### Unit Plan: Classified Staffing Request(s) [Acct. Category 2000]

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<td>Author(s) of this Unit Plan:</td>
<td>Kathryn Linzmeyer, Financial Aid Director</td>
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Due to an increase in student applications, follow up and student contact, new funding programs, and increased volume of work associated with determining financial aid eligibility, I am requesting a FT permanent Financial Aid Advisor be added to division organizational chart.

In April 02, the Financial Aid Office consisted of three processing staff, and they were overwhelmed.

Between 2000-01 and 2006-07, we have achieved a 25% increase in Pell Grants disbursed, 50% increase in BOG Fee Waivers and 149% increase in Chabot students receiving Cal Grant awards. In 2003-04, the state provided additional funding for financial aid outreach and staffing. Presently, there are six staff reviewing and processing student applications/files. As of the beginning of February 2007, their caseload averages 1167 student applicants to one financial aid advisor. And they are overwhelmed.

- Within the last two academic years, we have gained two new financial aid funds to administer, the California Chafee Grant (for at-risk Foster Youth), and the Federal Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG). Beginning with 2008-09, we have an additional Federal program, the TEACH grant.
- In general, a substantial increase in students applying for and receiving financial aid.
- Our loan volume has increased from 129 loans approved in 2001-02 to 436 approved in 2005-06, a 243% increase. In addition, due to student loan program reforms last year, we have lost the support of the lending industry for student loan orientations and education, as well as support for our various outreach programs.
- From 2003-04 through 2006-07, we have reviewed 205 requests for use of professional judgment, and 525 appeals after students lost eligibility due to academics.
- During 2004-05, we reviewed 481 students who withdrew officially or unofficially from their classes to determine if they owed any financial aid funds back to the Department of Education or Chabot College, following a very complex process and strict timeline. In 2005-06, we reviewed 467 for the same. In 2006-07, we reviewed 467, and we're up to 200 for the 2007-08 academic year.

As each specialized program has developed and grown, so necessarily has the dedicated staff time, which is taken from student file review, and student contact and advisement in the office. Response time has lengthened, and creates an increased risk to retention efforts in keeping students enrolled at a critical time.

While our overall number of applicants has fluctuated as Chabot's enrollment has dropped, the volume of student traffic requesting information, assistance and those following up with our office on their applications has risen. We have continued to actively promote availability of financial aid to the campus and community, knowing there are so many students who need our services. While we are continually looking for ways to increase automation and eliminate manual review, staff is already performing at peak levels throughout the academic year, and we need the additional assistance to provide the services needed by our students and the community.

Further, fully half of the financial aid staff are funded by categorical or soft money, this budget is not only subject to cuts along with other funding sources, but in
the five years we've had augmented funds, staff salaries and benefits have risen dramatically, with no reciprocal increases from the funding source. We are in jeopardy of losing the required staffing necessary to handle the heavy volume of financial aid applicants and recipients at the college.

Marketing studies done for the district revealed that the second highest concern by students and the community was financial aid and/or the ability to pay for college. And yet financial aid was not considered one of the “major student services” (as defined by over 60% of all students utilizing any student services) in the 2005 Student Satisfaction Survey, which indicated that only a little over half of the students applied for financial aid, and 30 percent were receiving some financial aid.

Requesting FT 100% Student Services Specialist position be added to our division organizational chart.