

Appendix L

Financial Aid Procedures and Policies

A. FINANCIAL AID ELIGIBILITY

Determination of eligibility for financial aid is based on the student's financial need as well as satisfactory academic standing. As used in relation to financial aid eligibility, the term financial need means the monetary difference between the total costs of attending the college and the computed amount of financial resources which the student and the family can contribute toward the total costs. The total cost of attending the University includes tuition and all fees, room and board, books and supplies, personal expenses and allowable transportation costs. Financial need is computed by a standard need analysis system using confidential information submitted by the parents or the self-supporting student. The need analysis system used by Georgia Southwestern State University is the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) administered by the U.S. Department of Education. The analysis of a family's financial resources includes consideration of current family income, assets, family size, number of children and number in college, and any other factors which seriously alter a family's financial strength. Federal aid programs, state aid programs and many university programs do not permit aid awards that exceed the computed financial need. Thus, information on all sources of aid must be provided to the Financial Aid Office. The amount of a student's computed financial need is the total cost of attending Georgia Southwestern State University minus the computed family resources.

B. PROCEDURES FOR APPLYING FOR FINANCIAL AID

Financial aid is not automatically renewed. Continuing students must reapply for financial aid each year. Reapplying for financial aid at Georgia Southwestern State University includes the following: Submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to the U.S. Department of Education for processing. These forms are available from the Financial Aid Office at Georgia Southwestern State University or you may apply online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. The FAFSA also serves as a prerequisite for the Federal Stafford Loans and the HOPE Scholarship. The information on the FAFSA will be used to calculate the expected family contribution (EFC) that is used to determine the student's need. Students are encouraged to submit the materials itemized above in January or as soon as the preceding year's federal income tax form has been prepared. When reapplying for financial aid, the student and parents need to allow time for the processing of the FAFSA, the primary determinant of the student's computed financial need, determined by the U.S. Department of Education.

C. FINANCIAL AID POLICIES

Georgia Southwestern administers its financial aid program in compliance with all applicable Federal and State laws and regulations. Specifically, the financial aid policies are listed below:

1. To receive any Federal financial aid, a student must maintain satisfactory progress toward a degree as determined by the standards of the University. The Federal Regulations defines "satisfactory progress toward graduation" as passing 67% of all academic work attempted during an academic year, as well as earning the minimum grade point average as specified in the University Bulletin. For example, a full-time student taking 30 total hours in two semesters should pass at least 20 hours for the academic year. A withdrawal does not constitute passage. At the end of the academic year, each student's progress will be reviewed. Students who fail to meet these standards will have their financial aid terminated. They will not be eligible to receive further aid until they have corrected the deficiency at their own expense or have successfully appealed the termination.
2. To receive Financial Aid, the student must not owe a refund of precious Federal grants or be in default on a Federal student loan and must sign a statement to this effect.
3. When the student is eligible for a Federal Pell Grant, the financial aid package is built around this grant. The ideal package will consist of grants, work, and loans respectively.
4. Refunds are made in accordance with the schedule in the current University Bulletin.

D. APPEAL OF FINANCIAL AID TERMINATION

A student has the right to appeal the termination of financial aid for any reason other than lack of funds from which the financial aid award is made. The first step is to submit a financial aid appeal to the Director of Financial Aid, c/o Office of Financial Aid, Georgia Southwestern State University. If a medical reason is the basis for the appeal, a letter of substantiation must be provided by the student's attending physician to the Director of Financial Aid prior to consideration of the request. It is always beneficial to attach a personal statement and supporting documentation with any financial aid appeal form. A final letter of appeal may be filed with the Vice President of Student Affairs. A complete copy of the Financial Aid Appeals Process, as stated in the Georgia Southwestern State University Financial Aid Policies and Procedures Manual, is available in the Georgia Southwestern State University Financial Aid Office (Sanford Hall, Room 207, 928-1378). If a student loses eligibility for her/his HOPE scholarship, the letter of appeal must be filed directly with the GSFC at:

Georgia Student Finance Commission
2082 East Exchange Place, Suite 200
Tucker, GA 30084
Phone: 800-505 4732

More information on financial aid may be obtained from the Financial Aid Office, Room 207, Sanford Hall. Office hours are from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday (except Summer Semester). (Phone 912-928-1378).

E. BUSINESS OFFICE INFORMATION

Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the official business regulations of the University and detailed financial information, which are stated in the current issue of the University Bulletin.

F. CASHING CHECKS

You may cash personal checks up to \$50 and money orders with identification at the cashier's window in the Marshall Student Center. No two-party checks will be cashed. You also may cash checks up to \$10 at the Campus Bookstore.

G. TUITION AND FEE REFUND POLICY

Students who formally withdraw from the University prior to passing the 60% point in time during the term are eligible for a partial refund of fees. Refunds are made only when a student completely withdraws from the University, and no refunds are made when a student of his or her own volition reduces the course load after the add/drop period. Students may receive a refund resulting from a reduction of their course load during the add/drop period. No refunds for withdrawals will be made after passing the 60% point in time during the semester. It is the student's responsibility to withdraw officially in accordance with University regulations. Forms for withdrawal from the University are available in the First Year Advocates Office located in the Academic Skills Center. A refund of tuition and fees, in accordance with federal, state, and institutional policies, will be issued within 30 days of receipt of completed withdrawal forms by the Business Office. Students who formally withdraw from the institution on or before the first day of class are entitled to a refund of 100% of the tuition and fees paid for that period of enrollment. (First day of class is defined as "classes begin" date published in the GSW Bulletin.) Students who formally withdraw from the institution after the first day of class but before the 60% point in time during the term are subject to guidelines established by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia. This policy states: The refund amount for students withdrawing from the institution shall be based on a pro rata percentage determined by dividing the number of calendar days in the semester that the student completed by the total calendar days in the semester. The total calendar days in a semester includes weekends, but excludes scheduled breaks of five or more days and days that a student was on an approved leave of absence. The unearned portion shall be refunded up to the point in time that the amount equals 60%. Students that withdraw from the institution when the calculated percentage of completion is greater than 60%, are not entitled to a refund of any portion of institutional charges. A refund of all matriculation fees, and other mandatory fees shall be made in the event of the death of a student at any time during the academic session. (BR Minutes, 1979-80, p.61; 1986-87 pp. 24-25; 1995, p.246)

The University is required to determine how much student financial aid was earned by students who withdraw during the term. If students have "unearned aid" because they

were disbursed more than they earned, it may be necessary for the unearned portion to be returned to the appropriate student financial aid fund. If the students have 'earned aid' that they have not received, they may be eligible to receive those funds.