



## Beyond Banner Financial Aid: What's Next?

Since the Connecticut Community Colleges implemented the SunGard HE Banner Financial Aid System for the 2000-2001 academic year, the system has experienced phenomenal growth in the number of financial aid recipients and awards. Financial aid applications have increased 80% while financial aid recipients have grown by 78% and awards have blossomed by 104%. For the recent 2007-08 academic year, the community colleges have disbursed \$56.6 million to over 21,125 students.

Although the system has developed an impressive technical infrastructure for the administration of student financial aid, it is unlikely we can significantly improve student access to financial aid services in future years solely through our skilled use of technology. Rather it appears to be time for the system office and the colleges to engage in an examination of financial aid policies and business practices to ensure student access and equity across our colleges.

In 2007 the Institute for College Access & Success ([www.ticas.org](http://www.ticas.org)), an independent nonprofit organization that works to make higher education more available and affordable for people of all backgrounds, conducted a research study into the financial aid services and operations among the California Community Colleges. The study resulted in an interesting report entitled *Green Lights & Red Tape: Improving Access to Financial Aid at California's Community Colleges*. We believe this research study holds important messages for the Connecticut Community Colleges.

We are pleased that the report's principal researcher and author, Deborah Frankle Cochrane, has agreed to meet with our financial aid community to present the report's findings and recommendations. In addition, Ms. Cochrane has agreed to work with us and other parties to develop a research methodology and action plan for an operational review of the financial aid services at our community colleges.

We invite you to join the financial aid community, Chancellor Marc Herzog, and Chief Academic & Student Affairs Officer Paul Susen at a financial aid forum to discuss future directions for financial aid services in the Connecticut Community Colleges on **Monday, June 16, 2008 from 9 AM – 4 PM at Capital Community College in Hartford.**

To register for this exciting event, please send an e-mail indicating your name, position, and college to Claudia Chafee, assistant director of financial aid services, at [cchafee@commnet.edu](mailto:cchafee@commnet.edu). We will provide you with more details and a complete agenda as the date nears.