



Financial Aid Parent Newsletter

Spring 2015 



Parent Newsletter: A Welcome

By Amanda B. Carter, Deputy Director

The Financial Aid Office is proud to introduce the spring 2015 edition of the Financial Aid Parent Newsletter! We've included an abundance of information in this newsletter, covering topics ranging from study abroad to financial literacy. After a successful fall semester, we're looking forward to nicer weather and another successful spring term.

The spring semester is when students have to reapply for financial aid. We've included some important tips in this edition that we hope will help you prepare for the application process. Please be sure to contact our office with any concerns about next year's application. We'd be happy to answer any questions and help reduce some stress.

We hope that you find this newsletter insightful. Feel free to contact our staff with specific questions regarding your student's financial aid at Rochester.

Meliora!



Spotlight on: Center for Study Abroad and Interdepartmental Programs

By Shelby Johnson, Financial Aid Analyst & International Financial Aid Counselor

The Financial Aid Office works with many different offices on campus over the course of the year. We'll dedicate time in our newsletter to let you know about those relationships and provide some insight on the ways we work to support your student. In this release, we'll focus on the Center for Study Abroad. I sat down with Jacqueline Levine, Assistant Dean and Director, to have a conversation about the Center for Study Abroad and Interdepartmental Programs.

SJ: What exactly does the Center for Study Abroad do?

JL: The staff advises students in all aspects of international education –semester, summer, academic year, as well as short-term winter-break and spring break programs. By the time of graduation, about a third of UR undergraduates earn credits towards their degree in another country. We get the word out through study abroad information meetings, an annual study abroad fair, and numerous student-to-student events.

Since we are a branch office of the College Center for Advising Services, the academic counselors provide comprehensive advising so that time abroad can be effectively factored into the individual student's degree program, regardless of major. In addition to working one-on-one and in groups with students, we connect regularly with parents, faculty, and other university departments.

We also help students to create interdisciplinary majors or minors, or to plan a full year of independent study on the Senior Scholars Research Program.

SJ: How does the Center for Study Abroad work with Financial Aid?

JL: Our goal is to encourage students to get to know their Financial Aid counselor and to rely on facts. Too often, students make assumptions that another student's situation applies to them. Every student's situation is different, and the FAO helps them as individuals. Our offices work cooperatively to dispel the common misconception that study abroad is not affordable.

We provide cost and budget estimates to the FAO for each UR-sponsored study abroad programs so that its staff can adjust student financial aid awards.

SJ: When does the Center for Study Abroad refer students to Financial Aid?

JL: From the very beginning. At information sessions, during in-person meetings, Study Abroad Global Fair, we advise students to have an initial conversation with their financial aid counselor. As part of our pre-departure programming, we require that students who receive or plan to receive need or merit-based financial aid meet with their financial aid counselor.



SJ: With what kinds of issues can the Center for Study Abroad help parents and students?

JL: Every family has its own questions. Some students come from families where the parents themselves studied abroad or may have extensive overseas travel experience. At the same time, many of our students' parents have never traveled, or the students may be the first of their family to attend college. We want parents and students to understand that we're here to address anything—finances, health and safety concerns, the advantages an international education experience can have on a student's career plans

We work closely with the Bursars, Registrar, and Financial Aid Offices to ensure that we're all on the same page in understanding study abroad policies as they relate to registration, billing, and finances. Forecasting and budgeting for study abroad expenses is part of a conversation that can begin before the students even arrive at UR.

SJ: What's the most important thing for parents to know about study abroad?

JL: Alumni will tell you that study abroad can be a character and life-changing academic adventure that enhances decision-making skills. Parents see their children return with changed perspectives; often they seem more mature and more focused. It's not a "semester off" and it will not delay graduation: it's about earning credits (major, minor, elective, or cluster) towards the degree in another country.

We Value Your Input...Our Parent Survey is Now Available!

We are constantly looking for ways to enhance the service we provide to you and your student. To ensure we accomplish this objective, we are seeking your feedback about the experiences you've had with the Financial Aid Office. Please consider completing our brief [Parent Survey](#) online.

Your feedback will help us to better serve our current and future students and their families. Thank you for participating in this survey!

Meet a Student Worker: Susan Ojukwu

By: Stephanie Allen, Financial Aid Counselor

The Financial Aid Office at the University of Rochester administers the student employment program. We help students find jobs at the University that provide them with skills that they can use long after they've earned their degree. The students aren't the only ones who benefit from the student employment program. Our staff and faculty are able to work with some truly amazing individuals over the course of the year. Here's an example of one of them.

SA: Tell me about yourself.

SO: I was born in Albany, NY, but I now live in the Boston area so when people ask, I claim Boston. I am the youngest of seven children, four boys and two girls. I am of Nigerian descent. I love to read, although it's tough to find the time. My favorite authors are Kurt Vonnegut and Haruki Murakami. I also love pancakes.

SA: What are your reasons for working on campus?

SO: It is nice to have a little extra source of income on your own in college, that way I don't always have to ask my family for money. It's practice for the future when I don't have any other choice than to be self-sufficient. It also seemed like it would be a good learning experience and so far it has been.

SA: What do you enjoy most about working in the Financial Aid Office?

SO: I decided to apply for a job in the office because as a recipient of financial aid, I wanted to learn more about what goes on behind the scenes since it directly affects me and many of my peers. The most enjoyable part for me is learning new things every day and being knowledgeable enough to answer questions that others have.

SA: Are you involved in other extracurricular activities at UR?

SO: Yes, I am on the track team. My main event is long jump. I am also a part of Xclusive, the school's step team. I am the Minister of Finance for Student Organization for Caribbean Awareness (SOCA), a committee under BSU.

SA: What do you enjoy doing outside of the office?

SO: I love to sing anything from Broadway and R&B to pop and jazz. I also enjoy running and leisurely bike rides.

SA: Do you have any advice for incoming students or current students interested in a work-study position?

SO: If you're interested in a work-study position, time management is a top priority. During freshman year, I got excited with the extracurricular clubs and tried to be a part of way too many. I quickly learned I had to cut down on a few activities. On occasion, those that I stuck with can still overwhelm me. Finding the time to be both a student and an employee, you have to remind yourself not to stretch yourself too thin.

Working on campus just makes it that much more important to do what I need to do in a timely fashion. As a student balancing work, school, and extracurricular activities, it can be challenging, but I have learned the importance of prioritizing. School always comes first. Working on campus has enhanced my experience because I get to be in a great environment with friendly faces. It is a great networking opportunity, and although it can be difficult, it is well worth it.



FAQs

We've chosen a couple of frequently asked questions that we receive during the spring semester. If you have additional questions beyond what's listed here, please don't hesitate to reach out to us.

Q: What is the application deadline for returning students?

A: Returning students must reapply for financial aid by May 1, 2015. Emails are sent to students in January to let them know their deadline as well as what items need to be included in their application packet. Not all students need to complete the same application requirements, but there is one common requirement: the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#), which can be completed online.

Since students receive these emails directly, we strongly encourage you to touch base with your student and confirm they've received the email. Keep in mind that returning students who do not submit their financial aid application with all supporting documentation by May 1, 2015 are not guaranteed full consideration for need-based assistance and may have their aid reduced due to limited funding. If you apply by the May 1 deadline, students can expect to receive an award package via email by mid-June.

Q: How do students check their financial aid or application requirements during the year?

A: Students are able to check the status of their financial aid through their **FAOnline** account. They log in to the web-based system with their UR student ID number and their self-created PIN. Our office isn't able to provide you with the log-in information due to FERPA regulations surrounding student privacy, but next time your student is at home, ask them to log into their account, so that you can check on the status of their awards and application materials. It's a useful tool that is available 24 hours a day.



Financial Literacy

By Emily Hessney, Financial Aid Counselor

Happy birthday to financial literacy! It has now been one year since the Financial Aid Office implemented a financial literacy program to help our students make good financial decisions in college and beyond. There are several online elements to the program that we encourage students (and their parents) to explore. To get started, check out the financial literacy section on our [website](#). This will direct you to some of our other cool resources: [the financial literacy blog](#), our [Twitter account](#), and [Financial Avenue](#).

Our blog is full of relevant information on a broad range of topics, covering everything from budgeting for living off campus to cheap ideas for fun summer activities! The Twitter account is a great place to go for quick and easy tips, especially on #ThriftyThursday. Last but not least, Financial Avenue is a service the University is offering to all students. It's filled with quizzes, articles, and educational modules to provide guidance on money management! When your student signs up, make sure he or she uses the University of Rochester access code, 967FBF.

You can always keep an eye out for our financial literacy mascot, Wallis Wallet, named for our location in Wallis Hall. Wallis is used throughout the program to help students identify resources related to financial literacy.

Stay tuned for upcoming Financial Literacy events! National Money Smart Week takes place in April each year, so keep an eye out for updates!

Do It Yourself

By Yolanda Gatewood, Financial Aid Counselor

All returning undergraduate students must file the FAFSA. Some students will need to submit the College Board's CSS PROFILE as well. In addition, some students may be required to provide additional documentation via the College Board's IDOC program. To determine your student's requirements, log into your FAOnline account and view the Required Documents tab for the 2015-2016 award year.

Many families view the FAFSA and the CSS PROFILE as a daunting task. Here are some tips that can help you through the process:

FAFSA

The only place you should ever go to complete a FAFSA is www.fafsa.gov. It is a FREE application for Federal Student Aid. You should never have to pay to complete it.

1. The FAFSA is used to determine your eligibility for federal student aid.
2. Always use your legal name—meaning the name listed on your birth certificate and social security card.
3. Using the right school code is important; this ensures your information is received by our office.
The school code for the University of Rochester is 002894.



4. The IRS Data Retrieval Process can save you a lot of time later on. It can only be completed if your federal tax return has been processed by the IRS. If you have not yet filed your taxes, you can always log back into the FAFSA to complete Data Retrieval after the IRS has processed your tax return electronically.
 - a. You will complete the IRS Data Retrieval Tool on the Financial Information tab on your FAFSA. Answer a few basic questions to proceed. If you filed an amended return, file a foreign tax return, or filed your return less than three weeks ago, you are not eligible to use this process.
 - b. If your answer is no to all the questions, you should be able to proceed. At this point, the FAFSA will request your Federal PIN and link you to the IRS web site
 - c. Once at the IRS website, you must enter the information exactly as it is listed on your tax return. For example, use 'Street' and not 'St.' if that is how it appears on your taxes.
 - d. Select the box next to **Transfer My Information** into the FAFSA and then **Transfer Now**. Your tax information will now appear on your FAFSA.
 - e. You will only need to enter you wages.
5. Don't forget to enter both your Federal PIN and your Parent Federal PIN. Until this is done, your FAFSA is not considered signed.

Now that you have completed the FAFSA it is on to the CSS PROFILE!

CSS / Financial Aid PROFILE®



CSS Profile

1. The CSS PROFILE is due by February 15 for prospective students and by May 1 for returning students.
2. The CSS PROFILE is used to distribute institutional grant funding.
3. The very first step is to get all of your papers together so the process can go smoothly.
 - a. Be sure to include your social security number on the application.
 - b. Use your filling code! For the University of Rochester it is 2928.
 - c. Completing the CSS PROFILE for the correct academic year is important! If you are applying for aid for fall 2015 you will be completing the 2015-2016 CSS PROFILE.

Up Next

By Long Vu, Assistant Director

Application Deadline for 2015-2016

Deadlines are approaching and will be here before we know it. Instructions will be emailed to students in January. Please make sure your son or daughter is communicating with you to collect the necessary documents. Financial aid applications for all returning students are due May 1, 2015.

For more information on the application deadline, visit our [website](#).

Summer Courses and Financial Aid

The University does not provide need-based grants for the summer, but students may be eligible for a Federal Direct loan if they did not utilize their maximum eligibility during the year. Students can also utilize a Federal Parent PLUS loan in the parent's name for summer coursework. Both are federal loans which require the student to be enrolled for at least six credits during the summer. To find out more information on eligibility and application requirements, visit the [financial aid website](#). Please have your son or daughter reach out to the Financial Aid Office in the spring semester to help plan for the summer.

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