Cabrillo lends a hand with college aid deadline

By CATHY KELLY
ckelly@santacruzsentinel.com

APTOS — Cabrillo College held an annual event Sunday that helps students seeking financial aid for college, in advance of a Saturday deadline for priority consideration.

Sunday, advisers at the college’s Computer Technology Center were helping students with the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or FAFSA. It is used for financial aid and scholarships, organizers said.

SEE COLLEGE ON B2

COLLEGE

Continued from B1

The process can be intimidating, but it is becoming simpler, said Tama Bolton, the college’s director of enrollment services.

Last year, the U.S. Department of Education and the IRS worked together so that tax information can be “populated” into the aid application, she said.

Those considering college can list 10 institutions they are considering and add or change that list later, she said.

“It’s good to get it done, no matter where you are going,” she said. “Different colleges process them differently. Cabrillo College wants you to apply first.”

And it should be free, she said, though some websites will charge application fees as high as $80, after applicants complete the form and are poised to submit it. (Use www.fafsa.gov, she stressed.)

The application takes about 30 minutes to complete, she said.

Sunday’s outreach program was done through Cash 4 College, a federally funded program that helps students with that process, said Antonio Alarcón, a Cabrillo College adviser and program outreach coordinator.

Alarcón, who recently joined the financial aid team at Cabrillo, said they will assist anyone needing help with the application, and not just for those going to Cabrillo.

And they help pinpoint local scholarships as well, he said.

“The whole idea is to get as many people to apply as possible,” he said. “It’s an under-utilized process the federal government and schools have created.”

The March 2 deadline is really to help states get their funding out, while federal deadlines are later, he said.

“Always apply, and follow-up with the school you want to go to,” he said. “Apply even if it’s just an option.”

He recommends that high school students start looking at specific colleges in their junior year of high school, with an eye toward aid and scholarship possibilities.

George Titsworth V, a Harbor High senior, came to the event Sunday. He said he wants to study Information Technology and plans to start at Cabrillo. Titsworth recently moved to Santa Cruz from Kansas City and would love to go to UC Santa Cruz, he said.

“I’m glad I came,” he said. “I needed to get the ball rolling for financial aid.”

Another Cash 4 College event will be 10 a.m. to noon Friday at Cabrillo’s Watsonville campus.

For information, call 831-479-6415 or email financial.aid@cabrillo.edu.