

# Journal of Student Financial Aid

---

Volume 17 | Issue 1

Article 2

---

2-1-1987

## Information Flow and Staff Contact: A Quick Evaluation of Financial Aid

Christopher B. Well

Alvin P. Short

Thomas W. Royal Jr.

W. David Watts

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.library.louisville.edu/jsfa>

---

### Recommended Citation

Well, Christopher B.; Short, Alvin P.; Royal, Thomas W. Jr.; and Watts, W. David (1987) "Information Flow and Staff Contact: A Quick Evaluation of Financial Aid," *Journal of Student Financial Aid*: Vol. 17 : Iss. 1 , Article 2.

Available at: <https://ir.library.louisville.edu/jsfa/vol17/iss1/2>

This Issue Article is brought to you for free and open access by ThinkIR: The University of Louisville's Institutional Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Journal of Student Financial Aid* by an authorized administrator of ThinkIR: The University of Louisville's Institutional Repository. For more information, please contact [thinkir@louisville.edu](mailto:thinkir@louisville.edu).

# *Information Flow and Staff Contact: A Quick Evaluation of Financial Aid*

by

*Christopher B. Well  
Alvin P. Short  
Thomas W. Royal, Jr.  
W. David Watts*

The authors examine the relationship between financial aid staff and students and attempt to analyze how the experience at one institution might provide some insight. The problem is viewed from the client perspective based upon day to day contact with various services provided to students by the financial aid office.

## *Introduction*

Administrators who work in the area of student financial aid services must be continually mindful of the fact that the student clients are the reason for the existence of specialized financial aid operations. It is therefore vital that the relationship between the financial aid staff and the students remain as sound and amiable as possible under what could often be referred to as difficult circumstances. Increasing educational expectations generated by sophisticated job requisites have become a part of the impetus for recent increases in enrollments for institutions of higher education (Evangelauf, 1985:1). Although dramatic increases in the amounts and types of aid have occurred over the past twenty years (Gillespie and Carlson, 1983:3), financial aid offices across the nation have come under fire as governmental decisions have decreased the amount of aid available for distribution in the near future. While financial aid organizations can do only so much in terms of the amount of aid available, organizations and individual institutions can have an important impact on the attitudes that students and even others have about the concept of financial assistance. The authors have therefore limited their analysis in this paper to the problem of how the local office (used here in the general sense) is viewed by the client on a day-to-day basis in terms of the quality of services rendered to students.

### *Reputation of the Financial Aid Office: Some Recent Research*

Recent research has found that financial aid professionals and office staffs are often perceived by the students to be as much of a hindrance (sometimes dispensing what is perceived to be inadequate information) as they are a valued resource in the university support system. For example, Pennell and Hurst (1982) found that there was dissatisfaction toward financial aid services, particularly among upper-class, transfer, part-time, and older students. Astin and Cross (1979) found a similar

---

Christopher B. Well, Alvin P. Short, and W. David Watts are all employed in the Department of Sociology/Anthropology at Southwest Texas State University, San Marcos, Texas. Thomas W. Royal, Jr. is employed in the Financial Aid Office of the same institution.

situation among students at proprietary institutions where respondents indicated that many applications/forms were difficult to comprehend. Carney and Tilton (1979) found that Florida State students expressed limited satisfaction with services received.

The authors of this article have recently conducted an investigation of student satisfaction with financial aid services at Southwest Texas State University. Five research hypotheses were used with the dependent variable in each hypothesis simply being the student's perception of the reputation of financial aid services. The major independent variables used in the analysis were the income level of parents, the application or lack of application for financial assistance itself, the receipt or non-receipt of written financial aid explanatory materials, the reading of financial aid materials received, and the perceived attitude of the local financial aid office staff toward student applicants. The five research hypotheses are as follows:

1. Less positive perceptions toward financial aid and financial aid services will be held by students from higher income families whereas more positive perceptions will be held by students from lower income homes.
2. Respondents who have been applicants and/or recipients of financial assistance will have more positive perceptions toward financial aid than respondents who have no experience with the application and award process.
3. Respondents who have received publications (explanatory materials) from the local financial aid office will have more favorable perceptions than students who have not received written materials.
4. Respondents who have read publications concerning financial aid opportunities (written explanatory materials) will have more favorable perception toward financial aid than respondents who have not read the materials they have received.
5. Respondents with more favorable evaluations of financial aid office contact will have more favorable overall evaluations of financial aid services.

The dependent variable in each of the above hypotheses, student perception of financial aid and financial aid services, is measured through a reputation score that will be explained in the next section.

### *Methods*

#### *The Research Instrument*

The original research instrument was composed of three major sections. The first part of the questionnaire contained items that were concerned with student knowledge about the location of the financial aid office on campus, the perceived reputation of financial aid held by the student's parent(s), and whether or not the respondent had applied for aid in some form. This original questionnaire was constructed to provide detailed information concerning the respondent's experience with financial aid.

The second part of the original research questionnaire was directed toward students who had actually applied for and/or received aid at the study institution (Southwest Texas State University, enrollment roughly 20,000 with Bachelor's and Master's programs). This section dealt with the services provided by the local office. A third section of the questionnaire was aimed at students who had received aid previously at another institution. The overall instrument was administered to a total of 628 students enrolled in introductory political science classes at SWTSU. Since political science is required of all students, the sample represents a cross-section of the student body.

### *Measuring the Variables: The Combined Indicators*

*The dependent variable: reputation.* In order to measure the dependent variable of student perception of financial aid services, a combined indicator, identified as "Reputation," was created. Reputation is the perceived status of financial aid in the eyes of the student respondent rather than a generalized measure of satisfaction, since satisfaction for students who have not applied for and/or received assistance is not meaningful. One cannot really have satisfaction with a service if the service has not been rendered. However, students may have some opinion concerning financial aid services, regardless of whether they themselves have been applicants and/or recipients. This reputation could come, of course, from interaction with parents, faculty members, student friends and acquaintances, and roommates. It was necessary to construct a measure of reputation that would allow for a comparison of attitudes between students who had direct experience versus those with only second hand information about financial aid. The concept of financial aid reputation served this purpose.

One might assume that student attitudes toward financial aid would be heavily influenced by friends, family members, and possibly even faculty members. The scores on a question that asked students about their attitudes (perception) concerning financial aid were combined with scores on other almost identical questions concerning how parents and faculty viewed financial aid. This combined indicator represents the student's total judgments about financial aid. No statistically significant differences between means for the student's own evaluation and their perception of how their family and faculty might view financial aid were found. However, since there were some differences, although not statistically significant, between student perceptions and their perceptions of parental ideas about aid, the combined indicator employs the maximum amount of attitudinal information.

Reputation is the student's attitude score, plus the parents' perceived attitude score, plus the faculty's perceived attitude score divided by three. The actual question concerning student perception of financial aid was phrased "To the best of your knowledge what is the overall reputation of the SWTSU Financial Aid Office among you and your fellow students?" Respondents were then asked to give the office a rating from excellent to poor. The actual responses were excellent, good, average, below average, and poor. Similar questions with the same types of responses were then asked concerning parental and faculty evaluations. These questions were of course based on the student's perception of how the parent or faculty members might answer the question. In any future research endeavor of a *major nature*, it would be important to obtain independent faculty and parental responses rather than just student perceptions of these responses.

*Contact as a multidimensional independent variable.* The researchers realized that a good measure of contact with the financial aid office was necessary. Something was needed to tap whether a student's contact (in the case of those students who had direct contact with the financial aid office) was basically positive or negative in terms of how the individual student perceived the situation.

In any contact with the aid office it would seem that the student would really be assessing or perceiving two dimensions. The first would be an affective dimension in which the student would perceive that he or she were treated fairly and nicely or treated with disregard and possible disrespect. The second dimension of contact, which can be independent of the affective dimension, is a dimension that deals with information content and knowledge. In other words, the student may perceive that the staff is knowledgeable and gives correct information or they may perceive that

the staff is not very knowledgeable and dispenses incomplete or possibly even *inaccurate* information. Although many students may be in a rather poor position to really know about the accuracy and completeness of the information they have been given, they nevertheless do make assessments about informational accuracy. This dimension was measured by a question separate from the item designed to tap the so-called likeability factor for the staff. A staff could be very likeable but have a reputation for giving out misleading information. One could imagine a reverse situation where a staff had sound knowledge but had a reputation for being short and discourteous to individual student applicants. The indicator of financial aid office contact is the combined scores relating to perceived staff knowledge and attitude toward students, divided by two. This yields a measure of the degree to which contact with the aid office was evaluated as positive or negative.

*General satisfaction.* In none of the questionnaire items was the term satisfaction used in either a general or specific sense, due to the necessity of comparing those who had no contact with the aid office with those who had personal contact. The contact variable, in particular, based on students' perception of staff knowledge and affect toward the staff is basically a more sophisticated equivalent of a generalized satisfaction measurement.

### *Findings*

#### *General*

The sample (N = 628) was forty-six percent male and fifty-four percent female. The median age of the respondents was twenty years with seventy percent of the respondents falling into the age category of twenty years of age and below. The majority of the respondents (85%) were white (not of hispanic origin) and about sixty percent were sophomores with the remaining students falling into roughly equal groups of freshmen, juniors, and seniors.

Ninety-five percent of the respondents felt that their parents approved of the idea of financial aid, but sixteen percent thought that their friends and parents construed financial aid as a form of welfare. Seventeen percent of the respondents thought of financial aid as a form of welfare, which is not surprising given the generally conservative nature of the target institution and the middle to upper middle income composition of the student body. Fifty-eight percent of the respondents indicated that their parents encouraged their application, whereas only forty-one percent stated that high school officials had encouraged them to apply for aid. Thirty-five percent of the respondents had applied for aid at the study institution and thirteen percent had applied for aid at another institution. Eighty-three percent of the respondents know the correct location of their financial aid office on campus.

Respondents were asked if they had received information from the financial aid office. Fifty-six percent of the total sample stated that they had received information but only fifty-five percent of this sub-group indicated that they read the information carefully. In other words, only roughly one fourth of the total sample indicated that they had read information concerning aid opportunities. Apparently people receive information, and then, for one reason or another, do not read the materials. Without a doubt, federal requirements, indicating that students must be informed of the consequences of default, have made for information that is detailed. This same information may appear to be overly complex and dull reading for the younger student. Comments from local financial aid personnel have indicated that students often do not appear to carefully read information. On asking students about whether they received information and read it, one financial aid staffer said that they frequently get replies like "I was going to read all that stuff," as a response to whether they had digested the somewhat detailed information. It appears that no

matter how attractively an office packages detailed information, a significant number of people will still not be willing to invest the time and energy necessary to comprehend the material.

Forty-three percent of the individuals who received information and read the information stated it was adequate. Apparently, this suggests that detailed information is not always perceived as adequate. Since no follow-up was done on this question, the reasons, that motivated over half the group who had read the information to deem it *inadequate*, are unknown. The example questionnaire included as an appendix remedies this problem by allowing for an open-ended response to a question about the strengths and weaknesses of the financial aid publications they have received and read.

Respondents were also asked if they felt they had ever been discriminated against because of gender, age, race, or ethnicity. Six percent of the total sample felt some discrimination, whereas only five percent of the majority group members felt discriminated against on presumably the basis of age or sex. Twelve percent of the minority group sub-sample indicated that they perceived discrimination presumably on the basis of race or ethnicity. Although the majority of the people who perceived discrimination were white (not of Hispanic origin) and remembering that the overall sample is primarily white (not of Hispanic origin), nevertheless, the proportion of persons in the minority sub-sample perceiving discrimination is almost twice as high as it is for the majority sub-sample. The sample questionnaire provides a space after the questions dealing with discrimination that allows the respondent to indicate why they felt discrimination if they indicate "yes" on this question. Felt discrimination, however, did not seem to be a factor for most respondents.

In comparing financial aid services and personnel at the current institution to previous experiences at some other institution, respondents generally ranked the current personnel as good. When asked to rate the attitudes of the employees in the local financial aid office on a scale of excellent, above average, average, below average, and poor, the respondents gave mean ratings that would place employee attitude toward the high end of the average category.

#### *Tests of the Hypotheses*

Hypothesis 1 stated that client perceptions of financial aid would vary significantly with parental income. Parental income levels and the reputation of the financial aid office as reported by the students apparently vary in a non-linear manner. As Table 1 shows, the students from the lowest income report the highest reputation mean score for financial aid, while middle income students report the lowest mean score. Reputation scores increase again as the student's family income increases. In other words, students who come from lower income families and students from more affluent families have higher mean scores on reputation, whereas students from families in the middle range income groups (\$15,000 to \$45,000) have lower mean scores. These differences in reporting the reputation of the financial aid office are statistically significant.

This finding may come as no surprise to financial aid officers who daily deal with lower income families who qualify for an award and middle class applicants who rarely qualify. Higher income families usually know how to make their incomes work better for them and have less need for assistance, while lower income families are the main target population for financial aid awards. Middle income families, whose income is just above the level often necessary to qualify and who often do not have other investments and resources, are most likely to feel the pinch of college expenses without being qualified to receive some kind of assistance.

In hypothesis 2, it was predicted that students who have applied for or received aid would have a more positive attitude toward the financial aid office than those

who had not applied. Students who have applied or received aid would have a better understanding of the process and better appreciation of the efforts of aid personnel in attempting to find assistance for them. Table 2 indicates that this is not the case with this sample. Those who have not applied for aid are proportionately less in the poor and average category, while more strongly represented in the average rank. It is the larger proportion of the "have applied" sub-sample that is in the poor and below average categories that makes this relationship statistically significant. Close examination of Table 2 shows that there is a slight difference between applicants and non-applicants as they ranked the financial aid office either as good or excellent. While this difference is not statistically significant, students who have applied for financial aid are more likely to rank the office as good or excellent. To summarize, it can be said that students who have not applied for aid are not as negative toward the financial aid office as students who have applied.

As predicted in hypothesis 3, students who have received publications from the institution's financial aid office had more positive perceptions than students who had not received written materials. Table 3 shows that the reputation mean score reported by students who had received written financial aid information was significantly higher than the reputation score reported by students who had not received any publication. For the most part, informational publications are sent to students at the outset of the application process. Perhaps the receipt of materials is interpreted by the student that financial aid staff is working to help students.

The positive perception of the financial aid office was not continued once the student had read the literature, contrary to the prediction of Hypothesis 4. As shown in Table 4, the students who had not read financial aid materials have a higher reputation mean score than the students who did read the information, although the relationship is not statistically significant. Apparently, reading the publications did not necessarily improve the respondent's attitudinal perceptions towards aid and the aid office. Financial aid offices may be dealing with a situation in which the busy student, struggling to make an adjustment to college life, receives financial aid materials and says to himself or herself, "That's nice. They sent me something, but I don't have time to read all this information so I'll wait until I get to the office. They'll explain it to me there anyway." Students who read the publications may literally be overwhelmed by the volume of the information regarding application procedures, documentation and other technical requirements. In this case the financial aid office is somewhat in a "damned if you do, damned if you don't" situation regarding information dissemination.

The fifth hypothesis had to do with the quality of contact the student had with the financial aid office. The student evaluated the contact with the office as more or less successful in terms of information received and staff attitudes toward the student. When the student has positive contact with the financial aid office, it is moderately and positively associated with the student's report of the reputation of the financial aid office, as shown in Table 5.

Apparently, neither reading aid publications nor actually applying for financial assistance are enough in themselves to produce more positive student attitudes toward aid offices. There is, however, a strong relationship between successful financial aid office interaction from the students' point of view and an overall positive evaluation of the aid office. Aid office staff play important communication and public relations functions, as measured by the overall reputation of financial aid.

In summarizing the findings, hypotheses 1 and 2 are not supported by the data. Parental income is not related to student reports of the reputation of the aid office, nor does applying for financial aid improve student attitudes toward the aid office and aid in general. While receiving financial aid information does improve student

attitudes, reading the information appears to have a slightly negative impact on student attitudes. Finally, successful contact with the financial aid office is associated with more positive overall perceptions regarding aid.

### *Conclusions and Recommendations*

The basic question of the article has been: "Does information and staff contact really affect student attitudes toward the financial aid office?" The answer seems to be a guarded yes. On the one hand, the feeling that the office staff is knowledgeable and concerned seems to make for happier clients. Providing relevant information in a well-packaged form (especially if it is not carefully read) and "being nice to folks" still seem to have the generally desired effects that formal organizational literature and common sense indicate. On the other hand, students who read informational literature and students who apply are not more likely than others to think well of the financial aid office. Students who know just a little about the application process report higher reputations than those who are beginning the process of reading about or actually applying. In the final analysis, the students who are most immersed in the process, who seek and get advice from caring and knowledgeable professionals, give the highest marks to aid offices.

### *A Possible Explanation for Income Differences*

Financial aid offices have certain problems as a function of having to follow very complex sets of guidelines imposed by external sources. In applying for financial aid, the student client and/or his parents come to grips for the first time with regulations regarding government funds and funds insured by the government. Middle class students and their families may have limited experience with application for governmentally assisted programs and are not as likely to qualify for any type of government help, while students from lower income families are both more likely to seek help and to have gotten it. Lower income students did report the highest levels on the reputation index discussed earlier. It may be possible that these students and their families have more experience at dealing with what may appear to be bureaucratic confusion and red tape. Could it be that lower income students know more about what to expect when dealing with government programs? While no question in this study taps this dimension directly, it may be that middle income families (those with the lowest evaluations of financial aid) have had little experience with this type of application process. When all is said and done, they may find themselves going through a very frustrating experience, only to find that they are not quite eligible.

### *Other Factors Affecting Low Evaluations*

Reading financial aid material and applying for aid are intrinsic parts of the process. Unfortunately, they are also associated with a lower evaluation of the aid office. Directions for future research would include further study into this relationship, while controlling for who was and who was not awarded aid. The students and families who are most likely to be frustrated with the financial aid office are those who need assistance but are ineligible because of government guidelines. They are also the most likely to evaluate poorly the performance of the financial aid office. This negative evaluation may be offset by continued contact with financial aid staff, the factor that is most positively associated with high evaluations.

To some extent, financial aid offices are in a difficult position, unable to award aid to all who believe that they need it. There are a limited number of factors that can be controlled in the campus office. Aid officers should pay special attention to the nature of the literature that they send to their student clients. Is it clear? Is the basic information that students think that they need readily visible? Can the average



high school graduate understand the material and guidelines? Does he or she understand what is expected of him or her and the likelihood of a successful outcome? How could the application process be improved? Irrespective of problems with written materials and the application process, the key to any successful financial aid office is its staff.

#### *Staff/Student Contact*

The critical variable for understanding students' perceptions of the reputation of financial aid office services appears to be the students' judgment of the quality of contact with that office. This is an important finding that needs to be explored in further research. In a time of limited institutional resources, will an investment of money be better spent for producing informational brochures or for staff? Clearly, these findings suggest that the most important factor is the perceived quality of student contact with the financial aid staff. Institutional and governmental regulations may well have reached the point where it is impractical for many students to struggle through those regulations without assistance. As a mid-range solution, financial aid officers must attempt to eliminate more of the bureaucratic language in client information publications. This may result in a more positive impact on student attitudes toward the financial aid office. Additionally, when talking with students and parents, a special effort must be made to communicate at a level they can understand.

#### *Future Research into Services Evaluation*

Evaluation of student aid services is important. As Anton and Baker (1983:44) have stated:

. . . financial aid administrators should be cautioned not to regard evaluation as a one-time affair, but rather as a cycle of thought, analysis, and discussion leading to maintenance and improvement of office service and staff.

The initial questionnaire was a rather lengthy instrument, since this was the first time this type of evaluation had been approached independent of other collective evaluations of local support offices. Proposed in the Appendix is a shorter questionnaire that might be used in evaluation of financial aid services.

Most of the questions on the questionnaire can be easily analyzed with SPSS or one of the social science computer packages possessed by most universities. Before reproducing a questionnaire, remember that major headings should appear in bold letters so as to attract the attention of the respondent. A number of computers today will produce graphics that will allow for the construction of bold headings.

The suggested research instrument that appears at the end of this article is a revised and shortened version of the instrument reported in this original research. It is felt that this shortened version of the questionnaire will elicit better response.

Table 1. Reputation (REP) By Income of Parents\*

INCOME	REPUTATION**		
	N	Mean	Difference
\$0-\$15,000	32	3.33	
\$15,001-\$30,000	118	3.05	0.28
\$30,001-\$45,000	150	3.01	0.04
\$45,001-\$60,000	109	3.15	0.14
\$60,000+	131	3.25	0.10
Total	540	3.13	

\*P < .05

\*\* (REP) = combined indicator (students' + parents' + faculty attitude/3)

Table 2. Comparison of Respondents Applying for and/or Receiving Financial Aid by Student Attitudes

STUDENT ATTITUDE	Applied for Aid					
	Yes		No		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Poor	23	10.6	19	5.0	42	7.0
Below Average	39	18.1	46	12.1	85	14.3
Average	86	39.8	207	54.5	293	49.2
Good	63	29.2	105	27.6	168	28.2
Excellent	5	2.3	3	0.8	8	1.3
TOTAL	216	100.0	380	100.0	596	100.0

\*P < .05 (Chi-square) = 5.34746, df = 4,  
no significant difference found at this level

Table 3. Reputation (REP)\*\* of Financial Aid by Publications Received\*

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED	REPUTATION		
	N	Mean	Difference
Yes	322	3.19	
No	186	3.02	0.17
Total	508	3.12	

\*P < .05

\*\* (REP) = combined indicator (students' + parents' + faculty attitudes/3)

Table 4. Reputation (REP)\*\* of Financial Aid by Publications Read

READ	REPUTATION		
	N	Mean	Difference
Yes	262	3.17	
No	80	3.25	.08
Total	342	3.16	

\*P > .05

\*\* (REP) = combined indicator (students' + parents' + faculty attitudes/3)

Table 5. Relationships (Spearman Correlations) Among Income, Reputation (REP)\*\*, and Contact##

	Income	REP**	Contact
Income	--	.05	-.08
REP	--	--	.42*
Contact	--	--	--

\*P < .001

\*\* (REP) = combined indicators (students' + parents' + faculty attitudes/3)

## (Contact) = combined indicators (information accuracy score + staff attitude score/2)

### NOTE FOR TABLES

For hypotheses 1, 3, and 4, the differences between groups was measured using one way analysis of variance. This statistical procedure permits testing of the difference in mean scores on ordinal scales, such as those used in hypotheses 1, 3, and 4. For hypothesis 5, the Spearman Correlation coefficient was the measure of association used, since the sample analyzed was not random and since the variables measured were ordinal. The analysis in hypothesis 2 utilizes a different type of statistical test than analysis of variance or correlation. The Chi-square test of independence was employed to see if the general reputation of financial aid was related to the application process. Apparently, there is a relationship between the variables, but inspection of the table showed that the relationship was not in the hypothesized direction. Only inspection of the table itself can reveal that the greater proportion of those who have negative attitudes toward financial aid account for the significant statistical difference as measured by Chi-square.

#### References

- Anton, K.P. and Baker, J. How to evaluate the services of the financial aid office. *Journal of Student Financial Aid*, 1983, 13(3), 39-44.
- Astin, H.S. and Cross, P.H. *Student financial aid and persistence*. Higher Education Research Institute, Inc., Los Angeles, CA, 1979.
- Carney, P. and Tilton, B. *Retention efforts: Could they be misdirected?* Florida State University, Department of Budget and Analysis. Tallahassee, FL, 1979.
- Evangelou, J. 40 Pct. of adults want further education, but most say they would need student aid. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 1985, 31(8), 1.
- Gillespie, D.A. and Carlson, N. *Trends in student aid: 1963-1983*. College Entrance Examination Board. Washington, D.C., 1983.
- Pennell, K.L. and Hurst, F.W. The role of the financial aid office as a student service. *Journal of Student Financial Aid*, 1982, 12(3), 38-46.

### APPENDIX

#### *Sample Evaluation Instrument for Financial Aid Offices*

##### Instructions to the Student:

We know that your time as a student is valuable; however, we are asking that you take a few minutes and complete the questions attached to this sheet to help the financial aid staff do a better job in serving you. All of the information you give will be confidential and no place on the questionnaire will you actually identify yourself. You can therefore feel free to express your true opinions. If you are on your first visit to the Office of Student Financial Aid, we ask that you wait until you have completed the application process to answer the questionnaire. If you have had previous experience with the Office of Student Financial Aid, we ask that you complete the questionnaire and place it in the return box on your next visit to our office. We ask that you actually complete the questionnaire in the office area today if possible.

On the next pages are several questions concerning your student classification, the financial aid services you have received through this financial aid office and others (if applicable). There are also questions asking for your opinions on how financial aid services might be improved.

The instructions for the questionnaire are very simple. In most questions there are brackets so that you can indicate the response to the question that applies best to your personal feelings. *Please check the appropriate response category*. A few questions ask you to write in information like your age.



In comparison to the overall experience you had in applying for aid at the previous institution, how would you rank the financial aid office at this school?

- Much better by comparison
- Somewhat better by comparison
- About the same by comparison
- Not as good by comparison
- Very poor by comparison

What were the strong points of the financial aid office at the institution you previously attended? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

What were the weak points of the financial aid office you previously dealt with? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

### **PART III - Publications**

Did you receive any publications concerning financial aid programs from the Office of Student Financial Aid or from any other university source?  Yes  No

Did you carefully read these publications?  Yes  No

If your answer to the last question was yes, go to the next question. If it was no, please skip to Part IV.

Was the publication easy to understand?  Yes  No

Did the publication answer your basic questions about financial aid?  
 Yes  No

What were the strengths and weaknesses of the publication(s) you read? (Example: What questions were not answered?) \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

### **PART IV - The People Who Helped You**

In your experiences with this financial aid office, were the people who helped you

- |  |                              |                             |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Courteous                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Helpful                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Friendly                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Rude   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Knowledgeable about programs and regulations | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

If you had experiences with more than one staff member, please comment on your experiences (was one member of the staff helpful, for example, while another seemed unconcerned with your problems?)

---

---

---

Did you receive financial aid?  Yes  No

Was it what you expected to receive?  Yes  No

Was it what you had hoped for?  Yes  No

Given your experience at this financial aid office and disregarding any previous experience with other financial aid offices, how would you rate your experience?

- Excellent
- Above Average
- Average
- Below Average
- Poor

Did you feel any discrimination in your application process at this office?

Yes  No

If yes, please indicate what type (e.g. racial, sex) and also indicate why you feel that discrimination occurred. \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

If you attended another institution, did you feel discrimination at that financial aid office?  Yes  No

If yes, please indicate why. \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

This last question is very important, so please give it some thought and take the time to respond in writing.

What suggestions might you give to the staff in order to improve financial aid services? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---