Responsible Division: University College
Responsible Office: Student Support Services
Issue/Revision Date: 12/01/2017

Policy for Participation

Policy:

Eligibility Requirements for Participants

A student who meets all of the following criteria is eligible to become a participant of TRiO - SSS:

- Is a citizen or national of the United States or meets the residency requirements for federal student financial assistance;

- Is enrolled or accepted for enrollment, in the next academic term, at the grantee institution;

- Has a need for academic support;

- Is a first-generation college student, or an individual with a disability, or qualifies for financial reasons.

First-generation college student means—

(1) An individual neither of whose natural or adoptive parents received a baccalaureate degree; or
(2) A student who, prior to the age of 18, regularly resided with and received support from only one natural or adoptive parent and whose supporting parent did not receive a baccalaureate degree.

Low Income according to the federal standards means—

The term "low income individual" means an individual whose family's taxable income for the preceding year did not exceed 150 percent of the poverty level amount.

Disability Documentation

The TRiO-SSS project relies upon Disability Services to determine if a student meets the disability eligibility requirement and for having the proper documentation on file. We are informed of who meets the proper documentation guidelines and are regularly involved regarding their accommodations and overall educational support plans.

Selection Process

The process of selecting students for TRiO-SSS begins with identifying the eligible population from within the pool of new students who have been accepted for admission into the University. Beginning with the application for admission will include a question related to first generation college status (*Did either your father or mother earn a four- year college degree?*). This will make it easier to identify the students who meet this eligibility requirement. However, since two-thirds of our students are required to also be low-income, the identification of this sub-population requires the involvement of the Financial Aid Office. Most notably this identification process involves a query which identifies students whose parents did not attend college (FAFSA questions) and who indicate a low EFC (Expected Family Contribution), and thus qualify for a significant Pell Grant.

Students who are found to meet the eligibility requirements for the project are contacted by mail, email, phone, or in person during new student orientation and invited to complete an SSS application. Once applications are returned, an intake appointment is scheduled as soon as possible and academic need is verified. The student is then invited to be a participant in the program.

Policy for Student Files

Counselors are responsible for maintaining student's files (alphabetically and related documentation in Blumen, our data base management software. Active files should be kept separate from inactive files. Student files must be kept in a locked file cabinet.

Every attempt is made to be in compliance with FERPA requirements when working with students and their parents. Tutors and Peer Mentors are required to sign a code of ethics during training, which informs them about protecting student privacy and how to maintain confidentiality in their work as a mentor for the program.

Policy for Grant Aid

SSS provides supplemental grant aid to students to assist with educational expenses and to reduce student loan debt. To be eligible, a student must be an active SSS participant as determined by SSS (see guidelines on following page), currently receiving a Pell grant, is in good academic standing and have a demonstrated financial aid need.

A supplemental grant provided cannot exceed the maximum appropriated Pell Grant or, be less than the minimum appropriated Pell Grant, for the current academic year. It is the policy of the SSS to award supplemental grant aid to as many eligible students as funds allow. Therefore, priority will be given to freshman and sophomores. Juniors and seniors may receive grant aid if they are at risk of dropping out and the needs of all eligible freshman and sophomores have been met.

Eligibility Guidelines for Active SSS Participants

- Attended at least 2 TRiO events or workshops before the application deadline.
- Meet with your counselor at least twice per semester.
- Complete Financial Literacy assignment from the Plato website.
- Complete an application and submit to Director of SSS along with essay before the deadline.

Student Support Services provides supplemental grant aid for a limited number of program participants who qualify and meet the application requirements. Therefore, applications are considered in the order they are received.