



Continuing Student Financial Aid Newsletter 2012-2013

December 2011, Edition I

Dear PLU Lute,

First things first: The priority filing deadline for continuing students has been moved up to March 15, 2012. The 2012-13 FAFSA should be submitted as soon as possible but no later than Feb 15 to meet the priority deadline of March 15.

Secondly, the recession and the political climate has put significant pressure on our federal and state governments to cut funding for their respective student aid programs. Budget decisions made in Olympia and in Washington D.C. could alter what your final aid offer looks like. See related stories in this newsletter on changes already made for 2012-13, proposed changes being considered (*Updates on Student Aid Programs*), and what you can do to influence that outcome (*Save Student Aid*).

Finally, your 2012-13 financial aid awards will be totally green. Notice of your aid offer will be sent via email only, and everything will be handled through Banner Web. Eliminating paper will allow us to get aid offers to you sooner. If all goes as planned and external (governmental) decisions are made on a timely manner, look for your "notice of aid award" email in late April.

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

Wishing you a successful academic year.

Sincerely,

Kay W. Soltis

Director of Financial Aid

FAFSA DEADLINE MOVED UP TO MARCH 15!

The FAFSA filing deadline to receive priority funding for continuing students has been changed and moved up to **Thursday March 15, 2012**. Do NOT wait until you file your taxes to do your FAFSA—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 income tax information once the tax returns have been filed. 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 February 15 as the target date in case there are any unforeseen processing delays. Please note that given the potential for cuts to federal and state student aid programs next year, missing this deadline has a much higher likelihood of a reduced aid package.

FINANCIAL AID OFFICE GOING GREEN - AID AWARD LETTERS TO BE FULLY ELECTRONIC

In an effort to "go green" and serve students as quickly and efficiently as possible, the Financial Aid Office will be distributing your 2012-13 Financial Aid Award letters via electronic format only. Students will receive an email from the Financial Aid Office once your award has been finalized, directing you to Banner Web self-service. Accepting your award will only be available via Banner Web.

All accompanying paperwork mailed with your award in the past will also be posted to the Financial Aid homepage under "document & forms". You are responsible for reading all of the information posted on-line and submitting all required downloadable forms, just as you were when it was included in a mailed envelope.

Continuing student aid offers are anticipated to be ready for release around April 21, for those students who meet the earlier March 15 FAFSA filing deadline. FAFSA's received after this deadline will generate aid awards on a week by week, rolling basis, subject to the availability of funds. This timeline assumes that 2012-13 technical and legislative changes to student aid delivery does not delay implementation or our awarding process.



The ongoing budget deficits in Washington D.C. and Olympia are putting significant pressure to cut funding for student aid programs at both the federal and state level. The Federal Subsidized Loan program for graduate students has already been eliminated for the 2012-13 academic year (see related story, page 3). Other proposals under consideration could cut the Federal Pell Grant, **eliminate the subsidized Direct Loan program for undergraduate students**, and discontinue the State work study program. For more information and how you can voice your concerns, see related stories on page 3.

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CHANGES TO THE 2012-13 FAFSA

- Beginning on February 1, 2012, you can authorize the IRS to provide your actual 2011 income tax information directly onto your FAFSA. 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 retrieval process by returning to the FAFSA website once your taxes have been filed.

FAFSA FILING TIPS

- Print a FAFSA on the Web Worksheet** at [www.http://studentaid.ed.gov/PORTALSWebApp/students/english/fasaworksheet.jsp](http://studentaid.ed.gov/PORTALSWebApp/students/english/fasaworksheet.jsp). Use this form to get all of the necessary information together so time spent on the computer is minimized. Worksheet will not be available until sometime in January.
- 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.
- 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 2011-2012 FAFSA you will be given the option to complete the FAFSA Renewal application which will include your 2011-12 FAFSA demographic information.
- List PLU's School Code (003785)** on your FAFSA. It will not be pre-filled on your FAFSA application.
- 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.
- Use the IRS data transfer** to ensure the accuracy of your income tax information on your FAFSA if your taxes have already been completed.
- If you or your parent **need a PIN** or don't remember your PIN, you can go to the www.pin.ed.gov website and receive your PIN in "real-time", and return the FAFSA website and use your PIN to sign your application.
- 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 after April 15.

IMPORTANT: UPDATE YOUR FAFSA

In order to meet the continuing student priority funding deadline of March 15, 2012, you may need to initially submit your 2012-13 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. If your and your parents income remain at a "Will File" status, your financial aid **will not disburse** onto your student account for the 2012-2013 academic year. You may also be selected for the verification process, which requires you to submit a tax transcript of your (and your parents') 2011 U.S. income tax return, as well as submitting 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.

2012-13 VERIFICATION CHANGES

In an ongoing attempt to increase the integrity of the federal student aid programs, the U.S. Department of Education has modified how families can satisfactorily complete the verification process. Previously, families could submit signed photocopies of their federal income tax returns to document the information on their FAFSA. **Beginning in the 2012-13 academic year, families will be required to [request a tax return transcript from the IRS.](#)** We will no longer be able to accept a photocopy of your tax return as acceptable documentation. The transcript request can be filed online.

A transcript does NOT have to be submitted if your FAFSA was completed by using the data retrieval tool on the FAFSA, authorizing the IRS to transfer your tax information to your FAFSA (as long as the data is not altered after the data transfer happens). If federal budget cuts imposed by Congress impact the IRS office, transcripts may take longer to be received. You are encouraged to utilize the data retrieval option, since this automated electronic process should not be impacted by budget cuts that might be imposed on the IRS.



UPDATES ON FINANCIAL AID PROGRAMS



CONGRESS ENDS SUBSIDIZED DIRECT LOANS FOR GRAD STUDENTS

As part of the compromise to pass a federal budget extension (and prevent a federal government shutdown), the Subsidized Direct Loan for graduate students was eliminated, beginning with the 2012-13 academic year. Passage of the Budget Control Bill of 2011 means most Direct Loan borrowed by graduate students for the 2012-13 academic year will begin to accrue interest at 6.8% as soon as a disbursement is made on the loan. You can remain eligible for the subsidized loan for 2012-13 by enrolling for the summer term, since elimination of the subsidized loan takes effect on loan periods beginning on or after July 1, 2012.

Undergrad Subsidized Direct Loan to Cost More

Two changes will result in the cost of borrowing the Subsidized Direct Loan to increase in 2012-13. First, the provision that lowered the interest rate to 3.4% for 2011-12 "sunsets", allowing the interest rate for 2012-13 to rise back to its previous 6.8% rate.

Second, as Congress continues its focus on reducing the federal budget deficit, the subsidy paid on subsidized loans for undergraduate students for the six month grace period has been eliminated. Savings from such a move would be used to maintain the maximum \$5550 Federal Pell Grant, which is awarded to the lowest income students attending college. 15% of PLU students applying for aid receive this maximum Pell Grant award.

Borrowers will now accrue addi-

tional interest at 6.8% immediately upon separating from PLU rather than after the six month grace period. This will add interest charges of about \$187 on a \$5500 loan and about \$646 on a \$19,000 loan portfolio. Check our financial aid homepage (see Save Student Aid) for other changes already enacted or under consideration, including:

- Elimination of the Federal Pell Grant for less than half time students.
- Modifying eligibility for the Federal Pell Grant to only the neediest of needy students.

Contact your Representative or Senator and let them know what you think.

Norm Dicks, US Congressman
(<http://www.house.gov/dicks/email.shtml#>)

Patty Murray, US Senator

(<http://murray.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?p=ContactMe>)

Maria Cantwell, US Senator

(<http://cantwell.senate.gov/contact/>)

SOME GOOD NEWS!

2011-12 State Work Study funds are still available. If you are a WA resident with work study eligibility, off-campus employers in the state work study program are still looking for part time help. Click on Jobx on the student employment center website for a listing of current positions.

If already working off campus with an employer whose work is not religious or political in nature, check out if your employer qualifies for a partial reimbursement of your wages with SWS funds at www.hecb.wa.gov.

Positions with a state work study employer can be a great opportunity in your career or academic interest area. Positions are available in private business, local & state government, and non-profits. For assistance, contact the Student Employment Center.

STATE AID PRO- GRAMS POTEN- TIAL TARGETS FOR BUDGET CUT

Faced with a \$2+ billion shortfall, the state legislature is looking for options to balance the budget. While the state's student aid programs have been funded through the 2012-13 academic year, the budget shortfall is significant enough that a funding reduction for 2012-13 is a possibility.

SWSP For the month of June: Despite this year's funding cut, State Work Study funding for 2011-12 is still available. Based on the current rate PLU students are working, there should be sufficient funds to fund the summer program through the month of June.

SWSP For the months of July/August:

Funding is subject to legislative action. If the SWSP is cut out of the state's budget for the 2012-13 fiscal year, as Governor Gregoire has proposed in her November supplemental budget, summer state work study will end June 30. Students awarded SWSP will be notified if their state work study award must be cut or eliminated due to a budget cut.

State Need Grant: Governor Gregoire's Oct 27 budget offers cuts to the State Need Grant program at 100%, 25%, 8%, as well as limiting the grant at public universities only. She did NOT include any of these funding cuts in her November supplemental budget.

To contact your legislature:
icwashington.org/action

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS: MORE THAN JUST YOUR GPA

PLU gift assistance is awarded for up to 8 full-time semesters. If you require a 9th semester to graduate, 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 of PLU gift aid eligibility will be less than 8 full-time semesters. For more information, see www.plu.edu/financial-aid/faq.

In order to receive any PLU Scholarships or Grants, you must be enrolled in at least 12 credit hours and a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or better.

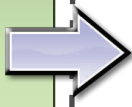
TWO POSSIBLE SOURCES FOR ADDITIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS

- Each year the **Independent College of Washington (ICW)** offer scholarships to students attending an ICW member school. Represent PLU as you compete against students from other independent colleges in the state of Washington! 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.
- www.thewashboard.org: Check out the scholarship search engine specifically for WA colleges and universities and/or WA residents:

**“Apply for scholarships available
only to students attending Washington
schools 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 2012-2013
academic year.**



Checklist for Continuing Students

- File 2012-2013 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, 2012**. 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 and can be done by simply checking the box that authorizes the IRS to transfer your data to your FAFSA.
- Submit to the Financial Aid Office all other requested documentation.
- Apply for outside scholarships at: (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 electronic process.
- Accept your aid online at <https://banweb.plu.edu> On-time applicants can anticipate receiving their aid packets **April 21**. 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.ed.gov/

Are you subject to a "Financial HOLD"?

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

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 of 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 for loan program(s).
- Verification not completed.
- Private loan application incomplete or not returned to lender.
- Financial aid based on full time enrollment and you are under-enrolled.