

# Office of Student Financial Affairs

Division of Enrollment Management



# ANNUAL REPORT 2012-13

Helping Students Be Successful





Dear Colleagues:

I am pleased to present the 2012-13 Annual Report for the Office for Student Financial Affairs (SFA).

This report provides detailed information about the major activities and events that have occurred in the reporting period July 2012 to July 2013.

The Annual Report also provides general information about the office.

This report is fully electronic, reflecting our efforts to reduce print publications and support sustainability efforts on campus.

Rick Wilder  
Director, Student Financial Affairs

## *Student Financial Affairs is, at its heart, a service organization.*

### **Our Mission**

The mission of the Office for Student Financial Affairs is to enhance recruitment and retention of students through research and support of financial aid programs while assisting parents and students in planning for and meeting higher education expenses.

SFA staff assume a proactive role, reaching out to students to educate them about the benefits of higher education and the availability of financial aid.

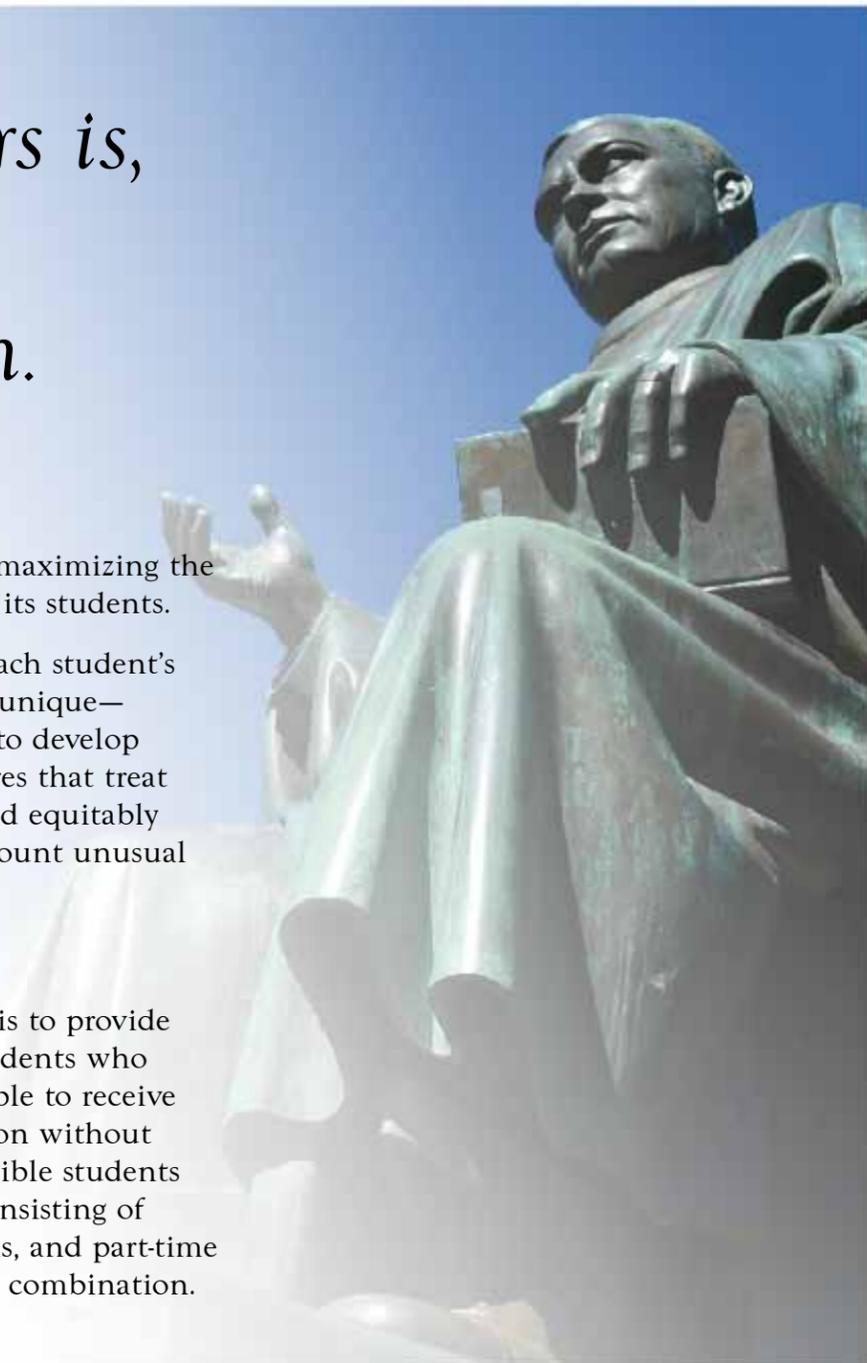
### **Our Core Beliefs**

- SFA believes that financial factors should not deny any student the opportunity to attend UF and successfully pursue their degree objectives.

- SFA is committed to maximizing the resources available to its students.
- SFA recognizes that each student's financial situation is unique—we make every effort to develop policies and procedures that treat each student fairly and equitably while taking into account unusual circumstances.

### **Our Role**

The Primary role of SFA is to provide financial resources to students who would otherwise be unable to receive a post-secondary education without assistance. SFA offers eligible students financial aid packages consisting of scholarships, grants, loans, and part-time employment, alone or in combination.





***Student  
Financial Affairs  
is dedicated  
to helping  
students obtain  
financial  
resources  
so they may  
achieve their  
educational  
goals.***

### **Leading the Way**

Each year, SFA continues to enhance the quality of its financial aid services and delivery capacity. UF is one of the country's leaders in providing financial aid to students, and has been frequently selected by the federal government to participate in experimental programs.

### **Overview**

During the 2012-13 fiscal year, SFA delivered about \$562 million in student aid from federal, state, institutional, and private sources to nearly 46,000 students.

### **What is Financial Aid?**

Financial aid is defined as money provided to students and their families as either "gift aid" or "self-help" to assist in paying college costs. "Gift aid," as the name implies, is free money such as scholarships and grants, which students do not have to repay. "Self-help" programs include loans and employment and are so named because students must repay loans and work for money awarded through employment programs. Awards to students consist of scholarships, grants, loans, and employment—singly or in combination.

<sup>1</sup> Four two-person advising teams handle inquiries from the majority of the student body

<sup>2</sup> Outreach/Training hosted more than 36 financial literacy workshops in 2012-13

### **Important Factors**

SFA awards aid to students according to financial need, defined as the difference between a student's current educational costs and what the student and the student's family can afford to pay toward these costs. UF uses a federally mandated need analysis formula provided by Congress to evaluate a student's financial need, based on information on the student's financial aid applications. Students and parents have the primary responsibility for paying students' expenses. When the funds available from family, job income, savings, and other resources are insufficient to cover all of a student's educational expenses, SFA makes every effort to meet the student's remaining financial need.

### **Beyond the Money**

SFA is, at its heart, a service organization. Besides disbursing financial aid monies, SFA strives also to assist and educate students—giving them the information, resources, and understanding necessary to become fiscally responsible and successful.

Towards this end, SFA offers financial aid advising services<sup>1</sup> throughout the year, comprehensive financial aid publications, and state-of-the-art technical support including an interactive website and student aid file information through UF's ISIS (Integrated Student Information System) website.

### **Facilities**

SFA's Student Resource Center in our main lobby in S-107 Criser is available Monday through Friday to assist students with financial aid status checks, online aid application, and scholarship searches. Counseling and outreach services include financial aid advising, orientation workshops<sup>2</sup>, budget and debt management counseling, and financial planning. SFA also provides access to alternative resources to help students who do not qualify for financial aid, or who need more assistance than SFA can provide.



Total Aid Disbursed  
**\$561,814,847**

Percentage of Enrolled Students Who Received Aid

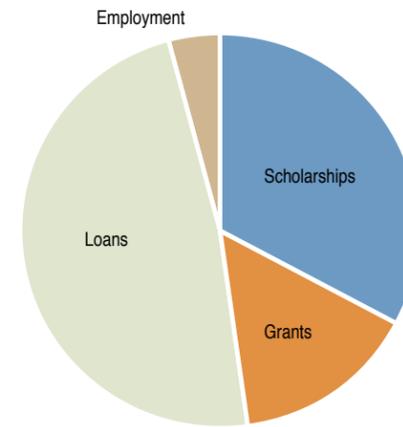
**82%**



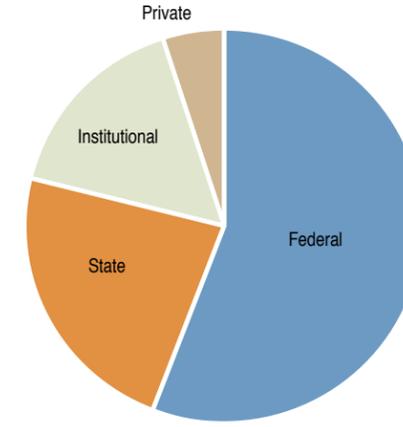
Total Aid Recipients  
**45,995**

Nearly  
**2/3**

of UF graduates leave the university with no student loan debt.



Breakdown by  
**Type of Funds**



Breakdown by  
**Source of Funds**

**#1**

on Washington Monthly magazine's list of national universities that offer the best bang for the buck  
2013

**#14**

in U.S. News & World Report "Top Public Universities"  
August 2013

## UF Student Financial Affairs at a Glance FY 2012-13

Job recruiters ranked UF

**9th**

on the list of places where corporations prefer to recruit new employees  
2010



In-State Freshman Receiving Bright Futures

**93%**

**#2** on SmartMoney magazine's list of universities whose graduates get the highest salary return for their tuition dollars  
2012

Among AAU public universities, UF ranked

**first**

in master's degrees and second in bachelor's degrees awarded to Hispanic students in 2013



**#15**

on the Forbes list of "Best Public Universities"  
2013



Average Undergraduate  
Cost of Attendance  
**\$19,530**

Federal Direct Stafford Loan 2011 Cohort  
**Default Rate**  
**3.1%**  
National Average is 10%



*SFA staff assume a proactive role, reaching out to students to educate them about the benefits of higher education and the availability of financial aid.*

## SFA Departmental Achievements

- Members of SFA's Disbursement and Systems departments were nominated for a 2014 Davis Productivity Award for developing and implementing custodial scholarship deposit processes to improve efficiency, service and data integrity. These new processes not only improved service to our students but also resulted in over \$42,000 in cost savings to SFA.
- The statewide transient process was initiated Spring 2013.
- Information/Publications continued work on its video podcast series, creating three new video tutorials on a variety of subjects.
- Nearly two-thirds of UF graduates leave the university with no student loan debt. For the remaining third, their average indebtedness<sup>1</sup> is roughly \$20,700, compared with the national average of more than \$29,000.
- Student Employment is responsible for reviewing and approving student employee hires and job changes. During the 2012-13 academic year, the Student Employment Office made it a requirement for student hires, with the exception of foreign national hires, to complete required new hire documents through GatorStart,

the university's new online system designed for employee onboarding. This new system was designed for employees to be hired faster, to reduce late hires, improve compliance, decrease the workload of the hiring managers, and leverage technology to create a state of the art process.

- The Innovation Academy (IA) enrollment model was launched effective with the spring semester of the 2012-2013 academic year. The IA program operates on a spring-summer calendar with IA students taking on-campus courses during the spring and summer semesters. In order to accommodate this new enrollment model, SFA had to significantly modify many of its automated processes including automated packaging, costs of attendance and award revision programs to ensure that proper adjustments to IA student awards are made when changes resulting in over-awards occur and corrections are needed.
- During the 2012-13 academic year, Student Financial Affairs (SFA) calculated and disbursed the first summer Bright Futures awards for students enrolled in UF's Innovation Academy (IA). To make this possible,

SFA had to work closely with the Office for Student Financial Assistance in Tallahassee. Each office had to rethink established practices and modify existing programming that were not designed to handle such a unique group. SFA managed to meet state-mandated fiscal deadlines and disburse scholarships in a timely manner during a compressed academic semester. As a result, SFA disbursed \$249,025 in summer Bright Futures scholarships to 239 IA students without any delays or complications.

- Loans and Disbursements implemented changes to processing of mid-year and summer transfer students, resulting in 1351% and 790% improvements in efficiency, respectively.
- Donna Kolb played a significant role in providing leadership with developing the statewide financial aid processes associated with the Florida Virtual School. As a result of her intimate understanding of the process, she was asked to speak at the Annual Conference for the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO).
- Tina Lamb received the 2013 Woman of Distinction Award from the University of Florida Association for Academic Women

<sup>1</sup> Source: Institute for College Access and Success (press release dated 12/4/13)



## SFA By The Numbers

### Summary

Total Aid Disbursed	\$561,814,847
Total Aid Recipients (unduplicated) <sup>1</sup>	45,995
Percentage of Enrolled Students Who Received Aid	82%
Average Undergrad Cost of Attendance (on-campus)	\$19,530
Average Undergrad Cost of Attendance (off-campus)	\$19,530
Average Undergrad Indebtedness (students graduating 12-13)	\$20,708
Federal Direct Stafford Loan 2011 2-year official Cohort Default Rate	3.1%

### Breakdown by Type of Funds

Scholarships (including waivers)	\$187,441,794 (33%)
Grants	\$84,719,345 (15%)
Loans	\$269,290,871 (48%)
Employment	\$20,362,837 (4%)

### Breakdown by Source of Funds

Federal	\$312,575,961 (56%)
State	\$127,650,698 (23%)
Institutional	\$93,488,705 (16%)
Private	\$28,099,483 (5%)

<sup>1</sup> Each student is counted only once in the total, regardless of how many awards the student receives

## SFA By The Numbers

### Florida Bright Futures

Total Bright Futures Students	25,213
Total Amount Disbursed	\$58,005,463
Percent In-State Freshman Receiving Bright Futures	93%
Percent In-State Undergraduates Receiving Bright Futures	72.04%
Academic Scholars	\$39,602,269
Merit Scholars	\$18,148,273
Gold Seal Vocational	\$94,875
Top Scholars	\$160,046

### Machen Florida Opportunity Scholars

Number of Recipients	1,315
Total Dollars Paid	\$12,136,788
Average Family Income	\$18,292
Average Award	\$9,229





## SFA By The Numbers

### Fiscal Review

- SFA functioned with a \$3,580,055 operating budget in 2012-13
- 96% went to Salary and OPS<sup>1</sup>, 4% to Operating Expenses
- State E&G funds provided 79% of the total budget
- Remaining 21% came from administrative allowance and financial aid fees
- Staffing was at 67.0 FTE<sup>2</sup> as of July, 2013, consistent with FTE as of July 2012
- Operating expenses and OPS expenditures are variable year to year, depending on departmental needs and funds available

<sup>1</sup>Other Personnel Services

<sup>2</sup>Full-time employment

## SFA Section Snapshots

### Advising

- Four 2-person adviser teams handle inquiries from the majority of the student body
- Five satellite offices, primarily serving students enrolled in professional programs
- Combined Fall/Spring walk-in total of 9,473 students during 12-13 Rush period

SFA's Financial Aid Advising Section is the initial point of contact for all students who apply for aid or who need assistance with the financial aid application process.

All UF students and aid applicants are assigned to two-member financial aid advising teams according to the last two digits of students' UFID. These teams are responsible for assisting students with all aspects of the financial aid process. They provide service to students via several methods: (1) on a walk-in basis, (2) by office appointments, (3) by telephone, or (4) by written communication.

SFA also maintains satellite offices to serve students in: the College of Business Administration's graduate programs; the College of Dentistry; the College of Law; the

College of Medicine; the Colleges of Health and Health Professions, Nursing, Pharmacy, and Veterinary Medicine.

In addition, the financial aid advising area is responsible for the Summer AIM program, the revision petition committee review process, and the coordination of aid for UF student athletes.





## Grants

Grants are gift aid (no repayment required) awarded to students who show financial need.

**28,096 awards totaling \$84,719,345 to 16,045 recipients**

Federal Pell Grant	\$45,739,492
Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG) Grant	\$2,819,691
Florida Student Assistance Grant (FSAG)	\$6,309,937
Graduate Grants	\$4,714,113
TEACH Grant	\$32,820
I. Douglas Turner Grant	\$15,226,065
Athletic Grants	\$9,000,411
Metta Heathcote Grant	\$98,601
Other Grants	\$787,215

## Scholarships

Scholarships are gift aid (no repayment required) based on academic achievement, but financial need may also be considered.

**47,320 awards totalling \$167,403,528 to 36,113 recipients**

Florida Academic Scholars	\$39,602,269
Florida Merit Scholars	\$18,148,273
Florida Vocational Gold Seal	\$94,875
Florida Top Scholars	\$160,046
Florida Opportunity Scholars	\$12,136,799
Out-of-State Matriculation Waivers	\$16,668,895
In-State Matriculation Waivers	\$46,448,814
UF College Awarded	\$27,501,766
National Merit	\$526,847
National Merit Stipend	\$434,650
Presidential Academic	\$1,011,681
Preidential Achievement	\$87,000
University Academic	\$32,000
Miscellaneous Other State	\$227,432
General & Special	\$980,693
Dental/Disadvantage	\$645,000
Medical/Disadvantage	\$0
Brecht	\$102,000
Miscellaneous	\$19,000
Lombardi	\$182,951
Alliance Partner	\$282,811
UF Gold	\$1,085,000
UF Platinum	\$1,024,737





## Loans

Loans are considered self-help aid, as loan funds must be repaid.

**36,995 awards totalling \$269,290,871 to 19,170 Recipients**

UF continues to participate in the Federal Direct Loan Program. The U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) acts as both lender and guarantor for Direct Loans, so only two agencies are involved: the federal government and the university. The university originates loans and disburses students' loan funds when they have been approved. Repayments are made to a USDOE Federal Direct Loan Servicer.

The Loan Certification Department administers the Direct Loan programs, including Federal Direct Subsidized Stafford Loans, Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loans, Federal Direct PLUS Loans, and certifies alternative educational (private) loans.

Subsidized Stafford	\$40,443,799
Unsubsidized Stafford	\$176,225,566
Perkins	\$4,043,285
PLUS	\$10,078,096
Grad PLUS	\$29,749,520
Short-Term	\$536,535
UF College Awarded	\$833,291
Private	\$6,783,728
Dentistry	\$187,804
Medical	\$126,065
Student Aid for Education	\$216,514
Arthur I. Wallace	\$21,168
Veterinary Medicine	\$43,000
UF Long Term	\$2,500

## Disbursements

**\$561,814,847 disbursed to 45,995 students**

**\$220,712,650 in Federal Direct Loans disbursed**

Disbursements monitors and controls the automated disbursement system and works with the University Bursar (UB) to ensure that the batch disbursement programs run correctly and efficiently.

Disbursements reviews student eligibility for loans, scholarships, and campus-based aid before disbursing these funds.

Disbursements receives, processes, and deposits paper checks from scholarship donors and private lenders. During the 2012-13 fiscal year, the area processed

6,508 individual checks, totalling \$13,877,545 in custodial scholarships.

Disbursements manages monthly and academic-year fund reconciliation between UF and the federal government for all Federal Direct Loan funds. This involves transmitting and reconciling all disbursement data and repayment data (due to voluntary or obligatory repayment) and internally adjusting student files when repayment occurs.

## Awarding/Pell Processing

Awarding and Pell Processing staff process all financial aid award revisions and monitor Pell Grant delivery. Requests for revisions to students' awards mostly come from financial aid advising staff when:

- students' enrollment, residency, or housing statuses change
- students receive additional outside funds
- students request revisions to awards.

Awarding staff are also responsible for monitoring and adjusting awards when students' need has been 'overmet' (outside resources such as scholarships, fellowships, etc. cause a student to be awarded more than they need). Awarding also monitors and documents students' repayments of aid funds when required.

In addition to these responsibilities, Awarding has oversight of the Pell Grant program, including recalculations and reconciliation of grant funds.



## State of Florida Programs

**UF leads the state in Florida Bright Futures recipients (25,213)**

**UF leads the state in Florida Top Scholars recipients (135)**

The Florida Department of Education offers a variety of student assistance programs that are administered by the State of Florida Bureau of Student Financial Assistance in Tallahassee,

Florida. SFA's State Programs Section is the UF liaison with the Bureau of Student Financial Assistance and is the campus administrator for most state-funded student scholarships and grants.

Major state of Florida programs administered through this section include:

- Florida Academic Scholarship\*
- Florida Medallion Scholarship\*
- Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholarship\*
- Top Scholars Award\*
- Scholarship for Children/Spouses of Deceased or Disabled Veterans and Service members
- Florida Student Assistance Grant
- José Martí Scholarship Challenge Grant
- Rosewood Family Scholarship Program
- Florida Work Experience Program

\* Part of the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program

## Student Employment

Student Employment coordinates the following programs: Federal Work Study (FWS), including the Federal Community Service (FCS) component; and Student Other Personnel Services (OPS). Employment is considered self-help aid.

**\$20,362,837 awarded to 9,876 students**

**Federal Work Study (FWS)** is funded 75% by the federal government and 25% by the institution. Awards are based on financial need.

854 awards totaling \$2,033,669

**Federal Community Service (FCS)** was implemented in 1994, allowing students to work with various community agencies dedicated to improving community living.

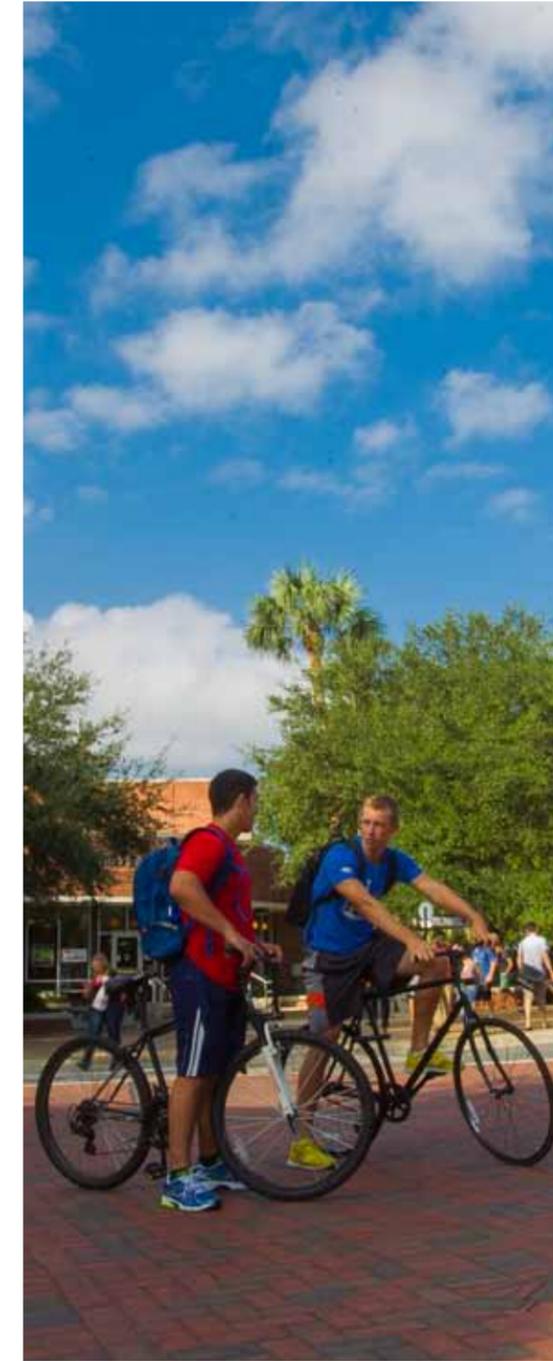
**Other Personnel Services (OPS)**<sup>1</sup> is a state-funded campus work program which is not based on financial need.

8,973 awards totaling \$18,244,141

**Florida Work Experience Program (FWEP)** is a state-funded, need-based student work program which is awarded by SFA.

49 awards totaling \$85,027

<sup>1</sup> Now known as STAS



## Verification

**3,959 student files selected for verification**

**3,477 files completed (88%)**

**2,624 discrepant files found**

**1,983 files completed (76%)**

Verification is a review process established to confirm the accuracy of information reported on financial aid documents. Because the University of Florida participates in the Federal Quality Assurance Program<sup>1</sup>, it designs its own verification criteria to best target error-prone items among its unique applicant population. This is done in lieu of verifying students selected by the federal processor.

<sup>1</sup> See page 24

During 2012-13 items selected for verification were:

- Parents' and students' adjusted gross income
- Amount of federal income tax paid
- Nontaxable income reflected on tax returns and W-2 forms
- Household size and number of persons in college
- Excluded Income
- SNAP (food stamp) benefits

## Systems & Programming

**Responsible for maintaining the records of more than 85,000 financial aid applicants**

Systems and Programming (S & P) develops and maintains the computer software systems needed for automated delivery of student financial aid at UF. The SFA computer system is a fully functioning, automated system comprising numerous files and/or modules, involving both batch and online processing.

S & P designs and maintains the online, web-based display system and coordinates electronic data exchange with federal, state, and local agencies to gather all information required to process students' financial aid.

Additional responsibilities include:

- Scheduled batch production & maintenance of 1,500 programs
- The online, real-time, updatable interface with the University Bursar (UB) for student award and disbursement data
- Nightly production interfaces with UF's Registrar's Office, UB, and student payroll files

- The daily, two-way, electronic transmission of student records to and from the federal and state processors
- All email communications with students
- Daily and ongoing maintenance of the network
- Production and maintenance of federal reports as needed
- Relationships with outside departments & agencies including UFIT-Enterprise Systems, Registrar/Admissions, UF Computing & Network Services (CNS), among others.





### Documents/Mailroom

- Mailed more than 5,420 financial aid application packets**
- Processed approximately 11,526 pieces of incoming mail**
- Processed approximately 21,662 pieces of outgoing mail**
- Bar coded 16,465 documents**

The Document Editing Section is where the application processing cycle begins. The staff of this section receive, sort, date-stamp, and distributed an estimated 11,526 pieces of incoming mail during 2012-13, not including documents received directly by advisers, by drop boxes, or faxed documentation.

This area handles the majority of mailouts for the office, including around 5,420 financial aid application packets to over 550 Florida high schools and community colleges at the beginning of every application year.

This area is supported by two senior clerks from the Records area.

### Records/Scanning

**Received & Scanned 201,373 documents**

SFA's Records/Optical Scanning Section maintains an accurate, up-to-date system of records consisting of active and inactive files stored in three different file systems.

This section optically scans, edits, and indexes all records.<sup>1</sup> In 2012-13, this section scanned:

- Information Releases: 3,049
- Verification Checklists: 52,980

- Electronic data changes from the FAFSA: 4,384
- Pell Calculations: 22,853
- Awards and award revisions: 65,566
- Scholarship Documents: 17,651

The total number of documents received and scanned for the 2012-13 school year was 201,373, with the majority received between June and October.

<sup>1</sup> Staff purge the file system once a year.

### Academic Progress

- 3,416 Files Met Conditions for Warning Status**
- 3,848 Files Met Conditions for Termination Status**
- 828 AP Petitions Submitted**
- 716 AP Petitions Approved (86%)**

To comply with federal regulations, UF must ensure that all federal aid recipients maintain satisfactory academic progress (AP). This policy requires that students make progress toward their degree by maintaining a satisfactory qualitative standard (GPA) and a quantitative standard (such as credit hours earned and percent of hours earned/hours attempted). Students who fail to meet the specified standards are placed in warning status or are terminated from financial aid eligibility.

Three times a year, a financial aid academic progress program generates email communications to students not meeting required standards. A petition procedure is available for students who believe their failure to maintain satisfactory progress is due to extenuating circumstances. The academic progress coordinator reviews petitions and oversees notifying students as to their AP status. SFA advisers counsel students on the academic progress policy<sup>1</sup> and petition process.



## Quality Assurance (QA)

There was no QA sample during the 2012-13 academic year.

In July 1989, SFA was selected to participate in the Department of Education's Institutional Quality Control Pilot Project, which began in 1985. This project, now called the Federal Quality Assurance Program, is a management experiment to test the feasibility of giving institutions more discretion in designing policies and procedures that will result in quality administration of Title IV student financial aid. This was one of the first initiatives on the part of the federal government to involve institutions in developing internal controls, rather than mandating them from the federal level.

As a participating institution, UF is exempt from certain verification requirements as long as it remains actively involved in conducting quality assurance activities. The university develops and implements its own verification program, customizing it to reflect its own unique institutional setting and student population.

The Department of Education initiated a redesign of Quality Assurance (QA) practices in the 2000-2001 academic year.

Beginning with 2004-05, a QA sample of approximately 350 students has been drawn almost every other year.

During 2012-13, QA schools did not do a random sample. Instead, schools uploaded and analyzed 1,500 records that the school had verified using their institutional criteria. An assessment of the results was used to determine if any modifications should be made to 2013-14 verification practices.

Self assessments of management practices were also performed.

## Information/Publication Services

The Information/Publications (IP) Services area is responsible for SFA's consumer information program, including the SFA website and the Gator Aid publications.

**SFA website averaged over 60,000 hits per month in 2012-13**

Information/Publication Services strives to disseminate high quality, cost-effective consumer information related to financial aid, using a variety of media, including:

- SFA website
- The Scholarship Search Engine sub-site <sup>1</sup>
- Gator Aid Application Guide (published annually) <sup>2</sup>
- Gator Aid Handbook (published annually) <sup>3</sup>
- SFA News (distributed electronically each semester) <sup>4</sup>
- Student application and award materials (print/electronic)
- Various brochures (print/electronic)
- Timely, effective news releases for various news media, including Facebook and Twitter

Information/Publication Services also produces internal materials for SFA staff, including assisting with the Fact Book, the Staff Info Chart, and more.

A particular emphasis for Information/Publications during the 2012-13 fiscal year was the development of a series of financial aid tutorial videos, available both on SFA's YouTube page and as a video podcast.

<sup>1</sup> A comprehensive listing of college-awarded aid at UF

<sup>2</sup> 12 pages, 20,000 copies. Gator Aid Guides are mailed to the guidance office of every high school in Florida.

<sup>3</sup> 100 pages, 4,000 copies printed. The Handbook is SFA's in-depth publication.

<sup>4</sup> Emailed to every student receiving financial aid. More than 86,000 students are invited to read the newsletter.





## Outreach

**3,088 Potential Students Reached in Fall of 2012**

**79 Students Received Personalized FAFSA Assistance in their Residence Hall**

UF's Outreach Coordinator continues to work in conjunction with UF's Admissions Office to actively recruit students from diverse backgrounds to attend UF. A UF team travels throughout the southeast focusing its efforts on under served areas of these states.

The primary goal of the SFA outreach adviser is to reach out to incoming freshmen and transfer students through lectures, conferences, workshops, and other recruitment functions.

SFA continues to participate in Preview, UF's summer freshman orientation program. Outreach and Training staff thoroughly brief students about financial aid before they enter UF, while providing the opportunity for financial aid applicants to check on the status of their awards and conduct business with the financial aid office.

## Training

**38 Financial Literacy Workshops**

**12 Full Staff Trainings**

Because of the large number of financial aid programs administered by SFA, the complexity of the financial aid process, and the need for compliance with federal and state regulations, ongoing staff training is critical to SFA's operation.

Training staff coordinate weekly 30-minute training sessions on timely subject matters, generally dealing with technical training,

**25 Professional Staff Trainings**

**4 Support Staff Trainings**

updates on specific program areas, and personal enrichment and growth.

Training staff also provide standardized, quality training for all new employees through a comprehensive, one-week orientation program.

## SFA Staff









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*The Division of Enrollment Management*