



OFFICE OF STUDENT FINANCIAL AID

UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

Division of Student Life



Access a World-Class Education

Our mission is to provide educational access and opportunity for all students. With over \$422 million in financial aid to 26,000 students, we foster an economically and ethnically diverse student body.

Access.
It's the Washington Way.

Our Story

Our students tell our story. The student's statement below illustrates how our work touches on so many aspects of students' lives—academic, social, familial, cultural and financial. We balance this with our role in stewarding public funds to achieve the intent of the aid programs and provide a fair way of allocating scarce resources to needy students. It is complex and challenging work.

“ I am a recent graduate of the University of Washington class of 2011. I will be continuing my studies in the College of Education Master's in Education Policy program this fall. As an undergrad I was introduced early to the financial aid process. As a student whose parents were recently divorced I found myself floundering in court documents and paperwork, trying to find a way to fund my education. I live in a single parent home, commute from home and work as many as three jobs at a time to afford my tuition and fees. I greatly benefited from the UW Husky Promise program, scholarships, and grants that funded large portion of my tuition..

Financial aid doesn't just award money for college, it awards opportunities. Opportunities that wouldn't otherwise be possible for a student like me. As a family we had our share of financial burdens with a single mother supporting three children on her salary. I stepped up as the oldest and worked for not just my school fees but for a second income to the household.

One of my greatest academic endeavors was my study abroad program to Cape Town South Africa, a trip that would have never been possible without the benefit of financial aid. In South Africa my world was opened up enormously. Not only did I get to return to the continent where my ancestors are from, but I became a part of an amazing film project with local video journalists. I saw how post-apartheid South Africa mirrored much of America's Civil Rights movement. The experience opened doors to new people, languages, networks and even internships. . Because of that trip, and other experiences afforded by financial aid, I realized how many possibilities are in my future. I now understand that I can truly grow up to be whatever I want, wherever I want.

I hope that financial aid continues to be offered so that more students can take advantage of incredible opportunities. ”

KNM (UW graduate and graduate student)

Our Commitment

Access – We promote participation in higher education and foster a diverse student body by providing and managing financial resources that allow students the access and opportunity to thrive academically and fully experience the University of Washington.

Engagement – We actively work to remove economic barriers that prevent students from fully participating in UW educational opportunities. We work closely with University staff to coordinate resources so students, regardless of economic status, can benefit from study abroad opportunities. We build citizenship and leadership abilities in students by sponsoring community service work opportunities and we coordinate work study jobs on and off-campus that prepare students for future employment.

Diversity – We promote diversity on many levels - from financial aid nights at local high schools, to our work with foster care students who want to go to college, to counseling first generation college students and their parents, to certifying veterans benefits eligibility for a returning veteran, and to our work developing, managing and promoting the Husky Promise program for low and middle income students. Our mission is to make it clear to all students who need financial assistance: **you belong here!**

Care – Our staff is empowered to respond to students in the moment, listen to their unique situation, translate what issues may impact their ability to succeed, offer advice on how to navigate the UW system and offer alternative options for resolving their financial concerns. It's so much more than filling out a financial aid form. Student finances are an intensely personal issue - our staff exhibits compassion and sensitivity to all who need our help.

Student Learning – All of our work is directed towards making a UW education possible for any student. In the process, our students acquire skills and knowledge about financial planning, complex laws and forms, and a greater understanding of the structure and services of a university. Students who work with our office gain confidence, efficacy, and awareness.

Quick Facts

We received over **62,000** applications for financial aid last year.

We administer a financial aid program of over **\$422 million**.

Undergraduate students who borrow leave the UW with **\$19,500** in cumulative loan debt—well under the national average of **\$23,000**.

Our office serves all three UW campuses—undergraduate, graduate and professional students, UWEO students.

About **29,000** students receive aid each year.

We provided in-person counseling to over **30,000** students who visited our office last year.

About **48,000** phone calls and **23,000** emails were answered by our counselors last year. In most cases, this represents additional in-depth counseling time provided to students.

In **one month** we received almost **40,000** unique visits to our web page.

760 student veterans enrolled autumn quarter—**20%** more than last autumn quarter and **70%** more than the year before.

Percent of undergraduates who are Pell eligible: **32%**.

The number of scholarship endowments that we manage increased **30%** over the last 5 years.

16% of all undergraduates receiving aid are under-represented minorities.

“ I wanted to say thank you for all the work you have done to make a difference in my life and future. All of your efforts have opened a path that was once unreachable for me. I eagerly look forward to what the world has to offer me as a college graduate. ”

J.N. (UW graduate)

“ No matter how obvious or difficult my questions have been, you have always come to the rescue—relieving my anxiety and, more importantly, the anxiety of my mother! ”

R. (UW graduate)

Efficiencies

The Office of Student Financial Aid is comprised of 23 FTE. Peer institutions of similar size enrollment typically employ between 40 to 70 FTE.

Since 2007-08, financial aid applications have increased 42% with a 35% increase in the number of Pell Grant recipients. Concurrently, we had a roughly 18% decrease in the number of OSFA FTE staff during this time period of extraordinary growth and demand on our services.

We continue to look for ways to efficiently and effectively communicate with students and their parents in a timely manner. We implemented a new automated Parent Loan system and a new on-line information release form. Both of these services improved our communication with parents and students.

Our Student Veterans Center has 2 FTE to handle the extensive federal requirements surrounding veterans' educational benefits. This is the same size staff we had two years ago, yet our student veteran population has grown 70%.

Challenges & Opportunities

In order to accommodate increased demand for our services during a time of budget constraints, we decreased contact hours to students by closing our office. During May-September 2010, we closed our office over 200 hours and were not available to provide information and guidance to students and families. Student/parent contact time was compressed leading to significant back-logs on phone service (waits of over 40 minutes on hold were not uncommon), delays in responding to student emails and a noticeable increase in frustration and anxiety of those in contact with us. Even given our closure hours, the backlog on documents that needed counselor review and resolution grew to 9 weeks.

With the recent budget cuts we have lost 3 FTE positions and have reduced funds for general operations costs. Further budget reductions will mean further erosion in the direct service time to students. We may need to consider eliminating certain labor-intensive financial aid programs and eliminating our outreach hours to the community.

Insufficient financial aid counseling, lack of open hours and reduction in funding available could lead to decreased access to the UW by low- and middle-income students.



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