Touch & Tech – An Interactive Session for Best Practices in Using Automation Technology in Your Emergency Aid Program

Automation Technology Subcommittee

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Benefits of Automation Technology

- ▶ Help make emergency aid programs more efficient and effective
- ▶ Help aid administrators focus on students
- ▶ CAS Standards (Part 10)
- ▶ Two areas that could benefit from automation
  - ▶ Application and disbursement process for emergency funds
  - ▶ Data analysis to determine program effectiveness

Landscape Analysis of Emergency Aid Programs (NASPA)

- Most institutions do not effectively use automation technology for
  - Administration of emergency aid programs
  - Necessary data analysis to measure the effectiveness of programs
- Important findings from survey
  - 56% of institutions maintained emergency aid recipient information in various spreadsheets or separate files
  - 75% of the institutions did not use tools or resources to automate the distribution of emergency aid
  - 68% of institutions do not use tools to analyze data about students who receive emergency aid

Need for Speed

▶ Delivery of emergency aid should be as fast as possible

  ▶ Helps students with their immediate financial need

  ▶ Allows them to focus on school

▶ Many institutions are using mostly manual processes for the application and delivery of emergency aid funds

▶ Automating processes would help the emergency aid staff have more time to focus on helping the students

▶ Personal touch will always be needed for students in crisis

Making the Case for Program Sustainability

- ▶ Critical for institutions to perform analysis on the effectiveness of their programs

- ▶ Good data could help solicit additional resources for the program

- ▶ Helps to tell the story of how emergency aid is making a difference for students

- ▶ Helps ensure good stewardship of funds

Recommendations for the Use of Automation Technology for Emergency Aid Programs

▶ Online warning system that faculty/staff can use to notify emergency aid staff about students in need

▶ Online emergency aid application that interacts with the information's student information system (SIS)

  ▶ Collect biographic/demographic information about the student from the SIS and store these data in the emergency aid database

  ▶ Collect financial need information from the FASFA (if applicable)

  ▶ Collect enrollment information, etc.

  ▶ Automate award notification to student

  ▶ Make process less burdensome for students and emergency aid staff

Recommendations for the Use of Automation Technology for Emergency Aid Programs – cont.

- ▶ Online application could push information to students as needed based on responses to question on the application

  - ▶ Food insecurity – provide resources for food pantry, community resources, etc.

  - ▶ Housing insecurity – provide list of housing resources

  - ▶ Counseling needs – provide counseling resources, etc.

- ▶ Automate feed of award information to the student information system

Recommendations for the Use of Automation Technology for Emergency Aid Programs – cont.

- Database of applicant/recipient information (from online application)
  - Track student retention, graduation and other success measures over time for emergency aid recipients
  - Track similar information for students who qualified but funds were not available
- Use statistical analysis tools to assist with data analysis
  - Tableau
  - SPSS
  - Alteryx

Recommendations for the Use of Automation Technology for Emergency Aid Programs – cont.

▶ Consider the development of mobile apps

- ▶ Provide resources and information to students
- ▶ Link to online emergency aid application via smart phone
- ▶ Collect information from students about needs

▶ Chat bot technology

Summary

▶ As more and more students require emergency assistance, it will be difficult for institutions to sustain current manual processes

▶ Important for institutions to consider using automation technology to help make emergency aid programs more efficient and effective

▶ Help facilitate programs that are more accessible and helpful to students facing emergencies