

## FAS Answers SOS to Enhance Customer Service

### Challenge

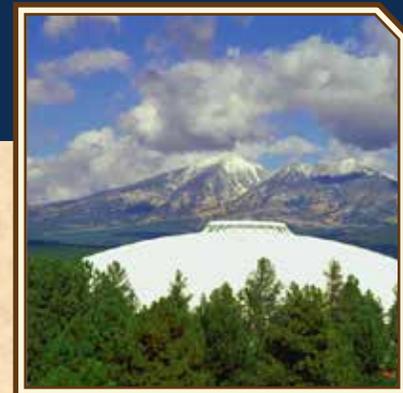
With nationally-ranked undergraduate and graduate programs, Northern Arizona University (NAU) delivers a rigorous, learning-centered education in multiple places, including Flagstaff, online, and at more than 30 statewide locations. Students and faculty work together, solving issues such as minority healthcare and alternative energy that impact the region, nation and the world. However, in 15 years the University's Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid had six different directors. There had also been a sizeable amount of turnover in other staff; seven positions were vacant and most employees were new to the financial aid profession. Collectively, these factors were taking a toll on the office. Customer service and student satisfaction were not at the level NAU wanted them to be. The University recognized that policies and procedures needed to be made current and professional development would greatly benefit the staff.

### Solution

In February 2012, after researching various consulting firms, NAU selected FAS to help with verification, customer service advisement, leadership mentoring and updating policies and procedures. Andrew Griffin, a retired Army Lt Col., who had been working as the university's Director of Military & Veterans Affairs, was asked to step in as Interim Director of Scholarships and Financial Aid. When Griffin arrived to oversee operations, four FAS consultants, led by Gary Garoffo and Chrystal Jefferson, were already on site. "All four consultants brought extensive experience in the field of financial aid, were well-connected and networked with others in the field," said Griffin, "They had experience coming into a school situation cold and being able to quickly assess an office's strengths and weaknesses. Gary mentored me with a calming effect and developed a custom director's course that helped me learn more about financial aid."

### Results

After nearly a year, FAS had filled a gap in personnel shortages, helped train new staff, updated policies and procedures, worked with Griffin to develop a training manual, and identified ways to provide more effective and timely student service. "We were impressed with their willingness to work with us to meet our needs, even as those needs shifted over a 10-month period," said Griffin. "As a result, the reputation and confidence in our office across campus has improved, and customers see more timely, accurate and efficient service. Chrystal is one of the most professional people I've ever seen. She was like family when she left."



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**Andrew Griffin**  
Director of Military  
& Veterans Affairs  
Northern Arizona University

+ For additional information about services provided by FAS, call our Client Relations Team at 770.988.9447 or email us at [info@FinancialAidServices.Org](mailto:info@FinancialAidServices.Org)