

FAS Helps Boost Student Satisfaction at NOVA

Challenge

With more than 78,000 students and six campuses, Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) is the largest education institution in Virginia and the second largest in the United States. NOVA is also one of the country's most diverse colleges, with students coming from more than 180 countries. For the past four years, NOVA's financial aid office has been in a restructuring mode to better manage its double-digit growth in student enrollment and total financial aid that has tripled since 2008.

Solution

To serve students more effectively, NOVA contracted for a 24/7 support center, hired additional staff and reorganized its reporting structure. Though staff members diligently work to encourage early application, NOVA students—like many others—tend to apply late. Ramping up staffing to successfully complete accurate and timely processing of the volume of FAFSA's received in a short period of time was virtually impossible. "We turned to FAS because it offered the whole package – professionalism, long-time experience in the business, a solid reputation and moderate cost," said Director of Financial Aid Joan Zanders, a 26-year financial aid veteran. "We brought in FAS to provide analysis and file verification because we were not able to process the applications that came in during the summer peak season," she said.

Results

Zanders says the "domino effect" from working with FAS has positively impacted student enrollment at NOVA. "We are able to process more financial aid in a timely manner," she said. "Because of the volume of work, federal regulations, and multiple reports related to the verification piece, we would have had to hire a whole lot more additional staff to keep all the balls in the air," she said. "We have a close working relationship with FAS, including weekly calls and status reports. We talk through issues and develop solutions." Zanders indicated that a recent survey showed a significant increase in student satisfaction toward the financial aid process at NOVA. NOVA Financial Aid was ranked in the top five of all college offices for student satisfaction. "That doesn't happen very often in financial aid," she said. "Under the best of circumstances, we can't always give students what they want. Providing the best possible service must be the goal. FAS has assisted us in positively influencing customer satisfaction. FAS is extremely professional, and I can't think of a better partner."



“ FAS has assisted us in positively influencing customer satisfaction. FAS is extremely professional, and I can't think of a better partner.”

Joan Zanders
Director of Financial Aid
Northern Virginia Community College

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