



Continuing Student Financial Aid Newsletter 2011-2012

February, 2011

Dear PLU Lute,

First things first: The priority filing deadline for continuing students is April 1, 2011. **A late FAFSA may result in a reduction to your aid package!**

The 2011-12 FAFSA should be submitted as soon as possible but no later than March 1 to meet the priority deadline of April 1. Do NOT wait until you file your taxes—use estimated information and use the “will file” tax filing status on your FAFSA to get it filed on time. (Update your FAFSA with the actual information once the tax returns have been filed.)

Hopefully, we will see the economic recovery pick up speed and put less demand on financial aid programs. If, however, your household’s 2011 financial picture has suffered a setback, look at submitting the *2011-12 Request for Consideration of Special Circumstances*, downloadable at www.plu.edu/financial-aid/documents-forms/

If you need assistance, we are here in person in the Student Services Center, in the Financial Aid Office or 24/7 on the web at (www.plu.edu/financial-aid).

Wishing you a successful academic year.

Sincerely,
Kay W. Soltis
Director of Financial Aid

CRITICAL: FILE YOUR FAFSA ON TIME!!

Financial aid priority funding deadline for continuing students is Friday April 1, 2011. The recession has put significant pressure on federal and state governments to cut their student aid programs. If this happens, **LATE APPLICANTS MAY EXPERIENCE A REDUCTION IN AID!** When submitting your FAFSA online and using PINs to sign, it will take approximately 3 - 5 days to get your information to PLU. We recommend that you submit your Online FAFSA by March 1, 2011 to allow for any processing delays that may arise.

FAFSA Reminders and Updates

- Print a FAFSA on the Web Worksheet at www.fafsa.gov.** Use this form to get all of the necessary information together so time spent on the computer is minimized.
- Submit your FAFSA online at www.fafsa.gov as soon as possible.** When you submit your FAFSA online and use PINs to sign it, your application will be processed within 72 hours. If you or your parent need to apply for a PIN or don’t remember your PIN, you can receive your PIN in “real-time.”
- Print your Student Aid Report.** Once your FAFSA is processed, you will receive an e-mail with a link to your Student Aid Report. If you do not provide an e-mail address or the e-mail is undeliverable, a paper Student Aid Report will be mailed to you. **If you do not receive your Student Aid Report, your FAFSA has not been processed.**
- Update your FAFSA online at www.fafsa.gov** after you and your parent’s have filed your taxes. You will receive e-mails from the Department of Education and from PLU’s Financial Aid Office reminding you to update your FAFSA.
- Once you have provided your name, date of birth and Social Security Number, the Department of Education will

check its records and if you completed the 2010-2011 FAFSA you will be asked the following question: “Would you like to pre-fill your 2011-2012 FAFSA?” Answer “Yes” so that some of your application is pre-filled.

- Please make sure that you list **PLU’s School Code (003785)** on your FAFSA. It will not be pre-filled on your FAFSA application.

7. If you save a partially completed FAFSA, you have 45 days to return to the website and complete it. If you do not return to the FAFSA website within a week of saving the application, the Department of Education will send you an e-mail or paper reminder that your FAFSA has not been submitted. In order to gain access to your partially saved application, you will need to input the password you created when you initially began the application. If you forget the password you created, you can now reset it online.

“LATE APPLICANTS MAY EXPERIENCE A REDUCTION IN AID!”

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CHANGES TO THE 2011-12 FAFSA

- The 2011-12 FAFSA website has been redesigned to provide a simpler look and fewer questions.
- The ability to authorize the IRS to provide your actual 2010 income tax information directly onto your FAFSA after January 31, 2011 has been added. If you complete the FAFSA after submitting your tax returns, you can ensure an accurate FAFSA by authorizing the IRS to make this data transfer. If you file your FAFSA with this authorization before filing your taxes, the authorization will NOT automatically move your IRS data to your FAFSA. You must re-authorize this data transfer by returning to the FAFSA website once your taxes have been filed

IMPORTANCE OF UPDATING FAFSA

In order to meet the continuing student priority funding deadline of April 1, 2011, you may need to initially submit your 2011-2012 FAFSA with estimated income figures. If you do so, you must return to the FAFSA website and update your and your parent's income information once your tax returns have been completed. To ensure that you complete this step, we will send you reminders to update your FAFSA with actual income information once you have completed your tax return. If your and your parent's income remain at a "Will File" status, your financial aid **will not disburse** to your student account for the 2011-2012 academic year. You may also be selected for the verification process, requiring that we collect your and your parent's 2010 U.S. Income Tax Returns as well as a completed Verification Worksheet.

Prevent the delay in disbursing your financial aid by correcting your FAFSA online at www.fafsa.gov once your and your parent's tax returns have been completed.

CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF A FINANCIAL HOLD

If your student account is past due, it will be placed on a "financial hold." Basic university privileges will be denied until the account is settled, including the right to register, receive copies of official **and** unofficial transcripts or diploma, or cash checks. Reasons for a Financial Hold may include the following:

- Offer Financial Aid has not been accepted.
- Financial Aid has not been credited to your account
- Tuition Management Systems Payment Plan Delinquent (no payment or late payments, etc.)
- Student Account Delinquent (no payment, late payments, etc.)
- Master Promissory Note or entrance counseling not completed
- Verification not completed
- Private loan application incomplete or not returned to lender
- Financial aid based on full time enrollment and you are under-enrolled

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS POLICY TIGHTENED

Recent updates to federal regulations will now require monitoring of the academic progress of financial aid recipients on a semester-by-semester basis. In 2011-12, students will be notified after each semester they fail to successfully complete the minimum number of credits or fall below the 2.0 minimum cumulative GPA (for undergraduate students). Previously the Financial Aid Office notified students only at the end of their academic year if their academic progress was unsatisfactory.

Students will now face the possibility of being on SAP (Satisfactory Academic Progress) "Warning" (failed to meet either GPA or credit minimum, but eligible for federal aid for an additional semester), "Probation" (failed to meet the GPA or credit minimum standard for a second consecutive semester and continues to receive aid based on an appeal), or "Suspension" (appeal was denied, or student does not appeal).

***PLEASE NOTE:** PLU gift assistance requires a 2.0 cumulative GPA for every semester PLU gift aid is received. SAP for state aid programs do not permit a semester on "warning".

PLU SCHOLARSHIPS & GRANTS

PLU gift assistance is awarded for up to 8 full-time semesters. If you require a 9th semester to graduate, PLU gift assistance for that 9th semester will be reduced by 50%. You are not eligible for a 9th semester of gift assistance if you have already reached 156 cumulative credit hours. If you attend additional semesters following the 9th semester, you will not be awarded PLU gift aid.

If you entered PLU with **transfer credit hours** from another school, then the number of terms that PLU gift aid can be received will be less than 8 full-time semesters. Please contact the Financial Aid Office or go to www.plu.edu/financial-aid/faq for further information.

In order to receive any PLU Scholarships or Grants, you must be enrolled in at least 12 non-repeated credit hours.



UPDATES ON FINANCIAL AID PROGRAMS



GONE: 2011-12 ACG & SMART GRANTS

The five year life cycle of the **Federal Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG) and the National SMART Grant** expired after the 2010-11 academic year and was not renewed by Congress. Therefore, recipients of the Academic Competitiveness Grant and the National SMART Grants in 2010-11 will not see their award renewed for the 2011-12 academic year. Prior year recipients received these grants on top of our regular financial aid packages. Therefore, the loss of funding for these expiring programs will not be replaced.

STATE NEED GRANT

STATE BUDGET CRISIS MAY REDUCE NUMBER OF GRANT RECIPIENTS AT PLU.

As the state legislature and Governor Gregoire attempt to craft the 2011-2013 biennium budget in light of another \$4.6 billion shortfall, there will be pressure to reduce funding for the Washington State Need Grant, the state's largest student aid program.

While the state legislature has been steadfastly supportive of this need based program in the past, the unprecedented budget crises may force the state to make deeper cuts that affect programs previously spared. The Need Grant is one such program.

A decision on the funding levels for the State Need Grant is not expected to be made until the state legislature completes its 2011 session.

WORK STUDY

SWSP VICTIM OF STATE'S ONGOING BUDGET CRISIS

In earlier session of the Washington State Legislature, the State Work Study Program (SWSP) was victimized by the multi-billion dollar deficit in the state's budget. Funding for the 2010-11 academic year was cut 31.4% and participation by non-resident students were severely limited. For the 2011-12 academic year, only Washington residents will be awarded State Work Study program dollars and funding for the

program is likely to be once again subject to legislative cuts as the state continues to wrestle with its ongoing budget deficits. Should the state legislature maintain funding for the State Work Study Program in 2011-12, PLU will first award state work study to Washington residents who participated in the program during the 2010-11 year. Seniors, and then juniors will be given the next priority for state work study awarding, dependent upon the funding levels made available to PLU.

SUMMER STATE WORK STUDY: SUMMER JOBS ON TEMPORARY HOLD

If you have participated in the full-time summer State Work Study program in the past, please note that the above mentioned budget crisis could impact the availability of this summer's employment program.

For the month of June: Funding for June earnings

come from the 2010-11 SWSP allocation, which saw a 31.4% reduction in funding. Therefore, funding for June positions will be limited to the dollars not spent during the 2010-11 academic year. PLU will hold any requests for summer state work study authorizations until we know how much SWSP fund remains unspent for the month of June, and whether funding is appropriated by the state

legislature for the 2011-12 academic year, which funds the months of July and August. If you are looking for summer employment and have eligibility

for financial aid, download a State Work Study Authorization & Referral Form at www.plu.edu/studentemployment and submit it to the Financial Aid Office or the Student Services Center. Please note that a summer work study authorization requires a separate referral form from the fall/spring authorization. Once program funds to PLU are known, we will contact students on the disposition of their summer SWSP employment requests.

SWSP FUNDS STILL AVAILABLE FOR SPRING SEMESTER: Despite the cut in SWSP funding for 2010-11, funds remain available for new SWSP awards or increases to current awards for spring semester. If you are interested (and a Washington state resident), contact financial aid for eligibility questions, or *jobx* on the student employment website to find a job.

Did You Know? Work study earnings do not contribute to your FAFSA generated EFC.

2011-12 REQUEST FOR CONSIDERATION OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES WILL ALSO REQUIRE VERIFICATION

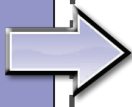
Is your or your family's 2011 income going to drop significantly from the 2010 income you report on the 2011-12 FAFSA? Do you have extraordinary medical or dental expenses you want us to consider on your FAFSA? If so, you would be completing our 2011-12 Request for Consideration of Special Circumstances Form, downloadable from our website. Please note, however, that recent changes to federal regulations will now require every FAFSA applicant submitting a Request for Consideration of Special Circumstances to also submit documents to complete the verification process. While the special circumstances will allow the financial aid office to use the family's projected 2011 information instead of the 2010 data reported on the FAFSA, this change in regulation will require the original 2010 income information to be verified before considering the 2011 information for an EFC recalculation.

LOOKING FOR ADDITIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS TO SUPPLEMENT YOUR FINANCIAL AID PACKAGE?

- Each year, the Independent College of Washington (ICW) offers scholarships to students attending an ICW member school. Represent PLU as you compete against students from other independent colleges in the state of Washington! Please log onto: <http://www.icwashington.org/scholarships/details.html> to see if you fit the criteria for one of their eight scholarships. If you meet eligibility criteria, download and submit an application before the deadline.
- Check out the scholarship search engine specifically for WA colleges and universities and/or WA residents: www.thewashboard.org

"Apply for WA only scholarships on the E-Harmony of Scholarship Search engines – www.thewashboard.org"

Please detach checklist provided to your right and refer to it as you prepare for the 2011-2012 academic year.



Checklist for Continuing Students

- File 2011-2012 FAFSA at www.fafsa.gov
- Review Student Aid Report
- Submit Verification Documents, if selected. All verification documents must be submitted to the PLU Financial Aid Office by **August 1, 2011**. Aid will be cancelled if documents are not received by that date.
- Update FAFSA after taxes are filed.** Corrections are submitted online at www.fafsa.gov. Be sure to check out the new Education Tax Benefits for 2010 (see link to IRS website on the PLU Financial Aid home page www.plu.edu/financial-aid/)
- Submit to the Financial Aid Office all other requested documentation.
- Apply for outside scholarships (www.thewashboard.org)
- When registering for next fall or summer term, **complete the on-line Payment Contract** at <https://banweb.plu.edu>. Information will be sent to you regarding this new electronic process.
- Accept your aid online at <https://banweb.plu.edu>. On-time applicants can anticipate receiving their aid packets in early May. While online, please take note of the following:
 - Expected Enrollment
 - Active Messages
- All **NEW** Direct Loan Borrowers, sign Master Promissory Note online and complete Online Entrance Counseling. (Go to www.studentloans.gov)
- If borrowing the Parent PLUS Loan, apply online. (Go to www.studentloans.gov)
- If borrowing the Federal Perkins or Nursing loans, you will receive an email in August directing you to complete the Perkins and/or Nursing Loan requirements at: <https://ipromise.campuspartners.com>; the website will guide you through all four steps of the signing process.
- If you are a first time State Need Grant recipient, a Student Directive for State Aid Form must be completed. The form is located at www.plu.edu/financial-aid/Documents-Forms/.
- Submit Refund Request Form EACH term you expect to receive a refund
- Search for on and off campus jobs online at: www.plu.edu/studentemployment.
- Check your PLU e-mail at all times for correspondence from PLU Administration

USEFUL WEBSITES



Financial Aid:	www.plu.edu/financial-aid/
Student Employment:	www.plu.edu/studentemployment/
Student Services:	www.plu.edu/~ssvc/
FAFSA on the Web:	www.fafsa.gov/
Federal PIN Website:	www.pin.ed.gov/
Banner Web:	https://banweb.plu.edu/
Higher Education Coordinating Board:	www.hecb.wa.gov/
U.S. Department of Education/Direct Loans	www.studentloans.gov/
Outside Scholarships Search:	www.thewashboard.org/
Independent Colleges of Washington	www.icw.org
National Student Loan Data System:	www.nsls.ed.gov/
Perkins & Nursing Loan Entrance Counseling:	https://ipromise.campuspartners.com/
Perkins & Nursing Loan Exit Counseling:	www.mycampusloan.com/
Federal Stafford Loan and Direct Loan Exit Counseling:	www.nsls.gov

CONTACT INFORMATION

FINANCIAL AID

Phone Numbers	(800) 678-3243 (253) 535-7134
FAX Number	(253) 535-8406
E-mail	finaid@plu.edu

STUDENT SERVICES

Phone Numbers	(800) 678-3243 (253) 535-7161
FAX Number	(253) 538-2545
E-mail	ssvc@plu.edu

STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

Phone Number	(253) 535-7459
E-mail	stuemp@plu.edu

U.S. House of Representatives Bill will Cut Federal Student Aid Programs

The U.S. House of Representatives passed their 2012 budget bill, H.R. 1 on February 19. Under this bill, federal funding for several student aid programs for the 2011-12 academic year would be cut. Most significantly for PLU students, the Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant would be totally eliminated and students receiving the Federal Pell Grant would see their awards cut by 15% or more. Together, this will cut federal aid by more than \$1 million to the more than 900 PLU students with the lowest family incomes.

President Obama's Budget, released February 14, maintains funding for the maximum Federal Pell Grant award, but pays for it with savings realized by eliminating the Direct Loan interest subsidy currently available to students attending graduate school. This would increase the cost of borrowing for approximately 134 graduate student borrowing the Subsidized Direct Loan at PLU.

The Senate has yet to pass their version of a 2012 budget bill. Once this happens, reconciliation between the Senate and House versions must be approved by both chambers before it can be submitted to the President for his signature. The final bill to be signed into law, and how it will affect the financial aid awards of PLU students will remain unknown until all of these deliberations result in a signed bill.

Contact your elected representatives to voice your opinion on this issue. A link to identify your representative and how to contact him/her can be found on the PLU Financial Aid Homepage.