Date: May 6, 2016

Memo to: Open CCC Apply Steering Committee

 Patricia Donohue, Product Manager, CCC Apply Center

From: California Community Colleges currently using Open CCC Apply admission application.

The 39th annual of CACCRAO, (California Association of Community Colleges Admissions and Records Officers) conference was held in Sacramento this past week at Holiday Inn, Capitol Plaza. On the conference agenda there was a session on Tuesday, May 3, that was open to all attendees, titled “Round Table Discussion for Open CCC Apply users”.

Close to 100 conference participants attended the session, including Patricia Donohue from Open CCC Apply Center. An invitation for feedback was sent to the CACCRAO list-serve prior to the conference as well as encouragement to attend the conference session. All feedback that was collected prior to the conference helped to frame the major areas that were discussed on May 3. There were twelve main areas that the issues could be attributed to and they are as follows:

1. Open CCC Apply account and the actual Admission Application – this was probably the singular largest complaint and seemed to be shared by all. Students complete the Open CCC account and then think they are done and never go on to complete the actual application. They can’t remember the user name and password when too much time has passed and retrieval is very difficult – students end up creating a new application which results in duplicate student records. The group requested VERY OBVIOUS directions for the student’s need to continue on to the actual application.
2. High School attended and expected graduation date, problems with Middle school – these students end up as non-residents because they cannot choose the name of a high school. Would like it to just be a month and year – and eliminate the day. When the graduation date is in the future – students have a hard time understanding that they need to check “high school graduate” for the summer and fall sessions after graduation – results in a stalling of the application process.
3. Challenges for students whose first language is not English – and it’s not just Spanish that is needed – many colleges named a number of different languages that were needed and that the toggle switch does not work effectively for students – especially our under-served populations and ESL students whose computer skills are minimal.
4. Personal questions asked considered indelicate and/or invasive – Gender and sexual orientation are startling and confusing to younger students and non-native students. Helicopter parents especially are upset by these questions for minors.
5. The application can take up to an hour to complete – especially for non-English speaking and non-credit population. Many students and whoever may be trying to assist them get frustrated by the great length of time it takes to complete the online application and actually abandon the process. This is especially true with non-native, life-long learners and certain cohorts of students such as Public Safety Training, and dual enrollment students.
6. No email log for notifications through the Admin portal in Open CCC Apply – practically every college requested this access.
7. No visibility into in-progress applications – Again – practically every college requested a string need for this access.
8. CEB codes inclusion in Open CCC Apply.
9. Failure to successfully communicate the end-of-March upgrade – apparently it was stated on the website but no actual email was sent to A & R Offices. Possibly sent to IT departments but that was not shared with A & R folks. (Led to much confusion.)
10. Overall failure of the March upgrade – especially if they did not have the correct version of Java – again – a failure to appropriately communicate the problems in a manner that A & R offices could understand or see.
11. Need to improve the update of majors/certificates in the administrator portal – Patty indicated it was in progress but users would like to provide input.
12. Veteran Discharge date and additional questions for active military and dependents of both – Patty indicated that this was an upgrade in March but no one in room seemed to know that.

*Note – many expressed a desire to have a “preferred name” field, (helpful for in-progress-transgender students) and also a question about why the first name is not required.*

In conclusion, the group voiced a strong need for improved communications from Open CCC Apply Product Center and the Steering Committee. The group expressed that, not knowing many of the changes, created many problems and confusion for both students and the staff serving them. We asked for communication that was more frequent, transparent and in language that users will understand and also an opportunity to ask for clarifications that would be shared with ALL users.

CACCRAO members appreciate the opportunity to represent a critical mass in expressing the concerns and issues that the colleges are experiencing and we look forward to a response and resolution on the many areas we have brought to light. We would like to emphasize that all colleges have enjoyed our working relationship with Open CCC Apply and look forward to many more years ahead collaborating on fine-tuning the CCC Apply products for maximum effectiveness! Thank you again for all that you do.