

August 7, 2002

TO: Howard Bell
FROM: Pat Hurley
RE: Interview notes

The following are excerpts from the notes I took during our telephone interview in May. I have incorporated these excerpts in a draft Best Practices report that I am writing. Please verify that the following excerpts capture the essence of your position.

Pat Hurley, *Associate Dean/ Student Financial Aid Services*, of Glendale Community College:¹

1) Stated that:

- a) A disproportionate number of the College's immigrant students do not answer question 31 "Will you have a high school diploma or GED before you enroll?" correctly because they interpret it as asking about US high schools only and not about high school equivalents in foreign countries. Hence, some immigrant students unknowingly disqualify themselves for Pell Grants by answering "No" to this question even though they will have a degree from a high school equivalent institution in a foreign country. **It is difficult for many of these students to produce a high school diploma if they are from countries experiencing war or conflict or from a culture that does not value good record-keeping.**
- b) The College is **especially** attentive to those situations in which an applicant's family size is not equal to the number of exemptions claimed by the applicant (independent student) or the applicant's parents (dependent student). **Additional information is requested to verify that "other dependents" (older parents, cousins, grandparents, siblings over 24) are real dependents.**
- c) Filers with incomes below a certain level should be reviewed for filing errors:
 - i) Zero income filers (whether \$0 AGI or \$0 income) should be reviewed.
 - ii) Family income \leq \$1,250 per person are selected for verification.
- d) Dependency status other than an age-based attribute can sometimes cause errors. **(I don't remember what I meant here! Our biggest problem was vocational students saying they were grad/professional students, but that seems to have been fixed with the rewording on the current FAFSA. A smaller problem is with students saying they have dependents who don't actually meet the definition and students who are in vocational programs.)**
- e) When assets are all blank they should be verified.

¹ Information identified in a May 29, 2002 telephone discussion with Pat Hurley of Glendale Community College.

- 2) Reported that the College uses high school tours/presentations to inform students, parents, and counselors how to complete the FAFSA form and how to avoid making errors. **We also use work-study students as peer counselors to help students complete the form.**

- 3) Recommended that there should be an easier way to "flag" students who qualify for certain programs (i.e. SSI, AFDC, **General Relief**) so they do not have to re-qualify for "need". They used to be exempt from having to re-qualify for need. **(Our recommendation is to reinstate those questions on the FAFSA and allow a simple needs test for those groups only, since they have already qualified for a need-based public assistance program through a government agency.)**