

## Big Changes for Bright Futures Recipients

### Award Amounts Change, New FAFSA Requirement

Since its inception in 1997, the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program has experienced more than a few noteworthy changes enacted by the State of Florida Legislature. Recent legislative sessions have brought some of the most significant modifications to the program, all of which will affect both current and future Bright Futures scholars.

#### Award Amounts

Award Amounts for the 2011-2012 academic year have been reduced by roughly 20 percent from the 2010-2011 academic year levels of funding. Current award amounts are now:

- \$101 per credit hour for Florida Academic Scholars
- \$76 per credit hour for Florida Medallion & Gold Seal Vocational Scholars
- \$43 per credit hour for Florida Top Scholars

#### FAFSA Requirement

As the OSFA Bright Futures webpage says, "No FAFSA = No \$."

Bright Futures recipients must now submit a complete, error-free Free Application for Federal Student Aid in order to receive both initial and renewal Bright Futures eligibility. The FAFSA must be submitted prior to disbursement.

The FAFSA can be filed online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).

#### Restoration

Bright Futures considers "restoration" as any of the following three circumstances:

1. The use of summer term grades and/or hours to meet the scholarship renewal requirements in the summer immediately following the loss of an award due to insufficient grades and/or hours (cohort dependent)
2. A scholarship that has been lost due to insufficient GPA, and after attending at least one academic year without funding and meeting the scholarship GPA requirement, the student submits an

application for Restoration on the OSFA website

3. An Academic recipient who earns a 2.75 – 2.99 GPA at the end of the academic year, renews at the Medallion level, then restores at the Academic level once the 3.0 Academic GPA requirement is met

**Bright Futures Eligible 2008-2009 high school graduates and earlier** may use summer term grades and hours for a ONE TIME ONLY restoration of award eligibility unless a previous restoration has been used.

**Bright Futures Eligible 2009-2010 high school graduates and thereafter** may only restore their award if it is lost due to an insufficient GPA, during the first year of funding.

#### Graduate Funding Eligibility

Graduate students may be eligible to receive their remaining Bright Futures hours during their first term of graduate school, up to 15 hours, at the undergraduate rate. To be eligible, students must earn their bachelor's degree in either:

- 7 semesters of funding (summers are not included) or fewer, OR
- 105 funded hours or fewer.

Students must also still have time remaining on their BFFAS or BFFMS program (7 years for 2009-2010 high school graduates and earlier, and 5 years for 2010-2011 high school graduates and thereafter), and graduate with their bachelor's degree in December 2010 or later.

More: [www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org](http://www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org)

#### Bright Futures Resource Page

To clarify some of the most confusing aspects of the Bright Futures Program, SFA has created a new student resource webpage. The Bright Futures Resources Page can be found at [www.sfa.ufl.edu/programs/bright-futures](http://www.sfa.ufl.edu/programs/bright-futures) and features a glossary of terms related to the scholarship, as well as audio and video presentations.

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UF Federal School  
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001535

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# New Academic Progress Policy

*In Effect Beginning Fall 2011-12*

Due to recent changes in federal regulations, the Student Financial Affairs Satisfactory Academic Progress (AP) Policy has been modified for the 2011-12 academic year. The purpose of the AP policy is to create a standard by which SFA measures and monitors a student's satisfactory progress towards the completion of his/her degree.

The new AP Policy will go into effect for the 2011-12 academic year.

The most important changes to the policy are summarized below.

**New Warning Status:** Students who do not meet the standards outlined in the AP policy will be placed on financial aid WARNING for one term. They remain eligible to receive financial aid for that term of enrollment. However, students who do not meet the AP standards during their next term of attendance will **not** be eligible for financial aid.

**New Petition Process:** If students are no longer eligible for aid, they may petition for the reinstatement of their financial aid eligibility. However, new petition guidelines require more extensive documentation. In addition, students will be monitored more closely. In order for a petition to be successful, it will have to comply with more restrictive conditions than in previous years.

**Plan of Work:** As part of the AP petition, students, in conjunction with their academic advisor, will provide a plan of work, a document which will provide 1) the necessary steps for the student to meet the AP standards and 2) the length of time necessary for this to occur. Providing this information will result in fewer students submitting repeat petitions each semester.

**New Probation Status:** Students who have an approved AP petition on file will be placed on financial aid probation status for the length of time as determined by the plan of work submitted by the academic advisor. Students will be expected to follow the plan of work as outlined on the petition. Students are required

to notify SFA if changes/adjustments are made to the plan of work.

Students can be placed on financial aid probation status on a case-by-case basis, contingent on the information provided by the academic advisor. Students' ability to remain on this status is contingent upon their following the plan of work and/or working with their advisor to modify the plan of work if necessary.

**Undergraduate Cumulative Grade Point Average:** Undergraduate students must maintain a cumulative 2.0 grade point average.

**Accepted Transfer Credits:** Accepted transfer credits will be included in the 75 percent completion rate and the maximum timeframe for degree completion.

**Professional Students in the Colleges of Medicine, Dentistry, & Veterinary Medicine:** Students who do not advance to the next class level but are still eligible for enrollment will be on financial aid warning status for the following term of enrollment. Students who have not advanced to the next class level by the end of the warning status will no longer be eligible for financial aid.

**Transfer Credits:** Transfer credits used toward program requirements will now count when calculating completion rate as well as the maximum timeframe for degree completion.

**Returning to Good Standing:** Students who meet the cumulative minimums will return to good standing and be able to continue receiving financial aid.

## Why Change AP Policy?

The changes to UF's AP policy are mandated by federal regulations. And for good reason. The last comprehensive examination of AP regulations by the federal government was in 1983. Among U.S. institutions, the federal government found a great deal of inconsistency in terms of terminology and methodology, and this update to federal academic progress guidelines is an effort to remedy that

problem.

## What Hasn't Changed

While there are a good many changes to AP policy, some policies are remaining the same. Graduate students will still be expected to maintain a cumulative as determined by their program of study. Students will still be expected to have a successful completion rate of 75 percent at each evaluation period, and they will continue to have a maximum timeframe of 150 percent to complete a program.

The new policy will be enforced at the end of Fall 2011 after grades for the term have posted.

Current UF students should become familiar with their AP status. Their AP status is available on ISIS under Financial Aid. Students should also review the AP policy to assess how these changes will impact their future aid eligibility.

The 2011-12 AP policy is available on the SFA website at <http://www.sfa.ufl.edu/additional/academic-progress>.





# Financial Aid in the News

## Student Loans Experience Crazy Growth

*(The Atlantic, Retrieved August 19, 2011)*

In a recent article appearing in the Atlantic Monthly, words like “staggering,” “crisis,” and “unsustainable” were used to describe student loan growth in the last decade. Why the hyperbole?

Because since 1999, cumulative growth of student loans has reached upwards of 500 percent. In the first quarter of 1999, \$90 billion in student loans were outstanding, as compared to the second quarter of 2011, when there were approximately \$550 billion of student loans outstanding. And this during a decade which included a massive housing bubble, a global financial meltdown, and a comparatively smaller rise in household (as opposed to student) debt.

Two possible reasons for the explosion of student debt are raised in the article—easier access to debt brought on by government backing, and sharply rising tuition costs.

High levels of student debt worry economists because young people saddled with heavy debt will have less money to spend and invest in the future, causing the U.S. to recover more slowly from the current recession.

## G.I. Bill Gets Another Update

*(GovernmentExecutive.com, Retrieved August 19, 2011)*

Another round of updates to the Post-Sept. 11 G.I. Bill is due to roll out on October 1 of this year. Termed a “significant expansion” by Keith Wilson, director of the Department of Veterans Affairs’ (VA) education service, the new provisions include:

- Eligibility for educational programs that don’t lead to a college degree
- A housing allowance for students not on active duty and who are enrolled in distance learning
- A stipend for books and supplies for active-duty students

Accompanying the increase in benefits is a budget increase—the VA requested \$11.1 billion for the 2012 fiscal year, \$2 billion more than the previous year.

Of course, it remains to be seen what will become of the VA’s budget, and the money for the G.I. Bill specifically, as Congress moves to trim the federal budget according to the 2011 Budget Control Act.

## Direct Deposit

### [New Policy Requires Students to Sign Up for Direct Deposit](#)

While students have long had the option of having their financial aid refunds deposited directly into their bank accounts electronically, University Financial Services (UFS) has announced that signing up for direct deposit will now be required for all students, beginning fall of 2011-12.

In support of moving to a fully electronic process for the refunding of financial aid funds, UFS cites the inordinate costs associated with producing, mailing, and tracking undelivered checks.

Discontinuing the use of paper checks reduces the amount of paper consumed by UFS, thereby supporting the overall goals of the University of Florida as it strives to develop more sustainable practices.

This change of policy is a positive one, as direct deposit is the quickest and safest way to receive financial aid refunds.

Direct deposit eliminates waiting for a check to arrive in the mail, as well as the need to visit the bank to deposit the check.

Students must give authorization to have their refunds electronically credited to their U.S. bank or other financial institution checking account. To authorize Direct Deposit:

Go to <http://my.ufl.edu>. Click the “Access myUFL” button.

Enter your GatorLink username and password on the GatorLink login page. When you are returned to the myUFL website, click on “Main Menu,” choose “My Campus Finances,” then “Student Direct Deposit.”

For more detailed information about direct deposit, visit:

<http://www.sfa.ufl.edu/receiving/disbursements> or

<http://fa.ufl.edu/ufs/disbursements/direct-deposit-policy.asp>.

Students may also call UFS at (352) 392-0737 or email [ufshelp@admin.ufl.edu](mailto:ufshelp@admin.ufl.edu).

## WAYS TO PAY

Students can pay UF fees using the following methods:

**Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT)**  
Use “Make A Payment” within myUFL. No service charge.

**Online credit card payments**  
Use “Make a Payment” within myUFL. There is a 2.6 percent service charge. Visa is not accepted.

**GatorParent Payment Access**  
Add parents to your account using myUFL, “My Campus Finances.” There is a 2.6 percent service charge.

**Personal check, cashier’s check, or money order (secure drop box or USPS)** There is no service charge for this payment method.

Remember, UFS will pay oldest debts first.

## ***New on SFA’s Website: Florida Bright Futures Resource Page***

Definitions of Key Terms | Video Tutorials | Audio Presentations

[www.sfa.ufl.edu/programs/bright-futures](http://www.sfa.ufl.edu/programs/bright-futures)

Office for Student Financial Affairs  
S-107 Criser Hall, P. O. Box 114025  
Gainesville, FL 32611-4025  
(352) 392-1275  
[www.sfa.ufl.edu](http://www.sfa.ufl.edu)

NEWS *Financial Aid for Gators* is produced once a semester by the Information/Publication Services section of the Office for Student Financial Affairs, to inform students about financial aid programs and services that help UF students meet educational costs.

Interim Director: Rick Wilder  
Editor: Harry Monkhorst

NEWS *Financial Aid for Gators* is available in other formats for students with documented, print-related disabilities. Students who are speech- or hearing-impaired can contact the Florida Relay Service.

Dial 711 or 1-800-955-8771 (TTY)

Online at <http://www.ftri.org/FloridaRelay>.

The University of Florida is committed to equal treatment of students without regard to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations, or veteran status.

## Farewell, ACG & SMART GRANT

### Feds Choose Not to Reauthorize Programs

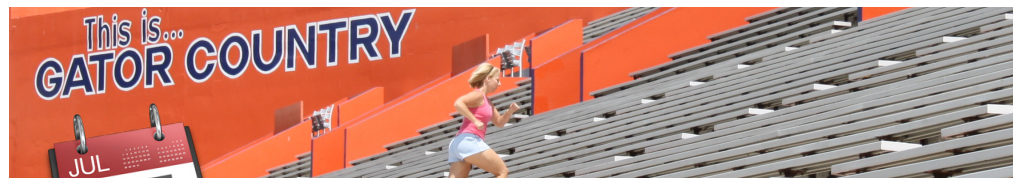
Two federally-funded grant programs will end with the Summer 2010-11 term—the Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG) and the National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent (SMART) Grant. In both cases, Congress chose not to reauthorize the programs.

The ACG was made available for the first time in the 2006-07 academic year, and was awarded to undergraduates who had completed a rigorous high school program. Awards ranged from \$750 to \$1,300 each academic year. During the 2009-10 academic year, students at UF received upwards of \$2.2 million from the program.

The SMART Grant also began to be awarded during the 2006-07 academic year to students in qualifying majors. Students could receive up to \$4,000 per academic year. Students at UF received more than \$6 million in SMART Grant funds during the 2009-10 academic year.

These programs together contributed funding to more than 4,200 students during the 2009-10 academic year.

Summer 2011 will be the last term that either ACG or SMART funds can be awarded.



### SFA CALENDAR

#### AUGUST 22

Classes Begin

#### AUGUST 22-26

Drop/Add

#### SEPTEMBER 2

Fee Payment Deadline (3:30 UFS)

#### SEPTEMBER 5

Labor Day Holiday

#### NOVEMBER 4-5

Homecoming

#### NOVEMBER 11

Veteran's Day Holiday

#### NOVEMBER 24-26

Thanksgiving Holiday

#### DECEMBER 7

Classes End

### TOLL-FREE Federal Student Aid Number

1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243)

### Florida Bright Futures

For information about application, renewal requirements, reinstatements, restorations, appeals, summer awards, and other topics, go to the

#### Florida Department of Education

Website,

<http://www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org>

Send questions by email:

[osta@fldoe.org](mailto:osta@fldoe.org)

Send mail to:

Florida Department of Education

Turlington Building, Suite 1514

325 West Gaines Street

Tallahassee, FL 32399

Toll-Free Hotline: 1-888-827-2004

### U.S. Department of Education

Student Aid Information Center  
P. O. Box 84

Washington DC 20044-0084

1-800-433-3243 / 1-800-730-8913 (TTY)

[www.ed.gov/finaid/landing.jhtml?src=rt](http://www.ed.gov/finaid/landing.jhtml?src=rt)

Federal Direct Loan Servicing Online

1-800-848-0979; 1-800-848-0983 (TTY)

[www.dlsonline.com/borrower/BorrowerWelcomePage.jsp](http://www.dlsonline.com/borrower/BorrowerWelcomePage.jsp)

Federal Direct Loan Consolidation

1-800-557-7392; 1-800-557-7395 (TTY)

<http://loanconsolidation.ed.gov>

Federal Direct Loan Information

<http://www.studentloans.gov>

- View loan documents
- Entrance Counseling
- Sign MPN
- Complete PLUS Request Process

### Satellite Aid Offices

Main Office: Student Financial Affairs • S-107 Criser Hall • P. O. Box 114025 • Gainesville, FL 32611-4025 • (352) 392-1275

College of Dentistry  
Tom Kolb  
Dental Tower, D3-#19E  
Health Sciences Center  
(352) 273-5999

College of Law  
Carol Huber  
164 Holland Hall  
(352) 273-0620

College of Medicine  
Eileen Parris  
M-128 Health Sciences Center  
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