Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy at Villa Maria College

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Policy Presentation Agenda

- SAP Overview
- SAP at Villa Maria College
- Recommendations
- Questions
- References

SAP Policy

How did it start?
What is it?
Why does it matter?

Title IV and the Higher Education Act of 1965

- Title IV was introduced as a form of need-based financial aid "intended to be the foundation for all federal need-based student aid awarded to undergraduates" (Dortch, 2021, p. 1).

  - Has expanded as access and interest in pursuing higher education has increased, not to mention the continued increase in cost

  - Includes subsidized/unsubsidized loans, PLUS loans, Parent PLUS loans, Pell Grants, Perkins loans, etc. (does *not* include loans, grants, scholarships from sources other than government programs)

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

- As a federal financial aid program, there are stipulations for both students and institutions about how the funds are distributed, retained, evaluated, and in some instances, returned. These minimum requirements are collectively known as "academic progress" or "satisfactory academic progress."

- Tracking and reporting satisfactory academic progress was added as a 1976 amendment to the HEA, but institutions still have some flexibility within this policy as long as they meet the minimum requirements.

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)
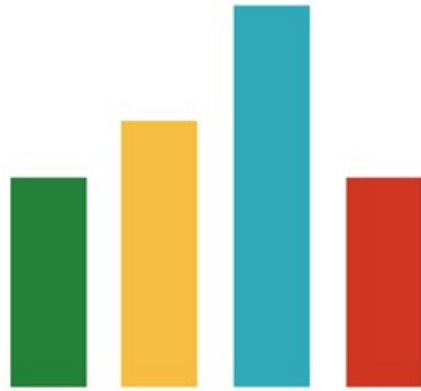
Cumulative GPA

Semester Hour Completion Rate

Maximum Timeframe

Minimum Federal Regulations for SAP

Cumulative GPA

Credits Attempted

vs.

Credits Earned

Degree Completion Timeframe

ACHIEVE AT LEAST A 2.0 GPA

EARN AT LEAST 66.67% of the credits you attempt

COMPLETE YOUR PROGRAM WITHIN 150% of the credits needed to graduate

Why does it matter?

- Creates a culture of accountability
  - Students
  - Institution
  - Organization dispersing financial aid
- Students are required to meet certain academic requirements in order to receive funds from state and federal sources
  - Financial assistance is not unlimited and loans need to be repaid so this encourages students to continue degree progress in a timely manner
  - Holds institutions accountable for having a SAP policy in place, offering assistance for meeting SAP, and not taking advantage of individuals receiving aid

SAP at VMC

What are the requirements?

How is SAP assessed?

How are individuals held accountable for meeting SAP?

Villa Maria College Regulations for SAP

Cumulative GPA

Credits Attempted

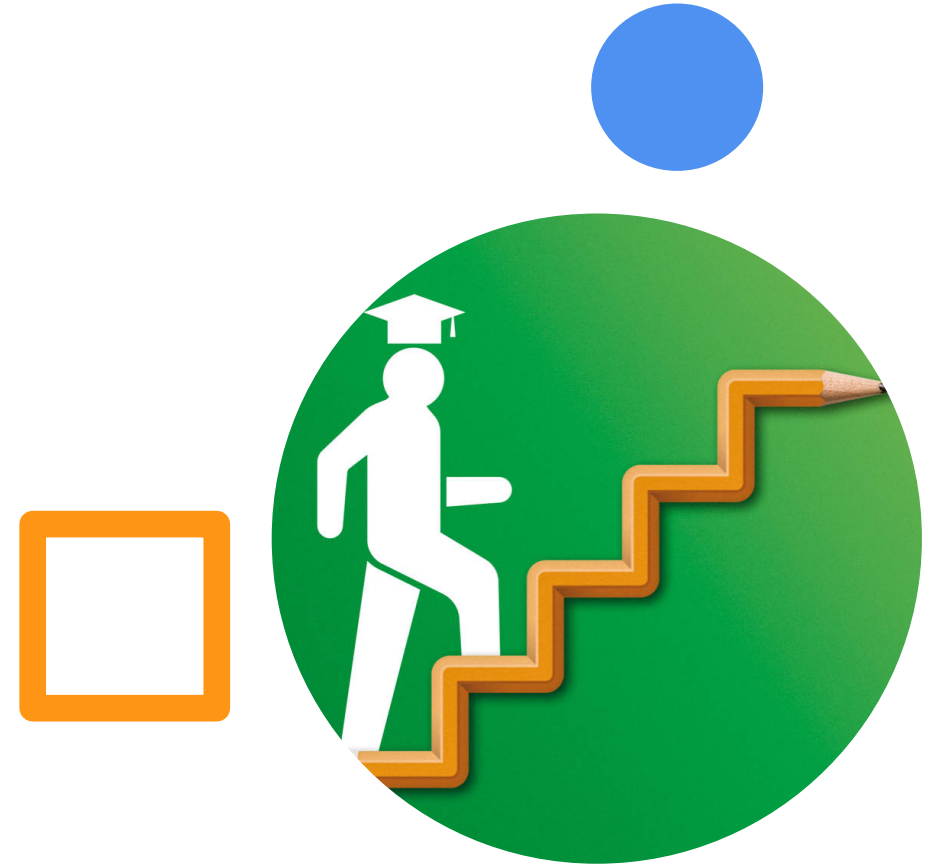**vs.**

Credits Earned

Degree Completion Timeframe

ACHIEVE AT LEAST A 2.0 GPA*

EARN AT LEAST 66.67% of the credits you attempt

COMPLETE YOUR PROGRAM WITHIN 150% of the credits needed to graduate

* or on pace to achieve a 2.0

Available SAP Information (in the Catalog)

- Title IV
  - Full Time Bachelor and Associate Degree
    - 6-12 semesters
  - Part Time Bachelor and Associate Degree
    - Credit based
- TAP Grant
  - Bachelor and Associate Degree
    - 6-10 semesters
- Say Yes Program
  - Bachelor and Associate Degree
    - 4-8 semesters

- Details how incompletes, withdrawals, repeated classes, change of major, academic amnesty, or transfer credits can impact SAP and academic standing
- How often SAP is evaluated
- Regaining eligibility and the appeal process
- Campus resources available to help students during any step of the process

Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards Continued Eligibility for Title IV Funds for Full Time Villa Maria College Students Pursuing an Associate Degree Program

Important: Federal regulations state that students must complete an Associate Degree within 150% of the published length of the program, generally within 90 credit hours.

AFTER Attempting This Semester	1	2	3	4	5	6
A Student Must Have Earned at Least This Number of Credits	6	20	29	40	49	60
With at Least This Grade Point Average	1.3	1.5	1.8	1.8	2.0	2.0

Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards Continued Eligibility for Title IV Funds for Full-Time Villa Maria College Students Pursuing a Bachelor Degree Program

Important: Federal regulations state that students must complete a Bachelor Degree within 150% of the published length of the program, generally within 180 credit hours.

AFTER Attempting This Semester	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
A Student Must Have Earned at Least This Number of Credits	6	20	29	40	49	60	69	80	89	100	109	122
With at Least This Grade Point Average	1.5	1.5	1.8	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0

Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards Continued Eligibility for Title IV Funds for Part-Time Villa Maria College Students Pursuing an Associate Degree Program

Important: Federal regulations state that students must complete an Associate Degree within 150% of the published length of the program, generally within 90 credit hours.

AFTER Attempting This Number of Credits	0-15	16-29	30-48	49-90
Pace Rate	66.7%	66.7%	66.7%	66.7%
Minimum Grade Point Average Required	1.3	1.5	1.8	2.0

Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards Continued Eligibility for Title IV Funds for Part Time Villa Maria College Students Pursuing a Bachelor Degree Program

Important: Federal regulations states that students must complete a Bachelor Degree within 150% of the published length of the program, generally within 180 credit hours.

AFTER Attempting This Number of Credits	0-15	16-29	30-48	49-180
Pace Rate	66.7%	66.7%	66.7%	66.7%
Minimum Grade Point Average Required	1.3	1.5	1.8	2.0

Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards Continued Eligibility for the NY State TAP Grant for Villa Maria College Students Pursuing an Associate Degree Program

BEFORE being Certified for This Payment	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
A Student Must Have Earned at Least This Number of Credits	6	15	27	39	51
With at Least This Grade Point Average	1.3	1.5	1.8	1.8	2.0

Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards Continued Eligibility for the NY State TAP Grant for Villa Maria College Students Pursuing a Bachelor Degree Program

BEFORE being Certified for This Payment	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th
A Student Must Have Earned at Least This Number of Credits	6	15	27	39	51	66	81	96	111
With at Least This Grade Point Average	1.5	1.8	1.8	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0

Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards Continued Eligibility for the Villa Maria College Say Yes Program Students Pursuing an Associate Degree Program

After Attempting This Semester	1	2	3	4
A Student Must Have Earned At Least This Number of Credits	On pace to earn 24 credits	24	36	End of Say Yes Eligibility
With at Least This GPA	On pace for 2.0	2.0	2.0	

Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards Continued Eligibility for the Villa Maria College Say Yes Program Students Pursuing a Bachelor Degree

After Attempting This Semester	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
A Student Must Have Earned At least This Number of Credits	On pace to earn 24 credits	24	36	48	60	72	84	End of Say Yes Eligibility
With At Least This GPA	On pace for 2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	

What happens when students don't meet SAP?

- The SAP policy can, and should, influence student behavior but this is contingent upon students being aware of what the SAP policy is assessing, how it is utilized for financial aid and academic progress, and the reasons behind the assessment (Walser, 2015, p. 60).
    - For students who are academically prepared to continue pursuing a degree, failing to make academic progress could be the impetus for them to work harder, refocus on classes, or seek out additional help (Schudde & Scott-Clayton, 2016).
    - For students who are either not fully equipped to be in college – academically, personally, financially, or any combination thereof – the threat of losing financial aid could help them realize that they are either not ready to take on the monetary risk and should stop out to avoid the financial burden or that they need to work harder to make the risk worth it (Schudde & Scott-Clayton, 2016).

Maintaining Accountability

- The SAP policy and requirements for maintaining aid are not intended to be a punishment if students have academic difficulties, which is why there is an appeal process and an academic recovery program available for students
- The institution is responsible for assuring students make required progress toward their degrees while maintaining good academic standing
  - Information is available in public facing catalog
  - Includes reference to the Office of Financial Aid, the Office of Academic Affairs, and the Student Success Center, all of which are available to help students with the SAP policy and academic recovery

Recommendations

What does VMC do well?

Where can VMC improve?

How can improvement be assessed?
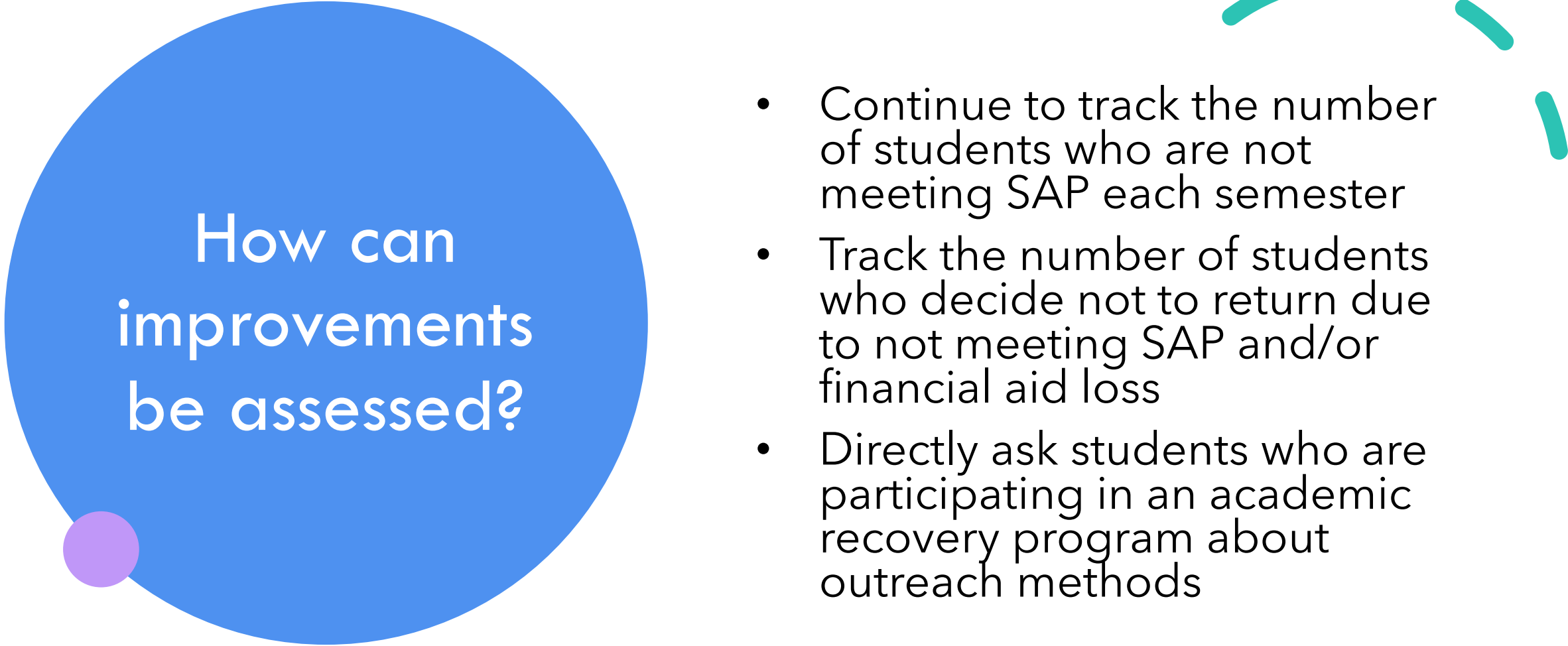
What does VMC do well?

- Offering flexibility within the SAP Policy, including an appeal process and academic recovery program

- Reaching out to students who are currently failing to meet SAP

- Encouraging all students to take advantage of campus resources

- Work with students who proactively seek information and support for SAP

Where can VMC improve?

- Clarifying SAP requirements and financial aid vocabulary when students first enroll, particularly for first-generation or under represented populations

- Implementing proactive communication for students in good academic standing

- Developing stronger communication methods for sharing information about the SAP Policy with students and staff

- Utilizing cost effective "nudging" tactics with targeted texting throughout the semester

How can improvements be assessed?

- Continue to track the number of students who are not meeting SAP each semester
- Track the number of students who decide not to return due to not meeting SAP and/or financial aid loss
- Directly ask students who are participating in an academic recovery program about outreach methods

Questions?

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