

Financial Aid Status Report for the Higher Education Policy Commission

September 14, 2010

The financial aid process at West Virginia State University (WVSU) has received attention in the media during the last month. As of Tuesday, September 14, 2010, our year-to-date disbursement of federal and state aid to students totals \$5,622,848. This compares to \$5,657,162 at this same time last year.

We have successfully implemented financial aid disbursement for the Fall 2010 semester. However, our records (see attachment) show that there is a small lag with the loan disbursements as compared to last year. This is likely due to students and parents having to sign new promissory notes and participate in loan entrance counseling due to the federal mandate for all institutions to move to Direct Lending. Previously, WVSU was a participant in the Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) program.

This academic year has brought significant change to how financial aid is processed and awarded at WVSU. As previously mentioned, all institutions were required to move to the Direct Lending program by the federal government.

We have also enforced deadline dates this year and ceased providing financial aid profile estimates to those who submitted late paperwork. This is in-line with best practices at other universities and is being done with the goal of modifying student habits and making them more accountable for their education.

Broadly speaking, it has been our experience that students given financial aid profile status often fail to complete their paperwork in a timely manner. Students who were given profiles

could not obtain their textbooks on financial aid due to the fact that their award had not been verified by the federal standards.

There are students at WVSU who submit financial aid documents past the deadline date. To document this situation, nine hundred and fourteen (**914**) students met the posted financial aid filing deadline date of June 30, 2010 for the fall semester. Meeting the deadline for a student constitutes having filed their Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and submitting all required supporting documentation. Of the 914 students, 892 student files have been completed and 22 student records are incomplete because we are waiting on electronic corrections to their Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR), extra documents which need to be submitted based upon review of other documentation, and financial aid appeals for students out of compliance with federal academic progress standards. These students with additional requirements will be completed upon their submission.

Further, one thousand fifty eight (**1,058**) students filed their financial aid documentation after the posted June 30th deadline. This is over half of the students who filed for financial assistance at WVSU this year. This cohort is similar to previous academic years and is the primary reason for the implementation of the financial assistance deadline dates.

It is a valid concern that approximately 150 student electronic Institutional Student Information Records (ISIR) were not transmitted into our database during a transition of Informational Technology personnel in late spring. This is out of over 6,000 ISIR reports sent to WVSU each year. It is readily acknowledged that misplacement of one student record in this process is unacceptable. Please know that all affected students have been identified and registered in their classes. This confirms that all "missing" electronic files have been requested and when received will be

processed with first priority by the Office of Student Financial Assistance.

Additionally, we have increased our financial aid disbursement runs from once per week to twice per week (Monday and Thursday). This is to make certain that any financial funds available to our students have been drawn in on the most expeditious schedule possible.

Determining financial aid eligibility and the processing of files for each student must be determined on a case-by-case basis. Completing a student file encompasses many areas, i.e, signing an award letter, turning in all required supporting documentation, loan entrance counseling and signing master promissory notes. Consideration must also be given to corrections which need to be done on a number of records due to student error. All of these factors determine the amount of time that is required to complete a student financial aid file.

It is hoped that the facts presented in this report alleviate concerns about the financial aid disbursement process at West Virginia State University. Please know that we continue to put forth every effort on behalf of our students.

West Virginia State University

Financial Aid Events Timeline

Fall 2010 Disbursement Cycle

January, 2010	Processes Set Up for 2010-2011
February 12, 2010	Mary Blizzard, Director of Financial Aid, Resigns
February 15, 2010	Sally Marcus-Burger Named Interim Director
February 26, 2010	David Morris, Financial Aid Information Technology (IT) Specialist, Resigns
March 2, 2010	Financial Aid IT Duties Transferred to Computer Services
April 1, 2010	Patricia King, Associate Director, Resigns
April 12, 2010	James Buchanan Promoted to Interim Associate Director from Lead Counselor Position
May 15, 2010	Counselor Position Advertised
Early June, 2010	Report received of Missing Student ISIR's
June 28 and 30, 2010	Interviews held for Counselor Position
July 23, 2010	James Buchanan Resigns as Interim Associate Director
July 30, 2010	Decision Made to Hire Both Associate Director and Counselor from Counselor Applicant Pool Due to Quality of Candidates
August 2, 2010	Katie Mills Hired as Associate Director
August 2, 2010	Gwen Bausley Hired as Counselor
August 25, 2010	First Disbursement to Students

The disbursement of financial assistance for West Virginia State University students was accomplished on the designated and established institutional date of August 25th for those students who filed and completed their financial aid before the deadline date of June 30th.

The published estimated date of disbursement for those students who filed and submitted late paperwork is as follows. Disbursements will be made earlier, if possible.

- 1) Paperwork submitted in July - Disbursement delay until mid to late September
- 2) Paperwork submitted in Aug. - Disbursement delay until mid to late October
- 3) Paperwork submitted in Sept. - Disbursement delay until mid to late November



WV SU Office of Admissions

Memorandum

TO: S. Bryce Casto, Vice President of Student Affairs

FROM: Trina Sweeney, Director
Office of Admissions

RE: Metro Enrollment

DATE: September 15, 2010

As per your request, an analysis of students qualifying for the metro tuition program was performed by the Office of Admissions. According to the data the following was determined:

Fall 2009 term

- 116 Students enrolled for Fall 2009 from Metro Tuition states
 - 26 students actually came from qualifying Metro Tuition zip codes
- Metro Tuition Program was not approved in time for the Fall 2009 term
 - No students actually receive Metro Tuition

Fall 2010 term

- 115 Students enrolled for Fall 2010 from Metro Tuition states
 - 53 students actually came from qualifying Metro Tuition zip codes
 - 14 New students from metro areas (primarily from the Maryland area)
 - 38 Returning/Readmitting/Continuing students from metro areas

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Fall 2010 Enrollment Figures – REGISTRATION AND RECORDS OFFICE-Donna L. Hunter

(Information based upon figures provided by the Office of Computer Services on Wednesday, September 15, 2010).

As of the last years census date (October 15, 2009) the total enrollment for West Virginia State University was 4,003. The In-State enrollment was 3,575 and the Out-of-State enrollment was 428.

Preliminary Figures for the current semester (Fall 2010) are as follows:

The total enrollment for West Virginia State University the Fall Semester 2010 (as of today, September 15, 2010) is 3,039. Of this figure, 2,705 are In-State students and 334 are Out-of-State. Of the 334 Out-of-State students, 53 are Metro. There are 2,669 students are from the Kanawha County area and 133 from the Putnam County.

Again 53 students are enrolled and paying tuition under the Metro agreement.

Starting today, registrations are being collected at area high schools that WVSU services through the Early Enrollment (formerly Dual Credit) program. We anticipate that this figure will be higher.

Submitted by Donna L. Hunter

Interim Director of Registration and Records