THE OVERLOOKED OBSTACLE

PART II:
Strengthening Satisfactory Academic Progress Policies to Better Support Student Success and Equity

January 19, 2023
Using Zoom Webinar

➢ To submit questions, click on the Q&A icon on the control panel. The Q&A window will appear, allowing you to ask questions to the host and panelists.
➢ You can also access the chat feature, raise your hand, and adjust your audio settings from the control panel.
➢ The webinar materials and recording will be posted at www.jbay.org following the live presentation.
AGENDA

1. Overview of SAP Standards
2. Impact of SAP on Students
3. Community of Practice Findings
4. Best Practices
5. Policy Recommendations
6. Q&A
TODAY’S PRESENTERS

Sarah Pauter
Senior Project Manager
John Burton Advocates for Youth

Elizabeth Clews
Youth Advocate
John Burton Advocates for Youth

Andrea Dargo
Student Advocacy Fellow
uAspire

Gina Browne
Interim Assistant Vice Chancellor, Equitable Student Learning, Experience, and Impact Office
California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office

Christina Tangalakis
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Glendale Community College

Zach Taylor
Assistant Professor
University of Southern Mississippi

John Burton Advocates for Youth
INTRODUCTION
The Overlooked Obstacle Series

jbay.org/resources/overlooked-obstacle/

jbay.org/resources/over-looked-obstacle-part-2/
What is Satisfactory Academic Progress?

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

GPA

Completion Rate

Max Timeframe

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How Does SAP Impact Financial Aid?

INSTITUTIONS THAT EVALUATE SAP EACH PAYMENT PERIOD

Term 1
Student does not meet SAP standard

Term 2
Student placed on warning status (maintains aid) & again fails SAP

Term 3
Financial aid terminated. May be reinstated only by appeal.

Appeal: “death of a relative, an injury or illness of the student, or special circumstances as determined by the institution”
IMPACT OF SAP
Research Review – Qualitative

Students not making SAP had:

- **More life responsibilities**
  - childcare, employment, family responsibilities, etc.

- **Fewer resources**
  - family support, reliable transportation, access to food and housing, flexible work schedule, etc.

- **Less access to cultural capital**
  - to help them understand how to navigate college inside and outside the classroom.

- **Greater feelings of powerlessness**
  - as a result of experiences such as homelessness, child welfare system involvement, witnessing family abuse, and extreme financial hardship.

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Percent of students who remained enrolled for first two consecutive terms and failed to make SAP in both terms

- 14% ASIAN
- 14% FILIPINO
- 15% White
- 22% UNKNOWN
- 22% PACIFIC ISLANDER OR HAWAIIAN NATIVE
- 24% TWO OR MORE RACES
- 24% ALL STUDENTS
- 27% HISPANIC
- 32% NATIVE AMERICAN OR ALASKA NATIVE
- 34% BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN
- 34% FOSTER YOUTH

Among foster youth, Black, and Native American Pell Grant recipients, over one-third have been disqualified from financial aid after their first year.

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Percent of students who fail to enroll for a third term

58%

Students who fail SAP

18%

Students who achieve SAP
Percent of students who maintain financial aid in their third term

- 23% Students who fail SAP
- 74% Students who achieve SAP
The percentage of students who did not make SAP during their first two consecutive terms and who had either disenrolled or lost their Pell Grant by their second year is 87 percent.
STUDENT STORIES
Student Panel

1. What was it like transitioning to college?
2. What were the circumstances that resulted in you not meeting SAP?
3. What was it like navigating SAP policies and appeals processes when you were first disqualified and when you re-enrolled?
4. What resources or supports would have been helpful?
5. Where are you now in your educational journey?
PERSPECTIVE FROM THE CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES CHANCELLOR’S OFFICE

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GINA BROWNE

Dean, Educational Services and Support
California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office
• A scan of SAP policies and appeals processes of California’s public two- and four-year institutions revealed that many imposed requirements that were stricter than federal requirements:
  o 10 institutions mandated course completion thresholds higher than 67 percent
  o Some campuses assessed SAP based on cumulative measures while others examined cumulative and term-based measures

• No two campuses had the same appeals process or criteria:
  o The grounds for filing an appeal varied widely—some special circumstances were explicitly allowed at some institutions while being explicitly disallowed at others
  o Some campuses limited the number of “lifetime” appeals a student could submit
### SAP Community of Practice Priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Create Student-Friendly and Equity-Based SAP Policies and Appeals Processes</th>
<th>Simplify and Translate Communication With Students</th>
<th>Strengthen Connections Between Financial Aid and Academic Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✅ Align SAP policies with the minimum federal standards.</td>
<td>✅ Update and/or simplify language on websites, forms, and overall communications to be more student-friendly and encouraging.</td>
<td>✅ Provide mid-semester guidance and targeted interventions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✅ Streamline the collection of appeal forms.</td>
<td>✅ Offer SAP workshops.</td>
<td>✅ Coordinate with campus partners (e.g., faculty, student support and equity programs, etc.) to develop an early outreach plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✅ Improve the review process and timeliness of appeal decisions.</td>
<td>✅ Implement early alert activities and proactive communication to students, including leveraging technology.</td>
<td>✅ Utilize proactive and intrusive coaching strategies to reach out to students on warning status.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✅ Create a multidisciplinary appeal review panel.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✅ Eliminate or extend appeal deadlines.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✅ Expand the types of extenuating circumstances.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BEST PRACTICES
1. Create Student-Friendly and Equity-Based SAP Policies

- Align institutional SAP policies with the minimum qualitative and quantitative standards
- Evaluate SAP based **only** on cumulative measures as opposed to cumulative and individual term-based measures
- Create flexibility in the evaluation of certain types of credits
- Implement graduated course completion and GPA standards
  - Butte College: 50 percent (<18 credits)
  - CSU Dominguez Hills: 1.5 (freshman), 1.8 (sophomore), 2.0 (junior and above)
Campus Spotlight: Glendale Community College

- Received a mini-grant from JBAY to analyze data pertaining to SAP disqualification rates and completed appeals.
- Examined data before and after modifying their SAP policy to align with the federal minimum requirements and create flexibility in evaluating certain credits (e.g., exclusion of repeated courses).
The changes to Glendale Community College’s SAP policy resulted in a **30.11%** overall decrease in the number of students on financial aid disqualification due to SAP.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SAP Data AY17 and AY21</th>
<th>Number AY17</th>
<th>Dismissal AY17</th>
<th>Number AY21</th>
<th>Dismissal AY21</th>
<th>Decrease</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All students</td>
<td>2228</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>1475</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td><strong>30.11%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinx</td>
<td>883</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>585</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td><strong>9.15%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td><strong>22.63%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Student Enrollment</td>
<td>23,982</td>
<td></td>
<td>22,662</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Create Student-Friendly and Equity-Based Appeals Processes

- Develop low-barrier SAP appeal processes
- Ensure ease of access to forms and allow electronic, mail and in-person submission
- Expand special circumstances to include common challenges students face
- Do not impose deadlines or limits on the number of appeals
- Do not require burdensome documentation or paperwork
## Campus Spotlight: Glendale Community College

### Students on SAP Dismissal in 2020-2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Students on SAP Dismissal in 2020-2021</th>
<th>Students Appealing in 2020-2021</th>
<th>SAP Dismissal Students Re-enrolling at GCC After SAP Dismissal and Appeal in 2020-2021</th>
<th>SAP Dismissal Students Re-enrolling at GCC Anytime After Dismissal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student Count</td>
<td>Percent of Total</td>
<td>Student Count</td>
<td>Appeal Rate*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Students</td>
<td>1,475</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinx/Hispanic</td>
<td>585</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Appeal Rate* is the percentage of students appealing the SAP dismissal.

**Re-enroll Rate** is the percentage of students re-enrolling after appeal.

***Attrition Rate*** is the percentage of students who attrited after re-enrollment.

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Campus Spotlight: Glendale Community College

Next steps:
- Implement a graduated GPA standard
- Provide intrusive advising
- Explore methods to increase the number of appeals submitted
- Campus-wide SAP training for counselors and students
- Mini-courses on writing effective appeals
3. Simplify and Translate Communication with Students

- **Simplify:**
  - Utilize lower grade-level diction and sentence structure
  - Use active voice, second-person pronouns, verb-first language, and dot points when explaining a process

- **Translate:**
  - Work with native speakers of non-English languages to translate simplified SAP communication

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3. Simplify and Translate Communication with Students (continued)

• Communicate:
  o Embed contact information into policy information
  o Segment policy information into smaller sections that pertain to student actions
  o Leverage multi-media
Decades of research = students and their support networks (e.g., parents, caregivers, siblings, community members, etc.) struggle to complete financial aid processes, namely completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Students have also expressed difficulty with other financial aid processes, such as applying for scholarships, understanding their award letters, accepting their aid, and successfully paying housing deposits or other fees.

As a result, many efforts have been made to simplify financial aid communication to ease the information burden on students and their support networks, subsequently increasing access to higher education.
WE KNOW THAT OUR STUDENTS STRUGGLE WITH SAP COMMUNICATION

• Among first-generation, low-income students, researchers found that students were seemingly unaware that SAP status can linger for multiple semesters, finding that students were surprised that they had received SAP notification again despite having improved their grades.

• This response from participants meant that they did not understand that the SAP notification was triggered by a combination of GPA, completion rate, and attempted credits, rather than simply a GPA range. Students attributed the lack of understanding to inadequate institutional communication and overly complex policies that were difficult to access.
Although research and practice has found SAP to be a difficult concept and policy to understand, several institutions have adopted linguistically-inclusive practices to help diverse students and their support networks understand and navigate SAP.
University of Wisconsin–Madison

- Includes clear, simple SAP information on their website, parsing the content in easy-to-follow menu schemes.

- Clearly, simply explains how to make SAP, what happens if students do not make SAP, how to appeal, and what the appeal process is.

https://financialaid.wisc.edu/eligibility/
University of South Florida

• Utilizes a student-friendly way of communicating SAP policies using multimedia.

• Instructional video features students who convey SAP information in simple, easy-to-follow steps.

To check your Satisfactory Academic Progress in OASIS:

1. Login to OASIS
2. Choose "Financial Aid"
3. Choose "My Award and Loan Information"
4. View your Satisfactory Academic Progress status under the "General Information" tab.

https://www.usf.edu/financial-aid/sap/
Milwaukee Area Technical College

- Provides a translated version of their entire financial aid website, including SAP information.
- Has embedded a trilingual chatbot into their financial aid website—most other institutions stop at admissions.

https://www.matc.edu/es/costs-scholarships-aid/satisfactory-academic-progress1.html
Santa Barbara City College

- Hosts bilingual SAP appeal and verification workshops to help students and their support networks understand these processes and learn to be more self-sufficient.

[Image of workshop page]

https://www.sbcc.edu/financialaid/workshopsandevents/workshop_sap_appeal_verification_feb16th.php
College of San Mateo

- Utilizes Financial Aid TV (FATV) and links all Spanish language FATV videos to their financial aid website.

https://collegeofsanmateo.financialaidtv.com/play/1227-en-espa%C3%B1ol-fundamentos-de-ayuda-financiera/10332-%C2%BFque-significa-sap
POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS
State Policy Recommendations: SAP Standards

- Require campuses to adhere to a common set of SAP standards aligned with the federal minimum requirements
- Evaluate SAP based only on cumulative measures
- Allow students who successfully appeal to remain on “financial aid probation” and continue to receive aid for any term for which they adhere to their academic plan
- Require information on SAP to be provided during new student orientation and embedded in course syllabi and financial aid award notifications
- Notify students after every term in enrollment in which SAP is not met
State Policy Recommendations: Appeals Policies & Processes

- Notify students subject to the loss of financial aid with information on the appeals process
- Create realistic appeal deadlines and require completed appeals to be reviewed within 30 days of submission
- Offer a second review process for all appeals that are denied
- Expand “special circumstances” that form the basis of an appeal
- Allow students to self-attest to special circumstances that cannot be reasonably documented
- Create opportunities for re-entering students on SAP disqualification status to appeal as soon as possible
Q&A

Please type your questions in the Q&A window or raise your hand to be unmuted.

Lee 01:54 PM
Will there be a follow-up session?

You 02:11 PM
The host said there will be a session next week.

Type your question here...
SAP Institutional Audit

- Consider completing the SAP Institutional Audit to assess your campus’ current policies and practices
- Scan the QR to participate!
THANK YOU

Sarah Pauter
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