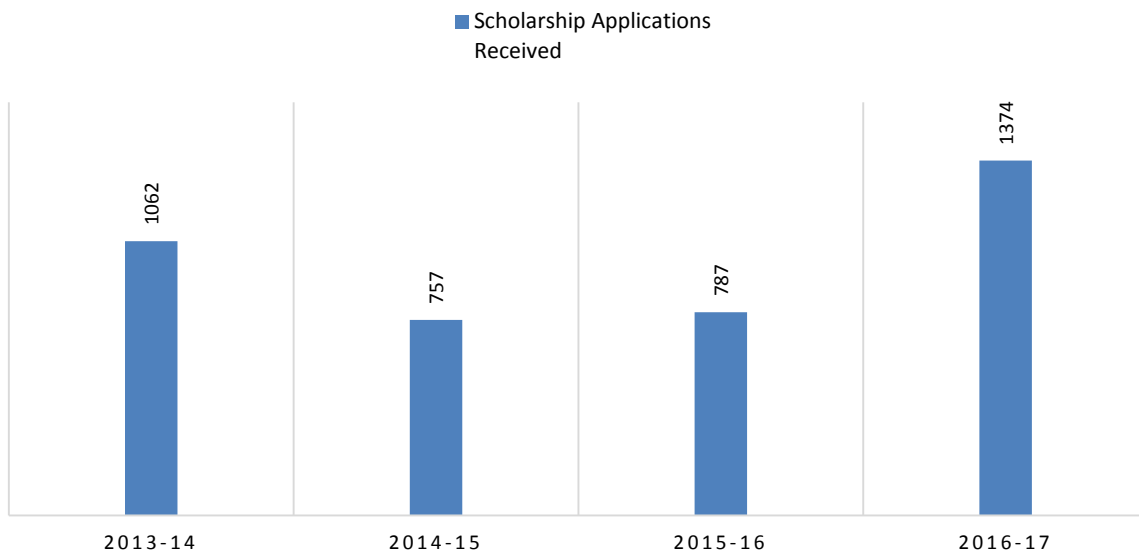
- Development and incorporation of expanded financial literacy content in Scholarship Recipient Workshops. Planning of workflow and processes required for move to mandatory workshop completion for 2016-17 academic year.
- Ongoing coordination with the Foundation to develop criteria, processes, and procedures to facilitate the switch to expanded need-based scholarship awarding. Work will also be undertaken to evaluate differential tuition scholarship criteria and awarding procedures.

Scholarship Scoreboards



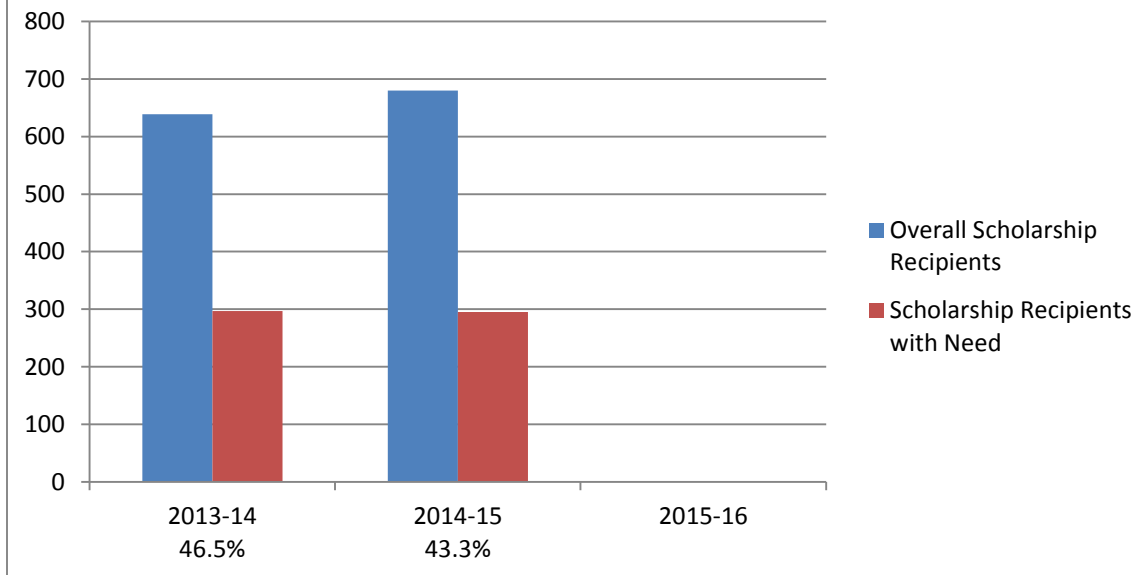
Scholarship fund usage for 2015-16 is not final and will likely increase by year's end. Data will be incorporated into August update.

Scholarship Applicants by Year

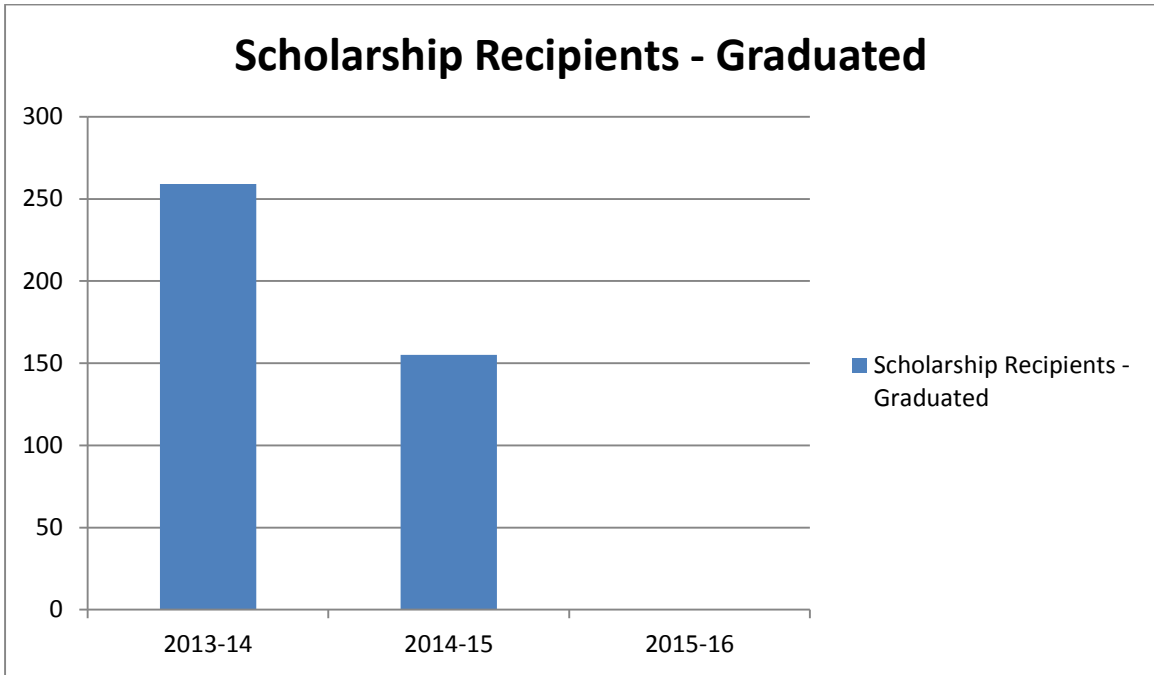


CAP team members attribute the 74.5% increase in applications received to both the new, streamlined online application process and additional communications targeting prospective, new and returning students.

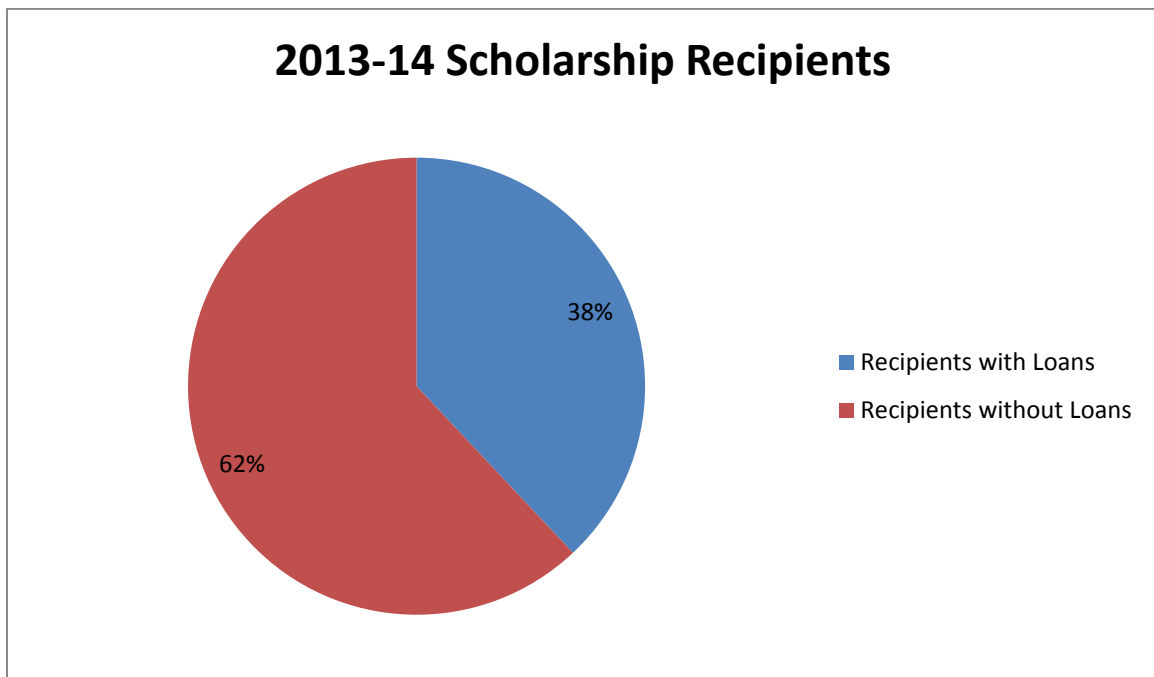
Scholarship Recipients with Financial Need



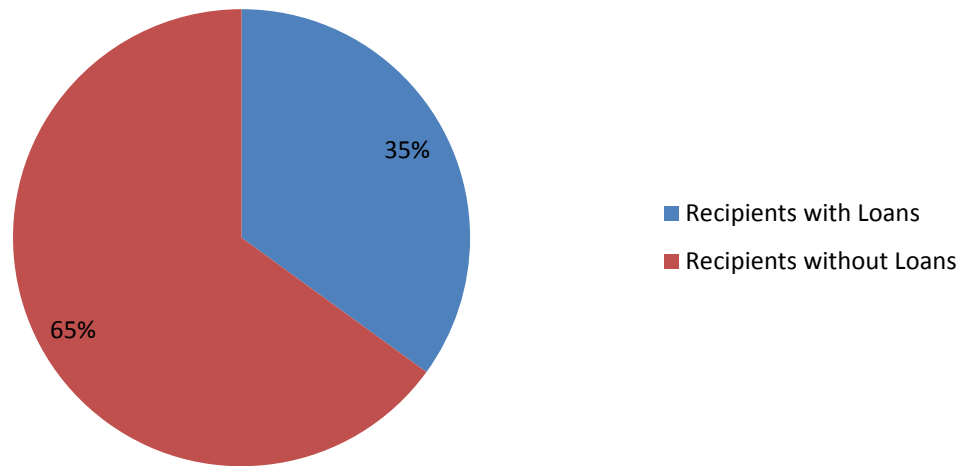
*Cost of Attendance (COA) – Expected Family Contribution (EFC) = Financial Need
Need can be addressed through a combination of grants, scholarships, work-study, loans and other assistance. We anticipate an increase in scholarships awarded to students with need during the 2016-17 academic year, as new awarding procedures are implemented. 2015-16 data not yet available. It will be incorporated into August update.*



2015-16 data not yet available. Sub team also has plans to track transfer rates for these students.



2014-15 Scholarship Recipients



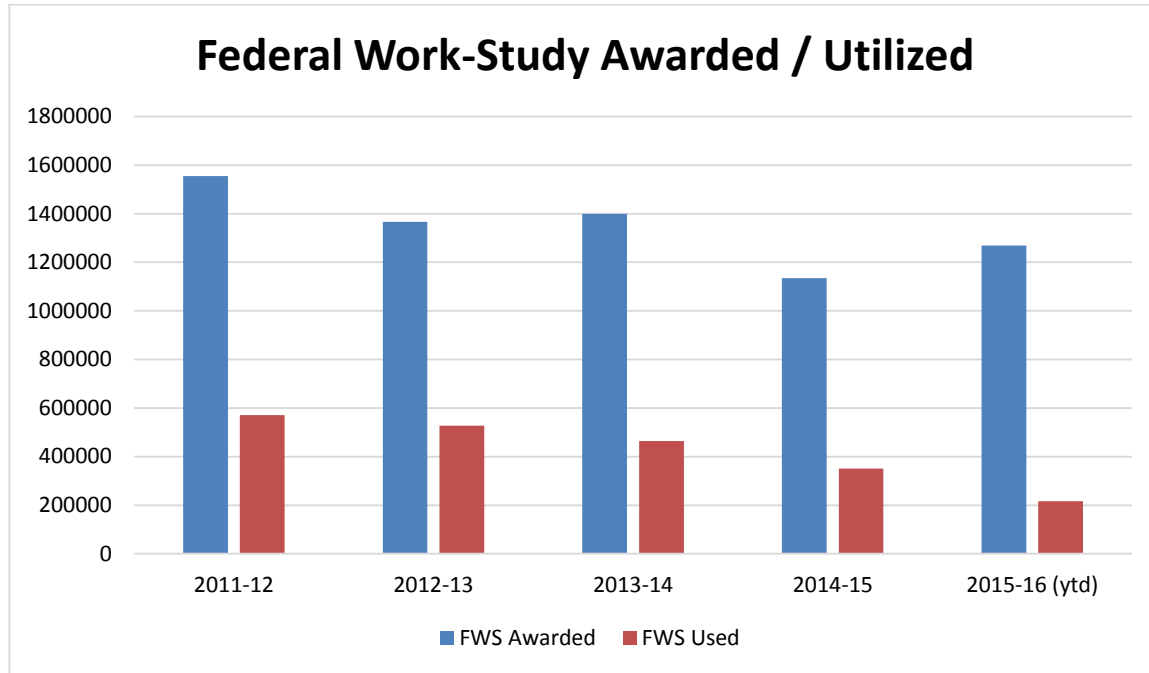
2015-16 data not yet available, but will be incorporated into August update.

WORK-STUDY

CAP sub team members participated in the following initiatives:

- Developed a survey to assess student employee knowledge of the work-study program. Forwarded by Student Employment Services to student employee supervisors for distribution. There were 114 total respondents. Data derived has been used to gauge student awareness of the program.
- Conducted brainstorming meeting which included student employee supervisors to explore factors impacting utilization of work-study funds and potential steps that could be taken to increase utilization. 19 ideas were generated.
- The CAP team is working with Financial Aid and Student Employment Services to implement the following ideas for 2016-17:
 - Packaging work-study based on interest expressed on FAFSA. No additional paper application will be required.
 - Communication plan for students awarded work-study to help them better understand how to obtain employment and utilize the award
 - Education of student employee supervisors to help raise their awareness of the program and its advantages to students and their department
 - Additional job fair event(s)
 - Job shadowing between the Student Employment Services and Financial Aid offices to build a greater awareness of the work of each office and how this work impacts students.
 - SES is implementing a new software system, Handshake, which may make it easier to match work-study recipients with employment opportunities

Work-study Scoreboards



Historically, the Financial Aid Office has awarded two to three times the budgeted amount of federal work-study, however utilization has continued to decline due in part to the improved economy in the greater Grand Rapids area. There is a need to create more targeted award and utilization strategies to assist students and avoid penalties associated with failing to meet Federal utilization requirements.

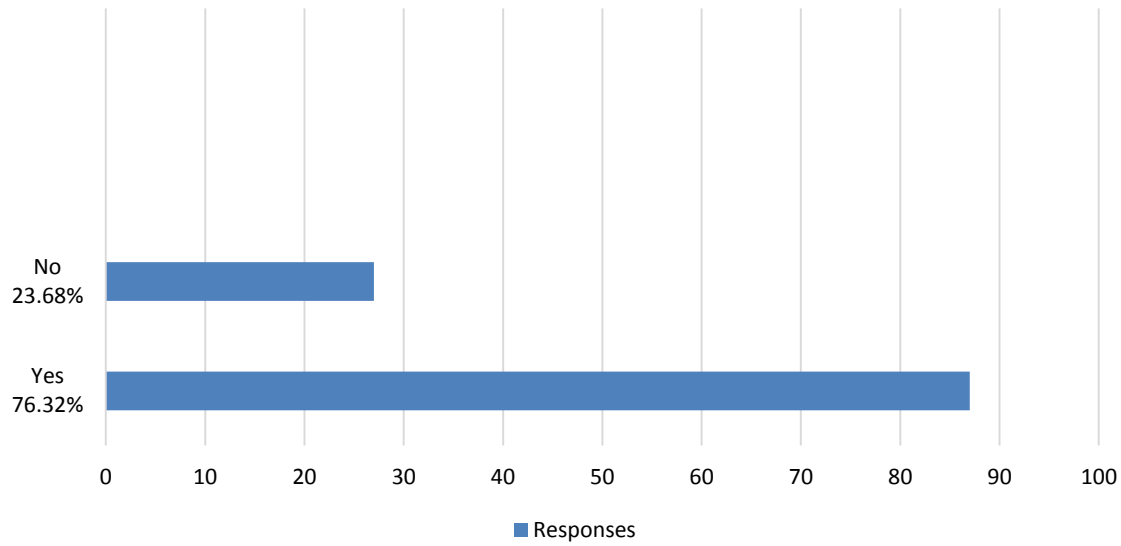
Data pertaining to expended work-study for 2015-16 will be updated in late Summer 2016. Data surrounding completion rates and loans accepted will be collected and incorporated into the August update.

Work-study Survey Results

As noted above, a survey was conducted in October/November 2015 to gauge student awareness surrounding this program. Survey questions and response-related data follow below.

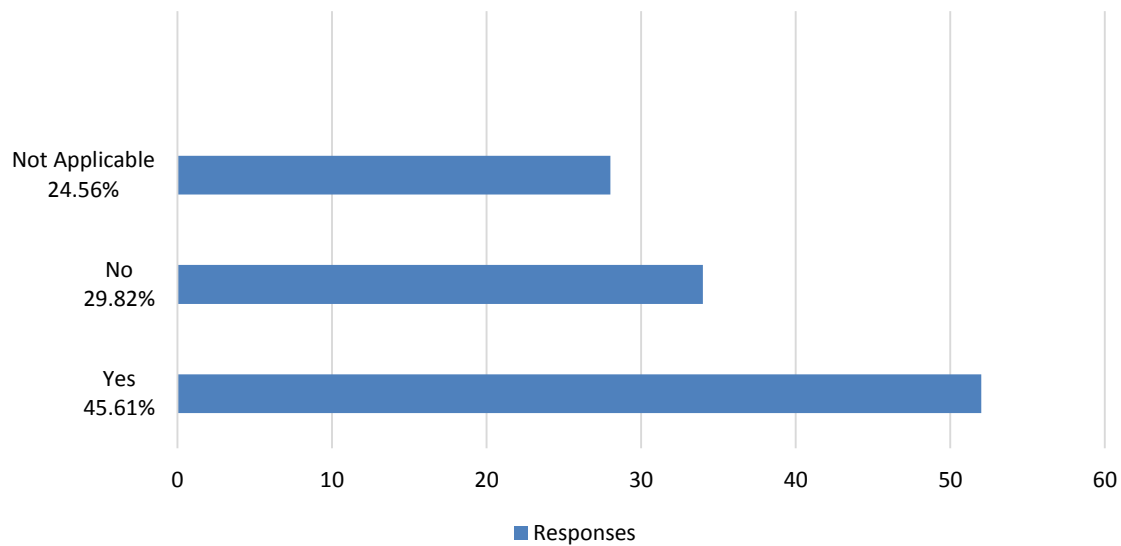
Survey Question 1: *Federal Work-Study (FWS) is a financial aid program that provides enrolled college students with part-time employment. Earned wages can be used to pay for education-related expenses. These wages are not counted against student eligibility on the FAFSA. Are you aware that GRCC participates in the FWS program?*

FWS Survey - Question 1 Responses

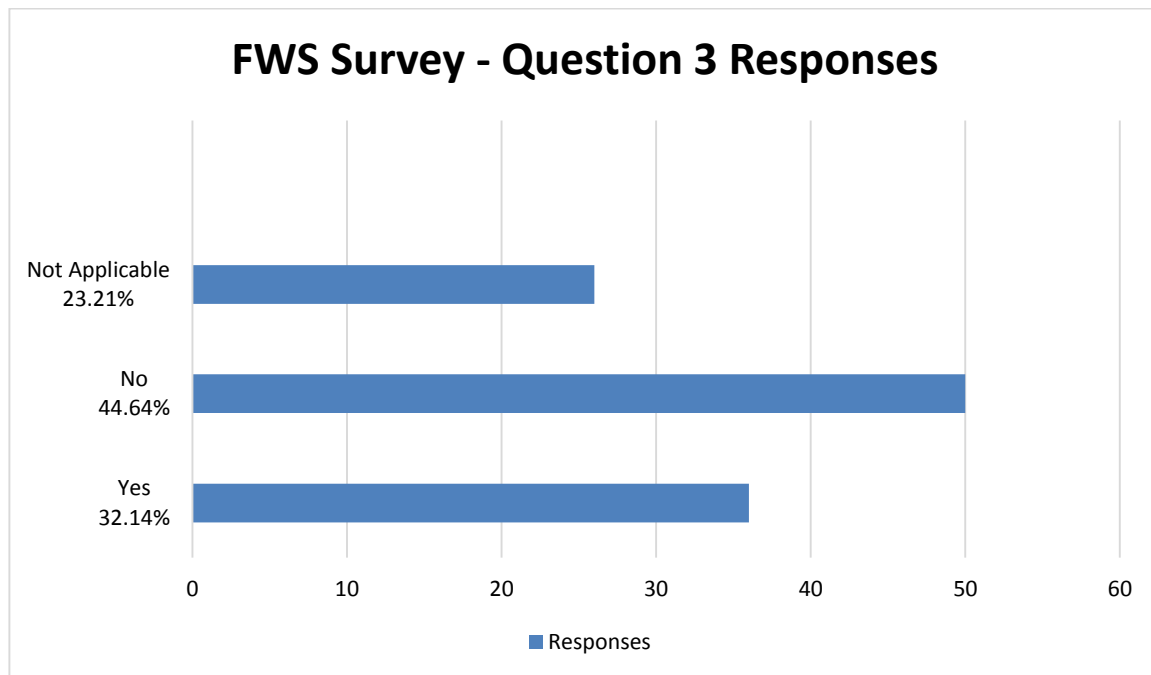


Survey Question 2: *If you visited the Financial Aid or Student Employment Services offices, did the person you met with mention the FWS program?*

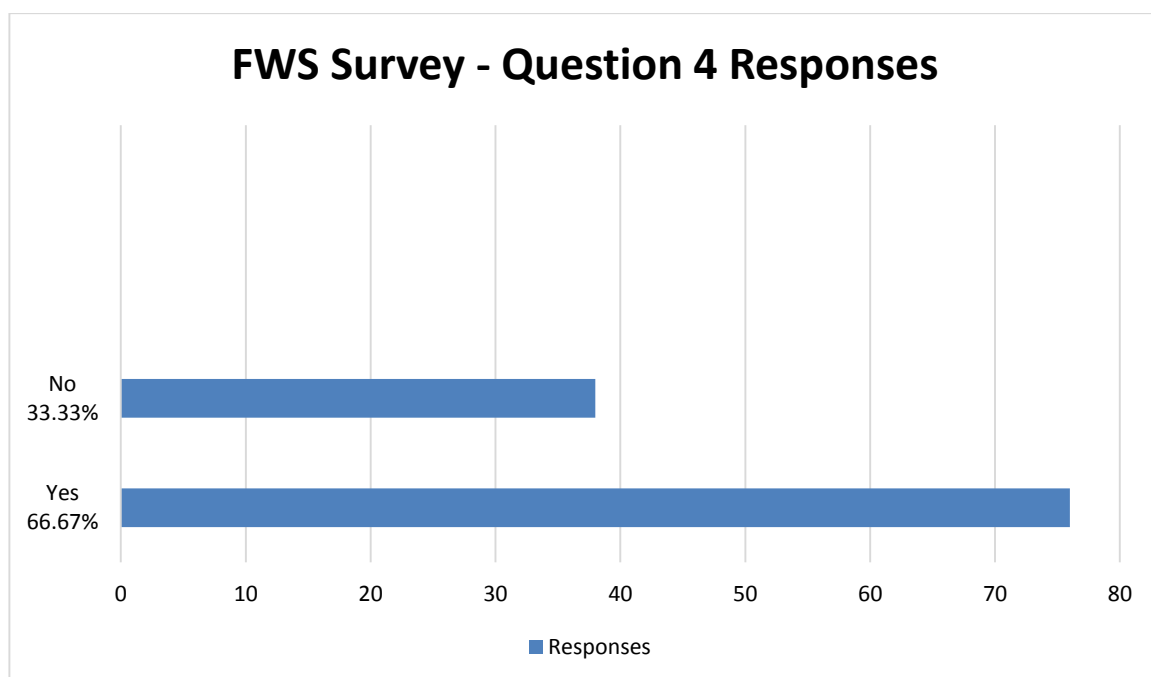
FWS Survey - Question 2 Responses



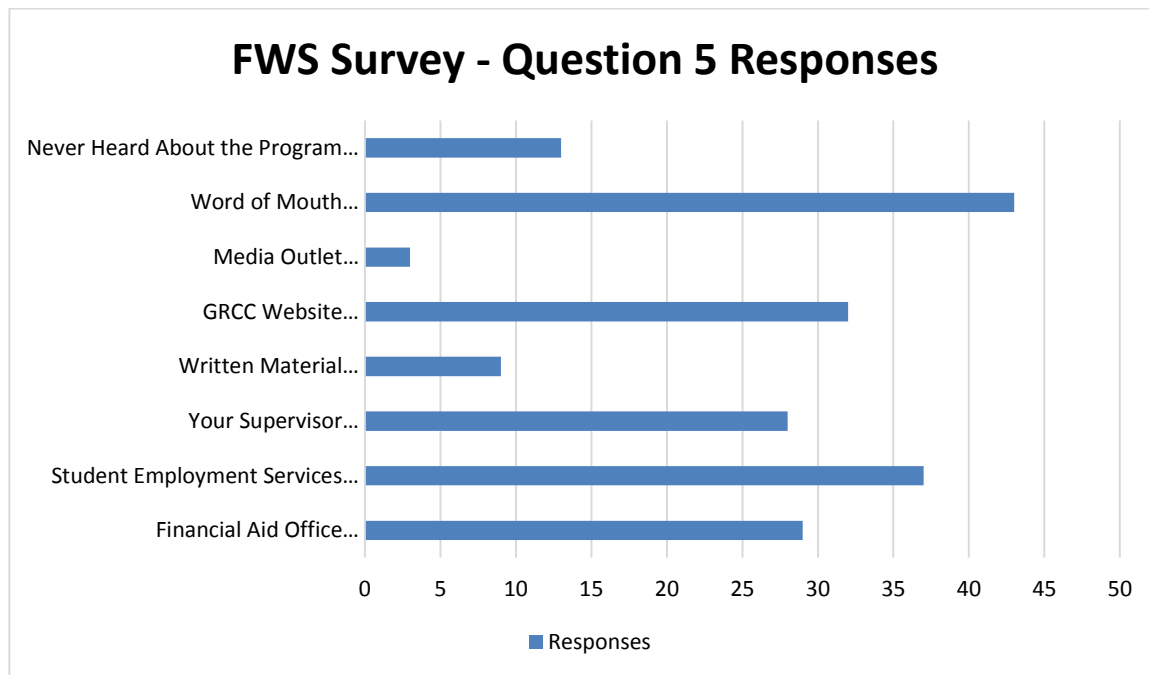
Survey Question 3: *If you visited the Financial Aid or Student Employment Services offices, did the person you met with explain the FWS benefits?*



Survey Question 4: *One advantage of the FWS program is that it helps reduce student loan borrowing. Would you be interested in participating in this program if doing so meant a loan you were previously awarded for this academic year would be reduced or cancelled?*



Survey Question 5: Please check where you heard about the Work-Study Program. (Check all that apply.)



INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS

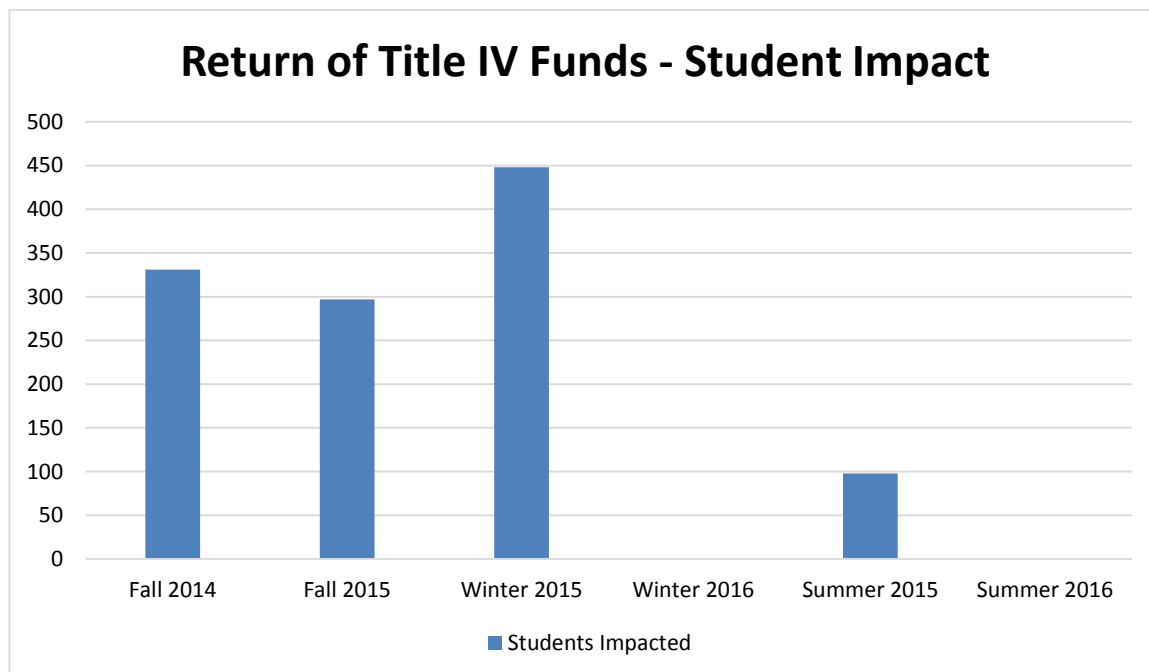
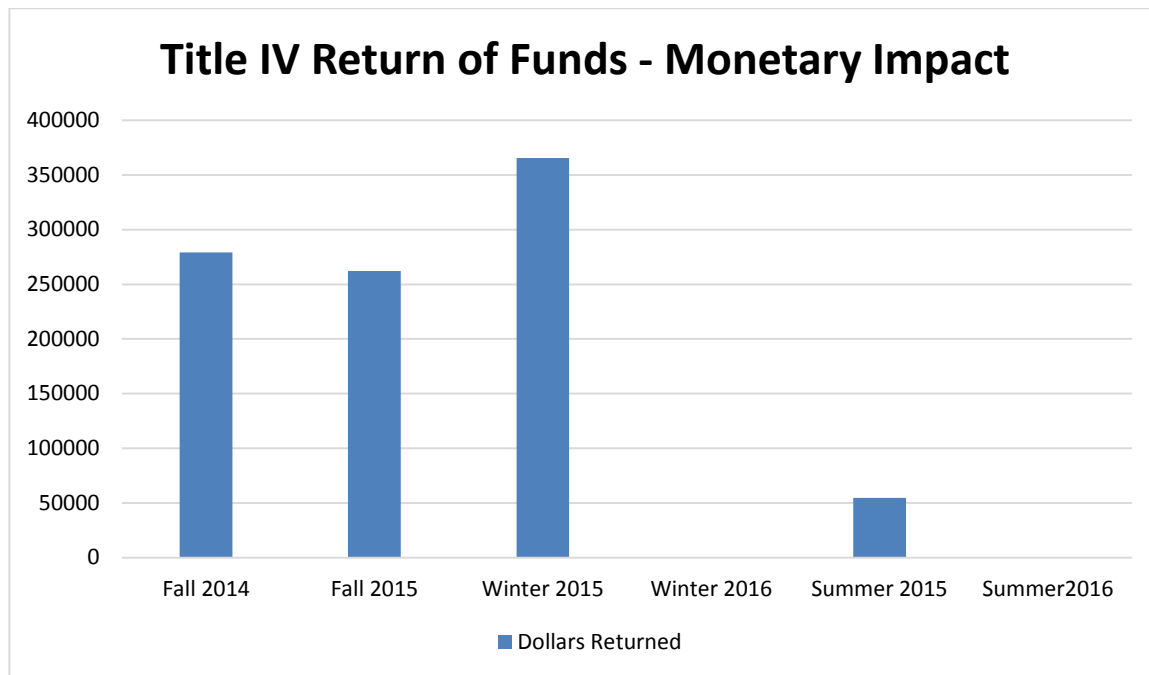
Sub team work included:

- Implementation of enrollment cancellation case management initiative. Piloted for Fall 2015 and Winter 2016. Enrollment cancellation was discontinued following the first week of class and a team comprised of staff from Cashiers, Financial Aid, Student Life, Admissions and IT met weekly to review those students who would have previously been removed from their classes due to unpaid balances. They then reached out to impacted students by phone, email or text to help them resolve their payment and/or financial aid issues. In some instances, the balance could be resolved, but in others the student was billed and allowed to remain in class. Student and faculty reaction was very positive. Evaluation of the process and revenue implications is still on-going. Results will be reported during the August update.
- In April 2015, Choice Consulting (CCTS) was contracted to assess financial aid-related policies and processes in an effort to identify unnecessary barriers for students. The written report provided by CCTS in June 2015 identified 8 main areas of concern and 11 findings where GRCC may not be in compliance with federal requirements. The report also made 15 recommendations to address these concerns and to improve the financial aid process for our students. Over the last several months, CAP sub team members have worked jointly with Financial Aid and other offices to initiate the following work:
 - Remove spousal signature requirement from independent verification worksheets
 - Implement enrollment reporting changes related to clock hour academic year, effective date reporting, and the Student Status Confirmation Roster (SSCR) to help ensure loan borrowers are not entering repayment early and are provided a full six month grace period once their enrollment drops below half-time.
 - Correct Return of Title IV funds procedures related to clock hour programs
 - Develop processes and procedures to ensure high school diploma validity and to better interpret foreign high school diplomas

- Implement auto-verification for 2016-17. This will eliminate the need for students who meet certain household size criteria and who successfully utilized the IRS data retrieval tool to submit verification documentation prior to awarding.

It should be noted that while many recommendations have been implemented, many others are complex and require significant time and expertise to complete. In order to expedite further student and compliance-oriented recommendations, it will be necessary to obtain additional assistance from CCTS or another consultant.

Institutional Barriers Scorecards:



When a student withdraws from classes or receives all failing grades, the Department of Education requires colleges to assess how much financial aid that student earned. Students earn their financial aid through attending and completing courses. If a student fails to earn all of the financial aid that was disbursed to them, it is necessary to return Title IV funds to the Federal government on the student's behalf. The student is billed by the college and a hold is placed on his/her account. This creates a barrier to completion for the student. Collecting this baseline data can help us to assess if future initiatives will further reduce these numbers.

While 2012-13 and 2013-14 data has not been included in this graph, GRCC has historically seen increases in Return of Title IV funds during Winter semesters, indicating the need for additional research and potential targeted outreach and programming for students enrolled in Winter semester.

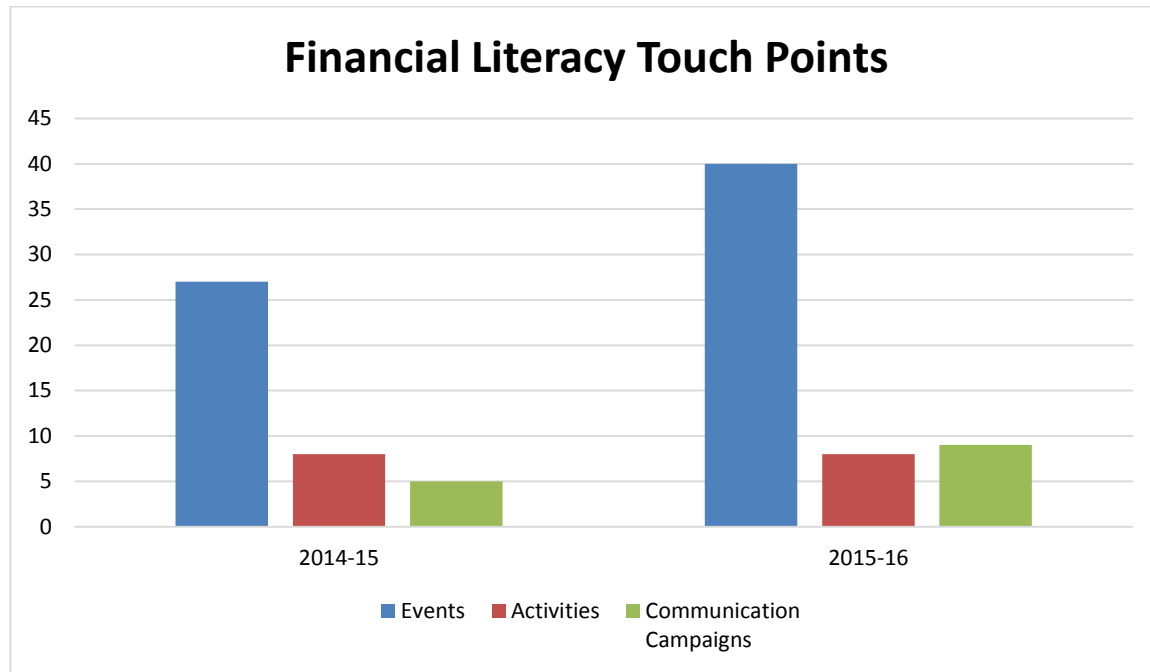
Winter and Summer 2016 Return of Title IV Funds data will not be available until August/September 2016.

FINANCIAL LITERACY

The sub team focused on the following work:

- Sub team and Default Management team members collaborated to expand financial literacy outreach events and activities during the Fall and Winter semesters. These included:
 - Participation in scholarship recipient workshops
 - A series of four presentations to 8th through 12th graders who attended a youth event sponsored by Latin Americans United for Progress (LAUP)
 - A Student Alliance Default Aversion Workshop
 - Expanded in-person exit loan counseling for graduating Tassel MTEC students
 - Planning for a new event called GeoCashe for College
- Draft cohort default rates were released in late February. GRCC's current default rate is 23.3% - our lowest rate since 2013, when we reached an all-time high rate of 26.4%. This is strong evidence that the default prevention initiatives implemented over recent years, including our financial literacy efforts, are having a positive impact on student borrowing and repayment.

Financial Literacy Scoreboards



Event touch points include: FAFSA completion workshops; high school financial aid nights; in-person exit loan counseling; scholarship recipient workshops; Grad Fest; Ready, Set Transfer; and Orientation. Activity touch points include: SALT coursework and SALT registrations. Communication campaigns include: Email/phone/texting related to exit counseling and loan delinquency, advertisements, posters, and loan repayment information sent to students with diplomas. The number of events types and communication campaigns have increased from 2014-15 to 2015-16. While financial literacy activity types have remained level, there has been a slight increase in students engaged based on year-to-date data.

6. What **Indicators of Success** will this project most likely impact? Please indicate whether the project will directly or indirectly impact the measure.

Yes, the project will directly impact the measures.

- Increase in number of students who apply for GRCC Foundation scholarships
- Increase in number/percentage of scholarships awarded to students with economic need
- Increase in number of fully utilized scholarship accounts
- Increase in loan default awareness within the campus community
- Increase in work-study funds utilized by students
- Increase in student employment opportunities offered
- Reduction in student loan funds awarded annually to GRCC students
- Reduction in GRCC's 3-year cohort default rate (CDR)
- Decrease in students dropped from classes through enrollment cancellation process
- Decrease in financial holds preventing future registration

7. What **personnel resources** will be required to deliver the project successfully?

Personnel from the following GRCC offices: Foundation, Financial Aid, Admissions, Enrollment Center, Records, Counseling, Student Employment, Communications, IT, IR, and Cashier's. Potentially contingency employees or consultants to assist with implementation needs.

8. What **additional resources** will be required to develop and/or sustain the project?

Category	Cost	Explanation (one time or recurring)	Which budget will cover these costs?
Supplies	\$750 (estimated)	2014-15 Request: Print materials/social media for financial literacy/default aversion outreach and promotion of scholarship opportunities.	Not required
Training	\$8867 (actual)	2014-15 Request: PeopleSoft Training for Financial Aid Processing Staff – January 20-23, 2015. 7 people. (one time)	Was covered by IT budget
	\$1141.57 (actual)	2014-15 Request: Annual Conference on Financial Education – April 1-3, 2015. 1 person – conference fee, travel expenses. (one time)	Was covered through Financial Aid budget
	\$829.74 (actual)	2014-15 Request: Department of Education Strategies for Reducing Cohort Default Rates Conference – April 28, 2015. 2 people - travel expenses. (one time)	Was covered through Financial Aid budget
Equipment/ Software	\$6000 – implementation fee (actual)	2014-15 Request: Potential scholarship management software (one-time implementation fee, as well as annual fee). Software would make application process simpler for students and speed application processing time. Software would also aid in improved utilization of scholarship funds.	Received one-time implementation fee through SLT
	\$9,500 – annual fee (actual)		Annual fee covered through Foundation/Financial Aid budgets
Other	\$170.80 (actual)	2014-15 Request: Scholarship Management Software Review/Best Practices Meeting with Delta College Foundation – October 22, 2014. 3 people	Financial Aid

	\$125.72 (actual)	– travel expenses. (one time) 2014-15 Request: Hosting Directors’ Financial Aid Best Practices/Reduction of Student Barriers Meeting at GRCC. Representation from Lansing Community College, Muskegon Community College and Kalamazoo Valley Community College – April 17, 2015. (one time)	Financial Aid
	\$9068.28 (actual)	2014-15 Request: FA Operations Evaluation consultation and travel expenses – week of April 27, 2015 (one time)	SLT – Request previously approved
TOTAL Cost Estimate	\$36,453.11 (requested) \$35,703.11 (used)		

9. Will this project require any **additional budget dollars** for the 2015-2016 academic year that have not already been secured? ___NO X Yes

If yes, please describe briefly:

For:

- 1) Additional Training/Assistance Based on Consultant Report Recommendations – Estimate - \$20,000 (Will be an SLT request)
- 2) Financial Literacy Assessment/Default Aversion training – Estimate - \$2,600 (Will be an SLT request)
- 3) Print materials/social media for promotion of scholarship opportunities/work-study – Estimate - \$750 (May be an SLT request).

10. Provide a 12-month work plan for this project:

Month	Activity	Person Responsible	Status
July, 2015	Confirm CAP team participants and availability. Set up meeting schedule. Complete CAP worksheet.	A. Isackson / P. Doane	Complete
August, 2015	Meeting Date: August 27, 2015 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome to new CAP team members • Introduction of 	Meeting Facilitator: A. Isackson Guest: B. Daily	Complete

	<p>new meeting format based on 4 Disciplines of Execution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triage Reporting from All Sub teams – 5 to 10 minutes each • Review and Evaluation of Scoreboard and Dash Board Data 		
September, 2015	<p>Meeting Date: September 10, 2015</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Choice Consulting Report and Discussion of Next Steps Involving CAP team • Triage Reporting from All Sub teams • Discussion of Key Goals for Each Sub team, Alternatives, Paths that Must be Cleared • Budget Evaluation • Review and Evaluation of Scoreboard 	Meeting Facilitator: A. Isackson	Complete
October, 2015	<p>Meeting Date: October 22, 2015</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update from Scholarship sub team on Scholarship Management Software Implementation • Triage Reporting from All Other Sub teams • Discussion of Key Goals for Each Sub 	Meeting Facilitator: A. Isackson	Complete

	<p>team, Alternatives, Paths that Must be Cleared</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and Evaluation of Scoreboard 		
November, 2015	<p>Meeting Date: November 12, 2015</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update from Financial Literacy Sub team Triage Reporting from All Other Sub teams Discussion of Key Goals for Each Sub team, Alternatives, Paths that Must be Cleared Review and Evaluation of Scoreboard 	<p>Meeting Facilitator: A. Isackson</p> <p>Guest: B. Powell</p>	Complete
January, 2016	<p>Meeting Date: January 28, 2016</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update from Work-Study Sub team Triage Reporting from All Other Sub teams Discussion of Key Goals for Each Sub team, Alternatives, Paths that Must be Cleared Budget Evaluation Review and Evaluation of Scoreboard 	Meeting Facilitator: A. Isackson	Complete
March, 2016	<p>Meeting Date: March 10, 2016</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update from Financial Literacy Sub team Triage Reporting 	Meeting Facilitator: A. Isackson	Complete

	<p>from All Other Sub teams</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of Key Goals for Each Sub team, Alternatives, Paths that Must be Cleared • Review and Evaluation of Scoreboard 		
March, 2016	<p>Meeting Date: March 24, 2016</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update from Scholarship sub team on Scholarship Management Software and Application Process • Triage Reporting from All Other Sub teams • Discussion of Key Goals for Each Sub team, Alternatives, Paths that Must be Cleared • Review and Evaluation of Scoreboard 	Meeting Facilitator: A. Isackson	
April, 2016	<p>Meeting Date: April 28, 2016</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update from Institutional Barriers Sub team • Triage Reporting from All Other Sub teams • Discussion of Key Goals for Each Sub team, Alternatives, Paths that Must be Cleared • Budget Evaluation 	Meeting Facilitator: A. Isackson	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and Evaluation of Scoreboard 		
May, 2016	<p>Meeting Date: May 26, 2016</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update from Work-Study Sub team • Triage Reporting from All Other Sub teams • Discussion of Key Goals for Each Sub team, Alternatives, Paths that Must be Cleared • Review and Evaluation of Scoreboard 	Meeting Facilitator: A. Isackson	
June, 2016	<p>Meeting Date: June 23, 2016</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triage Reporting from All Other Sub teams • Review and Evaluation of Scoreboard • Documentation of Work To-Date on Initiatives. Review/Refinement of Next Steps/Continuing Recommendations 	Meeting Facilitator: A. Isackson	
July, 2016	<p>Meeting Date: July 21, 2016</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triage Reporting from All Other Sub teams • Review and Evaluation of Scoreboard • Finalization Next Steps and 	Meeting Facilitator: A. Isackson	

	Continuing Recommendations		
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11. When will your Team meet? Please provide **Team meeting dates** for August 2015 to June 2016
(Create a Cadence of Accountability)

- August 27, 2015
- September 10, 2015
- October 22, 2015
- November 12, 2015
- December 17, 2015 – Cancelled due to lack of participant availability
- January 28, 2016
- February 25, 2016 – Cancelled due to snow day
- March 10, 2016 – February meeting scheduled to this day
- March 24, 2016
- April 28, 2016
- May 26, 2016
- June 23, 2016
- July 21, 2016

NOTE 1: We highly recommend that your team meets, at minimum, one time per month. You are encouraged to find ways to communicate within your team between scheduled meetings, perhaps weekly.

NOTE 2: If you choose to hold Team meetings on the SLT meeting dates immediately following SLT, lunch and a meeting space will be provided for your team.

12. Please check the response below that best describes this project:

This project will be completed by July 31, 2016 and should be closed

This project will be continued for the 2016-2017 academic year

The current activities for this project will be completed by July 31, 2016, but the CAP will continue for next year with additional initiatives

13. What **new CAPs** would your CAP team suggest as natural next steps to your current project?

- In reviewing data for this CAP, we see that during Winter semesters there are significant increases in the number of students who completely withdraw or receive all failing grades and are subject to Title IV Return of Funds calculations. This CAP, or another, could investigate the reasons for this increase and develop programming and outreach initiatives to better support these learners.

- A CAP to study barriers to employment readiness for GRCC certificate and degree students. How effectively does GRCC connect these students with career assessments, education planning for careers, job readiness (resume writing, interview coaching, dress for success, etc.), internship placement, on-line job data banks and on-campus recruitment events? Financial literacy, networking, and leadership development would also be examined as factors in empowering students and alumni to reach their fullest potential and career aspirations.
-