



SPARC – Service Areas (Updated 11-23)

Service and Program Area Review - Comprehensive Template and Instructions

INSTRUCTIONS:

Please find below the form that includes the specific elements that should be included in your Service Area Review. Feel free to include and attach additional information or documentation that you feel is critical to the understanding of your service area. This may include information on a particular challenge your area is facing, additional assessment information for your area, or details on a notable project your area has recently completed to support the College Core Themes, Student Success and Educational Pathways.

The purposes of a program review are improvement, alignment with established objectives, and planning for the future. The program review process provides opportunities for programs to review their accomplishments, examine their strengths and weaknesses, and develop plans through which improvements can be achieved. Service Area Review conclusions and recommendations will be discussed and reviewed in department, division, College, and budgeting and strategic planning processes.

Service Area Review

Due Date: August-September of the Academic Year Assigned

Submission year: 2024

Program Name: Financial Aid & Veteran's Services

Instructions: SPARCs are due in August/September of the scheduled year. They consist of:

- a look back and evaluation of assessment outcomes and goals/objectives from your previous SPAREs (annual reports)
- identification of long-term goals (upcoming four year cycle) and short-term objectives (to support the achievement of these goals)
- funding requests for the next fiscal year, subsequent to the reporting year.

Supervisor Review Date and Signature:

Part One: Service Area Overview

1. Describe the functions of your service area. How does your area contribute to the achievement of College Core Themes, and, through them, the fulfillment of the College Mission?

The Financial Aid Office contributes to student success and access to educational pathways by helping students and their families learn about the types of aid available to them, assisting them with applying for aid, and delivering funds equitably and in compliance with federal, state, and institutional rules and regulations. The department also coordinates state, local, and private aid with each student's federal aid. In addition, the department also certifies enrollment for veterans and their dependents who access VA educational benefits to pay for college expenses.

2. Describe the current staffing levels of your service area and use the table below to categorize them. Briefly describe the functions of each position, so that readers can better understand your area and its operations.

Financial aid gained a full-time position as of August 2024. We now have a director and a coordinator. The Director is responsible for all operations and functions. The coordinator assists and is responsible for financial literacy and outreach.

Position type:	# of positions:
Classified: Full time	1
Classified: Part-time permanent	
Classified: Part-time hourly	
Student workers	

Administrators	1
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3. As you look to the next four years of your area's operation, what are the strengths of your service area? What opportunities may exist?

Strengths:

The Financial Aid Office has strong cross-functional relationships with the Registrar, Curriculum Operations & Effectiveness, Advising, Student Resource Navigator, Business Office, Student Accounts, and the Foundation. These relationships ensure that student issues are holistically addressed and compliance requirements are known by all. The college has contracted with Global Financial Aid Services Inc. to process federal financial aid. Their systems and expertise continue to be an asset to the college.

Opportunities:

The department added a classified position in August 2024. With the addition of a Financial Aid Coordinator position:

- The department will be able to better serve students by providing access to trained financial aid professionals when they have questions that go beyond Coach expertise.
- The department will be better able to implement financial literacy and default prevention strategies.

4. Over the same period, are there particular weaknesses you may see in your service area? What challenges may exist for your area?

Challenges are likely to come from sources outside of the Financial Aid Office.

- OCCC student information system and the mis-integration of it with OCCC's third-party financial aid processor has not been optimal. Confidence in data coming from Anthology is low. Federal reporting is manual and time-consuming because data does not reside in one location.
- U.S. Department of Education's failed roll out of the FAFSA and the overhaul of it's software systems may continue to put stress on administrative capacity.
- Employee turnover if it persists, could limit the department's ability to make progress on our goals. Competency in financial aid is a multi-year endeavor.

5. Attach to this review (or insert below) relevant quantitative data that you feel reflects your area's level of service to students, responsiveness to their needs, and/or provides evidence of service gaps. Examples might include: numbers of student served by different functions within your area, usage levels of different services, information about demographics of your students served, student feedback or evaluation of your services, etc.
- Explain the source of your data. Give a brief overview of each example you have provided.
 - Number of students and total dollar amounts disbursed to students.
 - Disaggregated loan borrower data
 - Satisfaction Survey

Data results are attached.

- What does your data illustrate about student needs, the level and quality of service you provide, and the strengths or challenges you outlined above in Part One?

Tracking of number of students receiving aid, the types of aid and the amounts disbursed helps the office identify and monitor trends, if any. The same is true for reviewing disaggregated data. The student survey data tells us what is working or not working for students.

- What opportunities for improvement are reflected in the data? Are there changes your area can make that would improve Student Success? How does the data inform your area's plans over the four-year program review period?

The number of students and dollar amounts that they receive are important to monitor so that we can gauge staffing levels and potential impacts on institutional capacity.

Disaggregated loan borrower data did not show anything of significance. We will continue to monitor this data so that we can adjust quickly if the data shows a significant trend toward inequality.

The customer service survey established benchmarks for the department which we will use to inform our goals of increasing student satisfaction with our service. According to the survey, students were least satisfied with the information that they got about how to complete the financial aid portal and

how and when their aid will be disbursed. To reduce the dissatisfaction in these areas, the department will increase messaging about the portal and disbursement.

Part Two: Reporting on Past Period's Service Area Outcomes, Assessment, and Evaluation

1. Use the attached **Table I: OCCC Past Period Review of Service Area Outcomes, Assessment, and Evaluation** to list your *past period* Service Area Outcomes (SAOs) and the method you used to assess your area's progress toward achieving each outcome. For each SAO, specify the following:
 - a. the core theme sub-objective that was supported by the SAO,
 - b. the means of assessment you used to evaluate your progress toward achievement of the SAO and the frequency of assessment (minimum once a year), and
 - c. the threshold of performance you established for each assessment that signifies achievement of your Service Area Outcome.
2. How have your SAOs aligned with and supported College Core Themes and/or Comprehensive Institutional Learning Outcomes?

The SAO's of the past measured number of dollars disbursed and the numbers of students applying for aid. This was to establish a baseline because the college is newly independent and does not have data prior to Summer 2020. Although the SAO's of the past do not neatly align with College Core Themes, future assessment will be relevant to Educational Pathways Sub-objective 1. and Student Success Sub-objectives 1 and 2.

3. Describe how your service area consistently engaged in the discussion, review, assessment and revision of Service Area Outcomes.
SAO's have been reviewed on a yearly basis.

4. **(Not Applicable in Initial Review Year One)**. Attach or insert the results of your Assessment of your Service Area Outcomes (SAOs). Provide a brief summary of your assessment.

Assessment results are located in the the most recent SPARE which reviews the 22-23 year.

- a. Do the assessment results confirm your expectations? Why or why not?
 - i Yes
- b. Are your assessments capturing the information you had hoped to obtain about your service area?
 - i No, future SAO's will be closely aligned with Core Themes.
- c. What do the assessment results tell you about the level and quality of your area's services to students? What areas of potential improvement are indicated by the results?
 - i Although not attached to an established Financial Aid SAO, we asked for disaggregated data related to loan borrowing and also performed a satisfaction survey. The survey results identify the financial aid portal and information about disbursement can be improved.
- d. How will you cause this improvement to occur during the next program review period? What changes will you implement in response to the assessment results? Financial aid has established three new Service Area Goals and associated short-term objectives.
- e. How will you evaluate the impact of the change you have proposed above? The department will track the percentage of students who successfully navigate the application process, track OCCC's cohort default rate, and survey students about their experience with the process and staff who provide the service.

Part Three: Development of Next Four-Year Service Area Plan

1. Are there changes to your service area that you hope to implement over the four year review period to support student achievement of your Service Area

Outcomes? Describe them here, with an explanation of how these changes would support your SAOs.

- a. Yes, the department is setting new Service Area Goals that are broad:
 - i OCCC students understand their financial aid options & are able to navigate the application process. Student Success Sub-objective 1.
 - ii OCCC students who interact with Financial Aid and Veteran's Services feel respected and supported. Student Success Sub-Objective 2.
 - iii OCCC Financial Aid and other departments understand their Title IV regulatory responsibilities and can demonstrate compliance. Educational Pathways sub-objective 1.
2. How will these changes improve the College's achievement of its two Core Themes, Student Success and Educational Pathways?
 - a. Financial aid is complicated and scary for students. By showing students care and respect while providing them with more opportunities to learn about how it all works as early as possible in the cycle, it is expected that more students will have their aid packages complete before disbursement week. This is intended to allow students to focus on their studies rather than their finances and increase their odds of persistence.
 - b. College participation in Title IV federal aid programs is contingent upon compliance with a multitude of regulations. The U.S. Department of Education conducts routine Institutional Reviews. OCCC has not had one yet, but it will come. Without financial aid, most of our students would be unable to access the educational pathways that the college offers.
3. How will your service area build on the existing strengths and/or opportunities you identified in part 1.3 over the review period?
 - a. The Financial Aid office will maintain and strengthen cross-functional relationships across campus by sharing information and participating in trainings, and convening workgroups as needed.
4. Over the review period, how will you address any weaknesses or challenges you identified in part 1.4?



- a. The department will work with Global and Anthology to improve data integrity where possible and support the college's consideration of proven reliable data systems.
5. Identify two or more long-term objectives below that will continue to promote progress toward the institution's mission of achieving equitable outcomes for students at the College.
 - a. Related to Service Area Goal #1, "OCCC students understand their financial aid options & are able to navigate the application process," Financial aid will offer information and resources that are culturally responsive to Lincoln County's underserved populations.
 - b. Financial aid will periodically review disaggregated loan data for imbalances in debt.
6. Based on your responses to questions 1-5 above, use the attached **Table 2: OCCC Update to Service Area Plan, Upcoming Four-Year Review Period** to identify three measurable goals your service area will undertake to achieve or continue to work on achieving, and the two long-term objectives you have identified to support equity and inclusion.
 - a. Specify which Service Area Outcome is supported by your program plan goal.
 - b. Identify at least two interim objectives necessary to make progress toward the achievement of each goal you have identified above.
 - c. How will you measure or assess your area's achievement of this goal?

Part Four: Identification of Future or Unmet Needs

If the achievement of a goal listed in question 5, Part Three, would require additional financial resources, or you have identified an unmet need in your area, complete Table 3: OCCC Service Area Plan: Identification of Future or Unmet Needs. If you are aware of a potential funding source for your request other than college general funds, identify the potential source.



1. Describe each resource request.
2. What measurable outcome will result from funding this resource request?
3. How will this request further college achievement of the College Core Themes and, through them, the fulfillment of the College Mission?

Table I: OCCC Past Period Review of Service Area Outcomes, Assessment, and Evaluation

Reporting Service Area: Financial Aid and Veteran's Services Academic Year: 2023-2024 Review Year One 2020-2021	Core Theme Sub-Objective Addressed by SAO	Assessment Method	Frequency of Assessment	Threshold for Achievement of SAO
SAO #1: Establish a baseline for the number of ISIRS received.	None	Tally of unduplicated records.	Yearly	NA
SAO #2: Establish a baseline for Pell Grants	None	Tally of unduplicated records and total dollar amount disbursed.	Yearly	NA
SAO #3: Establish a baseline for the number of students receiving direct loans	None	Tally of unduplicated records and total dollar amount disbursed.	Yearly	NA

Table 2: OCCC Update to Service Area Plan, Upcoming Four-Year Review Period

Reporting Service Area: Financial Aid and Veteran's Services Academic Year: 2024-2025 Review Year One 2024-2025	Service Area Outcome Addressed by Goal	Assessment Method	Frequency of Assessment	Threshold for Achievement of SAO
Service Area Goal #1: OCCC students understand their financial aid options & are able to navigate the application process	Student Success Sub-objective 1.	% of students who receive federal aid during disbursement week.	End of each Fall term with Fall 2024 as benchmark and Fall 2025 evaluation.	>=50%
Short-term (one year) Objective One: Spanish language materials are made available to students and parents.		Documentation of Spanish language materials	Yearly	At least one new product is added each year.

Short-term (one year) Objective Two: Financial Literacy program review.		Documented review with recommendations	End of 24-25 AY with implementation set for Fall 2025.	
Service Area Goal #2: OCCC students who interact with Financial Aid and Veteran's Services feel respected and supported	Student Success Sub- objective 2.	Student Survey	Yearly	>=50%
Short-term (one year) Objective One: Financial Aid staff will undergo customer service training for serving vets.		Documentation of completion of training.	Yearly	At least 1 training per year
Short-term (one year) Objective Two:				
Service Area Goal #3: OCCC Financial Aid and other departments understand their Title IV regulatory responsibilities and can demonstrate compliance.	Educational Pathways sub- objective 1.	OCCC passes the US Dept. of Education institutional review.	At EDs discretion	No significant findings
Short-term (one year) Objective One: A comprehensive review of Consumer Information responsibilities		OCCC Consumer information webpage updated.	Yearly starting from 25-26	

Short-term (one year) Objective Two: Conduct a policy review to identify needed policies and update outdated policies.		Documentation of current and needed policies.	Yearly	
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Table 3: OCCC Service Area Plan: Identification of Future or Unmet Needs

Reporting Service Area: Academic Year: Review Year One				
Resource Need:	Specific SAO Supported by Funding Request	Specific Core Theme Sub-Objective Supported by Funding Request	Requested Amount	Potential Funding Source
Personnel				
Facilities				
Equipment				

Supplies				
Computer Hardware				
Computer Software				
Training/Professional Development				
Other (e.g. promotion)	Service Area Goal #3: OCCC Financial Aid and other departments understand their Title IV regulatory responsibilities and can demonstrate compliance.	Educational Pathways sub-objective 1.	\$20,000 - \$30,000	General Fund
Total Requested Amount			\$20,000 - \$30,000	

Justification for Request



CFR 32 Sec. 668.16 (b) (4) requires that a capable Financial Aid administrator “Has written procedures for or written information indicating the responsibilities of the various offices with respect to the approval, disbursement, and delivery of Title IV HEA program assistance.” In preparation for OCCC’s program review, it is necessary to identify policy gaps, write new policies and compile a policy and procedure manual for program review officials. NAFSAA Blue Icon Advisors is a consulting service that offers a review of current policy and procedure, provides a gap analysis, and helps write OCCC-specific policies and procedures for our approval. The time line is approximately 10-months to complete. Although the cost is high, the Department of Education can fine an institution up to \$ 67,544 per infraction in addition to holding the institution liable for funds that were awarded in error. An investment in this up-front will serve to assure that OCCC is solidly compliant and prepared for a program review. It will also protect the college from fines and Title IV repayments to the Department of Ed.

