Nonattendance for Pell Grant Recipients

Federal financial aid regulations require institutions to report students who stop attending or who have never attended class while receiving a Federal Pell Grant. This grant is made to high-need students working on the first baccalaureate degree.

The Registrar notified faculty and other academic staff of this requirement during her Opening of Semester message. Faculty are reminded that if they identify a non-attending student after the first week of classes, through the middle of the term of instruction, that they should notify their departmental office. Upon receiving a report of nonattendance, departmental representatives are encouraged to initiate drop proceedings by sending an email request to Reg@msu.edu. More information is available in the Academic Programs Catalog.

The Office of Financial Aid also has notified all students receiving Pell Grant in the Spring Semester of this requirement with the following message:

You are receiving financial aid from the federal Pell Grant program. If you receive a 0.0 grade in a course, and it is determined this was because you stopped attending the course without dropping it, your Pell Grant may be reduced by excluding the credits for this course.

New Financial Aid Security Requirement for Spring

The Office of Financial Aid at Michigan State University has developed a new procedure to verify student and guest identity when discussing private financial aid information by telephone. All students who receive financial aid and wish to discuss their private information with Office of Financial Aid staff by telephone must complete eSecurity in STUINFO (stuinfo.msu.edu).

Students must select and supply answers to three security questions. In addition, if the student wishes to access his or her records by phone, the student must enter the name(s) of these authorized persons and supply the answers to the security questions to that person as well.

If the student or guest are unable to answer the security question when asked, we will not be able to give any specific information about the student’s financial aid.

Please contact the Office of Financial Aid if you have questions about this requirement.
Pell Grant Changes Continued...

If you decide that you do not want to complete a course for which you are enrolled, we recommend that you speak with an academic advisor about the best available options before taking any action. If you have any questions about this federal requirement, please contact the Office of Financial Aid.

Summer Financial Aid

Are you planning on attending classes this Summer at MSU? Summer financial aid applications are available online. To receive priority consideration you should file your application by March 1st. Log on to STUINFO and select eFinAid. The summer link is located in the section titled “Action Items”. Please be aware that your summer aid may be prorated based on your enrollment. For more information visit: http://finaid.msu.edu/sumdisb.asp.

How to Notify Our Office of Scholarships

The Office of Financial Aid works with department scholarships in several ways. One tool that we offer is the Scholarship Notification Form, which many departments are using, to notify our office of the award amount, account number to be debited, and the student to whom the award is being granted. The link to this form is:

http://www.finaid.msu.edu/forms/awardnotification/awardnotification.asp

It is helpful to use this form rather than e-mailing the office so that the request is distributed to multiple people in case someone is out of the office for a significant period of time. It also ensures that all information necessary to process the request is provided. So why do we need to know about every scholarship that a student receives? If a student is receiving federal aid, our office and the student are required per federal law to report all financial resources used to pay for their cost of attendance. The cost of attendance includes tuition, fees, room, board, books, and some personal/miscellaneous expenses. Each year the Board of Trustees approves a cost of attendance budget for our student populations.

We are responsible for ensuring that all financial resources do not exceed this cost of attendance budget. This assists in ensuring that scholarship and grant funds are not being utilized for non-education related expenses. If you have questions about notifying our office of scholarships please contact Chandra Owen in the Office of Financial Aid.
Helping Students to Keep from Reaching Federal Loan Maximums

The Office of Financial Aid has created a new process that will hopefully reduce the number of students that every year get closer to the cumulative borrowing maximum allowed by the federal government for an undergraduate degree. Students are no longer able to call and request to borrow their full academic year Stafford loan amount in a single semester. Instead, students that make this request are directed to come to the financial aid office and meet with an advisor. The student must fill out a form stating that they understand the ramifications of borrowing their full Stafford loan in one semester, and must also provide an explanation of how they will pay for the upcoming semester since they will have no loan. This form is called “The Maximum Stafford Loan” form. This approach is a better way of tracking the students that do borrow their maximum loan in one semester, and gives the office of financial aid a form they can reference if a student is inquiring to why they have no loan for a semester.

Filing Your FAFSA

It’s that time of the year that you need file your FAFSA for the upcoming 2011-12 Academic Year. Starting January 1st you can reapply at http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/. Submit your form by March 1st to receive top priority for Michigan aid programs. A new enhancement has been added to the FAFSA. It is the IRS Data Retrieval Option. Effective January 31, 2011, you can elect to SECURELY retrieve your tax information from the IRS. If you filed electronically, allow about two weeks (paper 6-8 weeks) after you file your return for the information to be available. The main benefits of this enhancement are that it will save you time when completing the FAFSA, the information provided on the FAFSA will be accurate and you will no longer have to submit complete copies or your federal tax returns to our office before we can finalize your financial aid eligibility.

Also remember to contact the Office of Financial Aid is there has been a change in your finances. You may qualify for a Special Condition that will allow us to reevaluate the data that was submitted on the FAFSA (possibly resulting in an increase in your aid).

Study Abroad and Financial Aid

The Office of Financial Aid has worked closely over the past year with the Office of Study Abroad to enact a better process of packaging summer study abroad students earlier in the academic year. Due to the collaborative effort between the two offices, financial aid packaging began in December 2010 for 2011 summer study abroad students. This is a great improvement in the packaging process which in prior years typically started around late February for the upcoming summer. This new process will give students that are relying on financial aid to fund their study abroad a longer timeframe to make a more informed decision on whether they can or cannot afford the program.