

Student Financial Services News



FAFSA Filing Reminder

The start of the new year means that FAFSA season is approaching. It's more important than ever for students to apply on time. Your 2011-2012 FAFSA must be received by the Central Processing System by March 1, 2011.

Submit your FAFSA online by Feb. 14 in order to ensure that it is received in time.

- Students who file after the priority date may not receive institutionally controlled grant money.
- Log onto www.fafsa.ed.gov to complete the FAFSA.
- Both you, and one parent of dependent filers, will need your FAFSA PIN. If you have forgotten your PIN, you may request a duplicate at www.pin.ed.gov.
- Keep track of your PIN! You'll need it for renewal FAFSA applications and completing other requirements.
- Collect 2010 W-2s and federal tax returns for both you and your parent(s).
- Don't worry if you haven't completed your taxes! It's absolutely fine to estimate your income for 2010 as long as you update this information after filing your taxes.

- It's a good idea to print out copies of your application and your confirmation number for future reference.
- Keep copies of all information used to file your FAFSA in an easy to find place. These may be requested by our office for verification.

Please remember that you must reapply for financial aid every year.

Avoiding the Void

There are a number of reasons that a FAFSA may become void or invalid. Some of the top reasons are:

- Missing signatures (via your PIN)
- Taxes paid are equal to or higher than the adjusted gross income
- Parent's last name, social security number and date of birth do not match the records at the Social Security Administration
- Insufficient information

Complete your FAFSA carefully, making sure that you "sign" your FAFSA or any subsequent corrections by using your PIN. If you are considered a dependent student, one of your parents will also need to sign the FAFSA and each correction. If your FAFSA is voided for any reason, our office will not consider your application to be complete until the date that your FAFSA becomes valid.

Reminder

Please note that May 1st is the due date for all requested financial aid documents (i.e. tax returns, W-2s and verification worksheets). Students must complete their financial aid file by providing all requested documents to the financial aid office by the May 1st deadline. Students must file the FAFSA by March 1st and complete their file by May 1st in order to be considered on time and receive priority aid consideration.

Tax Tips

The Financial Aid Office is required to resolve all discrepancies before awarding financial aid. Discrepancies delay awarding and may result in a smaller financial aid award. Here are some tips to ensure that this doesn't happen to you:

- Make sure that you file a tax return if required and that you file with the correct filing status. If another taxpayer is entitled to claim you as a dependent, you cannot take an exemption for yourself.
- Please remember that you must include income from all employers that you worked for in 2010. If you file a tax return, you must include all W-2s, including those from federal work study jobs.
- You may be eligible for **freefile** if your AGI is less than \$58,000. Log onto www.irs.gov for more information.

CALENDAR

January

Locate or request PIN

February

Scholarship application available online

February 14th

Submit 11-12 FAFSA online for priority aid consideration

March 1st

Scholarship application and FAFSA due date

April 1st

Summer 2011 aid application available

May 1st

All requested financial aid documents must be received by this date

Award Letter Process

Financial aid award letters are mailed out to students once their award has been determined. Revised award letters are sent out each time a change to the award has occurred. Students must read all information in the comment box, accept or decline each type of financial aid, sign and return the award letter to our office. If you wish to reduce the amount of your loan, check off “accept” and then in the space below, write in the loan type, revised fall amount, revised spring amount and revised total. It is very important that students check their on-campus mailboxes at least once per week and respond to our mailings in a timely manner.

Electronic Billing

All undergraduate Day students are billed electronically through our eBill system. Students receive an email notification each time a new bill statement is available. Students may set up authorized users who may view billing statements, make payments and receive email notifications. Students are encouraged to sign up for eRefund which provides faster refunds via direct deposit.

For more information, please visit the Student Accounts website
www.fitchburgstate.edu/studentaccts

Financial Aid Office Staff

The staff of the Financial Aid Office is here to assist you. We are located in the Anthony Building and are available Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. On Tuesdays we have extended hours until 6 p.m.

We are:

Pamela McCafferty, Dean of Enrollment Management
Alcira Zadroga, Associate Director
Rachael Whitney, Assistant Director
Andrea Johnston, Financial Aid Counselor
Heidi Berndt, Customer Service Representative
Marie Abboud, Customer Service Representative

Have questions?

All students are assigned a Financial Aid counselor based on the first letter of their last name. Counselors are assigned as follows:

A-F Andrea Johnston

G-M Rachael Whitney

N-Z Alcira Zadroga

Counselors are available by appointment or on a walk-in basis for emergencies. Stop by the office or call (978) 665-3156 to schedule an appointment.

