

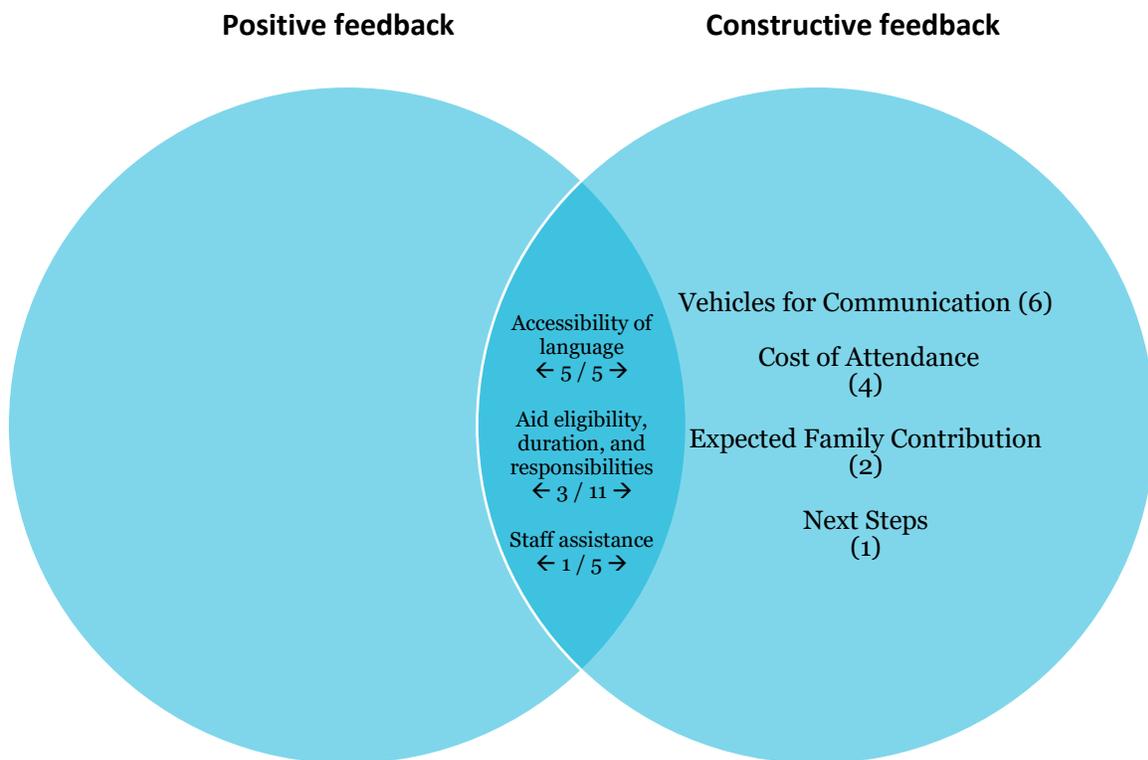
# Campus Safety and Equity Advisory Council (CSEAC) – Student Feedback on Financial Aid Equity and Institutional Financial Aid Messaging and Support

## Overview

CSEAC met on February 18, 2022, and had a robust discussion on financial aid equity and institutional financial aid messaging and support. Prior to the meeting, council members were asked to reflect on their own experience, review their financial aid award letter in advance, and come prepared for a discussion including topics such as institutional communications on financial aid awards, clarity or lack of clarity about types of aid offered and expectations around that aid, and understandings around subsequent actions needed to accept/decline financial aid.

## Feedback

Categories and examples of feedback are outlined in the table below, with the number of students who gave that feedback in parenthesis. Overall feedback is summarized below:



Positive feedback	
Category	Examples
Accessibility of language (5)	My financial aid award letter made sense (5)
Aid eligibility, duration, and responsibilities (3)	I understand what I had to do to keep my scholarship/financial aid (3)
Staff assistance (1)	I was able to get the help I needed from financial aid staff (1)

<b>Constructive feedback</b>	
<b>Category</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Aid eligibility, duration, and responsibilities (11)	I want clarification about scholarship stackability (3)
	I want clarification about conditions for maintaining scholarship eligibility (1)
	I want clarification about how long my scholarship will last (1)
	There should be a way to help undocumented students more easily identify which scholarships they are eligible for (1)
	I want clarification about what types of aid pay for summer semester (1)
	There should be clearer distinction/less conflation of loans vs. gift aid (1)
	I want more clarification about how Federal Work-Study is awarded (1)
	I want more clarification about the difference between subsidized and unsubsidized loans (1)
	Financial aid award letters should define aid types clearly in the letter itself instead of linking out or communicating through pop-up boxes (1)
Vehicles for communication (6)	I would prefer if financial aid communications came through Canvas or an equivalent LMS (4)
	I would prefer if I was notified about financial aid communications via text (2)
Staff assistance (5)	I wasn't able to get the help I needed from financial aid staff (4) <i>Specific examples: staff members are fellow students who are part-time and/or not sufficiently trained; there are too few staff members to accommodate demand</i>
	Academic advisors should be cross-trained to answer questions about financial aid and scholarships (1)
	Financial aid offices should employ staff that are fluent in multiple languages to the extent that they can translate higher education and financial aid terms effectively (1)
Accessibility of language (5)	When choosing verbiage, financial aid offices should take underrepresented student populations into consideration (3) <i>Specific example: Do English Language Learners, first-generation students, nontraditional students, and international students have the English fluency and life experiences/context to fully understand the information financial aid offices send them?</i>

	Written communication should be offered in languages other than English (1)
	Financial aid award letters should avoid using confusing abbreviations (1) <i>Specific example: "DCOB GR BUSN NR Tuition" should not be a customer-facing abbreviation</i>
Cost of Attendance (4)	Financial aid award letters should offer transparency about how tuition and fees are spent (2) <i>Specific example: I want to see clearer information about "hidden fees" (e.g. extra fees for online courses, differential tuition, etc.)</i>
	I want clarification on residency requirements for in-state tuition (1) <i>Specific example: What are the steps/responsibilities and potential consequences of becoming a resident (i.e. loss of scholarships)?</i>
	Allow students to adjust figures in dashboards (1) <i>Specific example: If I found textbooks cheaper than what my financial aid offer estimated, I want to be able to customize that field so I understand my costs and budget more accurately</i>
Expected Family Contribution (2)	There should be an appeal process students can utilize when EFC is not reflective of financial reality (2)
Next steps (1)	Financial aid award letter should clearly outline deadlines for accepting or rejecting aid (1)