Student Financial System Phase 1 Completed

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The first of two phases of the integrated Student Financial System (SFS) project, a joint effort among the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (OFAS), the Graduate Division, and Student Information Systems and Technology (SIS&T), was completed in February 2016.

The purpose of the project is to replace the legacy systems in OFAS and Graduate Division with a hybrid solution using a best-of-breed vendor product (ProSAM by Sigma Systems) with custom-developed Microsoft .NET web applications. The first phase included a redesigned mobile friendly OFAS website, MyAid Status Modernization, mass email system, and the replacement of the OFAS’ 18-year-old client-server application consisting of Visual Basic and MS Access with ProSAM software.

Graduate Division’s financial support system is responsible for the administration and distribution of over $50 million annually in Graduate Student Fellowship and fee remission support. Funding sources include central campus resources, extramural contracts and grants, academic department owned gifts and endowments, as well as funding provided by external entities for specialized fellowship programs. Additionally, fee remission must be administered in compliance with the UAW ASE collective bargaining agreement and federal cost accounting standards. Effective utilization of these significant campus resources, in conjunction with proper administration of funds stewarded by the Graduate Division on behalf of external agencies, create a dynamic and evolving set of circumstances for which agile and flexible system applications are critical.

The second phase, scheduled for completion in 2017, includes functionality for the Graduate Division’s financial support systems. This phase will include the creation of an Academic Department web portal, replacement of the Graduate Student Fee Remission System (GSFR), an integrated multi-year financial commitment tracking system, and automated award packaging functionality.

The OFAS is one of the departments on the UCSB campus with the fastest growing demands for change in their practices and processes. With more students than ever before applying for financial aid, and with more than $300 million flowing through their office annually, the need for a robust delivery system is paramount. Additionally, federal, state and university regulations and guidelines must be followed and enforced. The new Student Financial System will enable the OFAS to be nimble and more adaptable in a constantly changing business environment.