

How Admissions Staff Should Prepare for Financial Aid Season

Mary Piccioli

Enrollment Management Consultant

December 9, 2011

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Agenda

- Approaches to following up about financial aid
- Communication prior to your holiday break
- Required forms and deadlines
- What is verification?
- Can you explain an EFC? What about need?
- Reviewing the aid package with a student
- Loans, payment plans, and paying the bill
- Appeals and special circumstances
- Hand-off to financial aid office
- Value and return on investment (ROI) messages

Approaches for Following Up

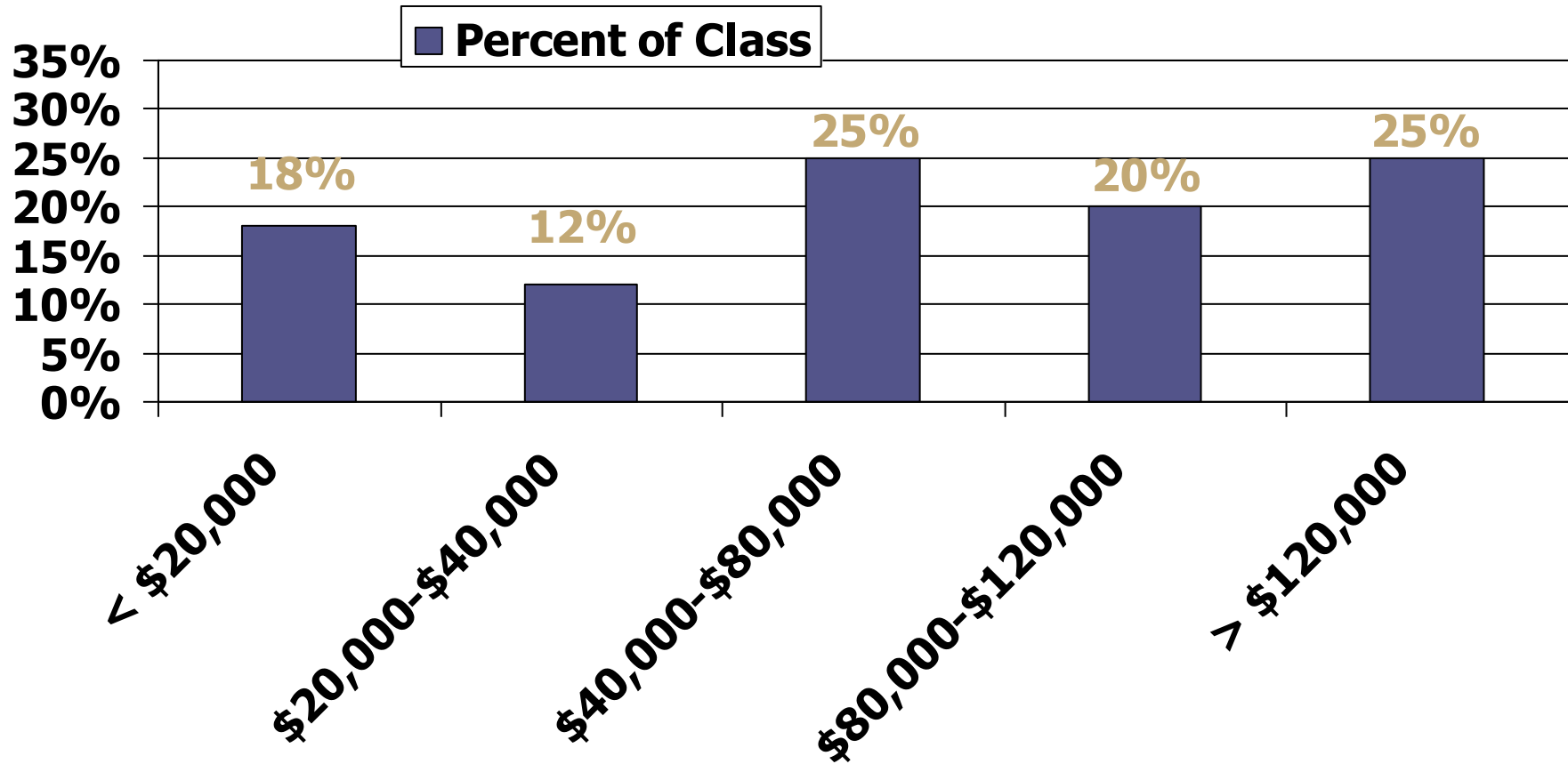
- Some institutions have admissions staff do outreach calls once aid packages are sent
- In other cases, admissions recruiters simply need to be prepared to handle incoming calls

Communicating Before Holiday Break

- Apprise students/parents of the forms required
 - FAFSA for sure
 - CSS Profile or institutional form
 - Deadlines/priority dates: school, state, other
- They need to believe it's affordable or else they may not bother sending the FAFSA results to you
 - Income profiles
 - Case studies
 - What does your NPC tell them?

Sample Income Profile

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Sample Case Study

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Cost Scenarios

Each financial situation is different. We have prepared a few scenarios to help you understand the types of financial aid you might expect and how all the aid resources tie together in one package.



Student	Daniel	Jacob	Lindsey	Sarah
Parents' Finances				
State:	TN	KY	VA	TN
Parental Earnings:	\$106,710	\$16,595	\$50,629	\$246,250
Investments:	\$18,200	\$200	\$0	\$171,000
Family Members:	5	4	4	6
Number in College:	1	1	1	1
Student's SAT/ACT:	29	23	1050	1050
Student's GPA:	3.85	3.5	2.45	3.61
Financial Aid Package:				
Academic Scholarship:	\$9,000	\$8,000	-	\$8,000
Athletic Scholarship:	\$5,000	-	-	-
Tennessee Hope Scholarship:	\$4,000	-	-	\$4,000
Tennessee Merit Scholarship:	\$1,000	-	-	-
Pell Grant:	-	\$4,700	-	-
Federal Supplemental Grant:	-	\$1,500	-	-
Institutional Grant	-	\$2,000	\$10,200	-
Stafford Loan:	\$3,500	\$3,500	\$3,500	\$3,500
Parent Plus Loan	-	-	\$12,500	\$9,550
Total Aid:	\$22,500	\$20,700	\$26,200	\$25,050

Verification – a whole new ball game

- What are your institution's policies?
 - Will a student receive a package prior to verification?
 - What forms will you require?
 - Admissions recruiters need a general update from the aid office, particularly because verification will now involve the ability for the aid filer to match data with the IRS.
 - In addition, when a “tax return” is collected, it must be an official tax transcript from the IRS, not just a copy of a tax return.

EFC and Need

- EFC = Expected Family Contribution
 - Does it really? Be ready to discuss what it means at YOUR institution.
 - It determines Pell eligibility at all institutions
 - Guides in determining which needy students receive SEOG, Perkins, and FWS from a limited pool of funds
- Need = Cost of attendance minus EFC
 - Does your institution meet full need, or close to it, for certain categories of students?

Reviewing the Aid Package

- Be able to explain:
 - The types of aid: grants/scholarships, loans, work-study
 - Which grants/scholarships are renewable and does GPA matter?
 - What is the interest rate on the loans?
 - Subsidized or Unsubsidized and what that means
 - If work-study, what is process for getting a job?
- Remind families not to compare aid packages alone.
 - There are cost differences between and among schools.
- Be prepared to respond to questions about recent tuition increases.

Other Loans and Payment Plans

- Parent PLUS Loans
 - Whether or not your school packages a PLUS, know how much eligibility the parent(s) has and interest rate
- Alternative Loans - have general info about alternative loans at your finger tips
 - Be ready to give a couple of examples of interest rates and how to apply.
 - Be sure not to recommend a specific lender unless your institution has a preferred lender list that meets the federal regulations.
 - At least know enough to send them to a site where comparisons can be made.

“Self-Service” and Online Opportunities

- What online functionality exists (or is required) for students at your institution to:
 - Apply for loans
 - Accept or look up aid awards
 - View missing items necessary to complete financial aid paperwork
 - Complete loan entrance counseling
- If an estimated aid package was sent **prior** to verification, what must the student do to complete the process?

Payment Plans and Billing

- Payment plans
 - Monthly, by semester, for the entire academic year?
 - Is there a fee to use a payment plan?
 - Do you use a 3rd party vendor?
- Bills
 - Can the bill be paid online? And who can access the billing info online – student and other authorized person? Or only student?
 - When are bills sent? Due? When is the earliest the bill can be accessed? Will pending aid display on the bill?

Appeals and Special Conditions (PJ)

- If my family's financial circumstances have changed, what do I do?
 - Is there a form to file? Is it on your website? What else needs to be submitted? FA should provide ADM with list of what circumstances typically meet the PJ category
- What if I just want/need more money?
 - Don't encourage appeals. Be up front about if and how your school reacts to appeals. Do only special condition (PJ) appeals result in more \$\$\$?
 - Aid office needs to be ready to prepared to respond to appeals of all types in a timely fashion.

Handoffs to the Aid Office

- When should admissions hand off to financial aid?
 - Complex questions about such topics as divorce/separation, independency
- Handoffs need to be smooth and the student/parent needs to know when they should expect to hear
- How is the FA counseling organized? Do all freshmen questions go to a certain counselor? Are the responsibilities split by alphabet?

Expect to Discuss Value and ROI

- Messages about affordability and net cost should be balanced with message about value.
 - Graduation rates, job placement rates, grad school outcomes
 - Features and benefits of programs, both academic and extra-curricular
- The financial aid office staff should also be prepared to discuss value and ROI.
 - Admissions staff may be able to help them on this front.

Questions?

Mary Piccioli
Scannell & Kurz, Inc.
71-B Monroe Avenue
Pittsford, NY 14534
(585) 381-1120

piccioli@scannellkurz.com
www.scannellkurz.com