

**FINAL REPORT OF THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL AID & SCHOLARSHIP POLICY  
OF THE CENTURY II PRESIDENTIAL TASK TEAM  
OCTOBER 18, 1999**

be used for other purposes.

PLNU Financial Assistance Policy describes how federal, state, and other outside sources of aid, along with institutional scholarships and grants, are awarded to students. Generally “outside” aid is awarded first, then institutional aid is applied to tuition and/or other remaining expenses. The Subcommittee concluded that the current financial assistance policy is cumbersome and confusing both to administer and to explain. Its many variables also make automation of the awarding process virtually impossible. An improved policy has the potential to increase student & parent satisfaction and to significantly improve the timeliness of the financial aid awarding process. In addition, an enrollment management consultant hired by PLNU concluded that the University’s criteria for awarding academic scholarships is too liberal, resulting in many students with below-average grades receiving scholarships. At the same time, he concluded that PLNU’s scholarship renewal policy is too conservative, resulting in most students losing their scholarships after their freshman year.

In addition to problems with the current financial assistance policy, a number of other administrative and technological factors are also negatively affecting financial aid processing.

1. Frequent technological changes in the delivery systems used by federal & state agencies and lenders, and increased and changed reporting requirements of these same parties, has resulted in significant additional demands on both the PLNU Financial Aid Office and Information Technology Services department. This is occurring at the same time that computing demands from the rest of the University are also increasing.
2. A lack of uniformity in the term/session lengths of graduate programs and summer school results in additional financial aid processing time and the risk of non-compliance with federal regulations. It should be noted that these non-uniform terms also impact other offices, such as Student Accounts.
3. The timeliness (or lack thereof) with which the Financial Aid Office receives information from within and outside the University significantly impacts the timeliness and accuracy of financial aid awards to students.

## Recommendations

1. Initial eligibility for the Presidents and Deans scholarships should be based on **both** a minimum high school grade point average **and** minimum test score. Based on an analysis of various GPA and test score thresholds, we recommend a threshold of 3.700 GPA **and** 1150 SAT for the Presidents Scholarship, and 3.500 GPA **and** 1050 SAT for the Deans Scholarship. (These combined GPA/test score thresholds are for freshmen only. Transfer students with at least 24 college units would be eligible based on their college GPA alone.)
2. The PLNU scholarship should be eliminated and these funds should be redirected to need-based grants and/or to other types of grants whose purpose is to further shape the student body (e.g. diversity).
3. Eligibility for initial academic scholarships should be based on a six-semester high school transcript. This is the same transcript used by the Cal Grant program and its use will result in the more timely determination and awarding of academic scholarships at PLNU. We recommend that students be able to improve their scholarship awards if their subsequent grades and/or retaken test scores warrant it.
4. The GPA's required to renew an Honors, Presidents, or Deans scholarship should be reduced from their current levels to the following: Honors - 3.500 cum; Presidents - 3.400 cum; Deans - 3.200 cum. Eligibility should be based on the cumulative GPA at the end of the spring semester.
5. Students who are not eligible for an academic scholarship at the time they initially enroll at PLNU, and students who receive a scholarship but subsequently do not meet renewal requirements, should have the opportunity to *make application for* a Deans Scholarship. Approval would be based on: 1) raising their cumulative GPA to at least 3.200 by the end of the spring semester; and 2) recommendations from their major department and/or other individuals. We recommend that the Enrollment Management Committee be assigned the task of implementing this process.

6. Remove the institutional restrictions that permit certain kinds of awards to be used for tuition only, **provided there is adequate funding to do this**. This change would greatly simplify the awarding process and improve constituent relations.
  
7. PLNU should award Cal Grants on an estimated basis in order to have our award letters be more comparable to other institutions.
  
8. To increase the timeliness with which awards are made, the Financial Aid Office should perform the federally-required verification process *after* making the initial award rather than before. In addition, we should only request required additional documents from students who are actually selected for verification.
  
9. The University should establish firm deadlines each year by which PLNU departments need to submit the names of scholarship and grant nominees to the Financial Aid Office. A limited number of awards past the deadline may be necessary in performance-related areas such as athletics, music, and forensics.
  
10. The University should attempt to establish, wherever practical, consistent start & stop dates and standard term lengths for its various programs and locations, both regular year and summer. This will greatly benefit both the awarding of aid and the billing and collection of charges.
  
11. Current non-academic institutional scholarships and grants should be evaluated to determine if their objectives are still valid and being met, and whether their awarding can be simplified.
  
12. Ensure that technical support for the Financial Aid Office from Information Technology Services is adequate to ensure compliance with federal and state requirements, and to facilitate improvements in the processing of financial aid.

Respectfully Submitted,

George Letter, Jr.

Chair, Subcommittee on Financial Aid & Scholarship Policy

Century II Presidential Task Team