



## **2009-2010 Financial Aid Office Policy and Procedure Information**

**Financial Aid award letters will be mailed on a rolling basis beginning in late February. (Returning students have their institutional awards saved forward but they are not activated until the FAFSA is received and the student has been emailed to accept them on TheSIS.) When you receive the award letter:**

1. Review your 2009-2010 Financial Aid Award Letter and decide whether or not you will accept all or part of your financial aid package.
2. Indicate your acceptance or rejection of each award. If you plan to reject the entire package and not attend Birmingham-Southern, please indicate that on the document and return it to our office as soon as possible. If you are accepting any part of a Stafford Loan, please indicate on the award notification the amount of the loan you wish to borrow. (You still must complete a Stafford Loan Request Form.)
3. Sign and date the award notification, and return the original to our office by the date indicated on the award notification or, no later than May 1, 2009. If you receive your award letter after May 1, 2009 then you should return a signed copy of your award letter within two weeks of the date of the letter. Disbursement of financial aid funds will occur after the signed award notification is received by the Financial Aid Office, in accordance with the regulations and/or the policies of each award, and two weeks after classes begin. (You may need to complete other forms for awards to move to your student account; see Understanding your Award Letter.)
4. If you need additional time to make a decision on the acceptance or rejection of your financial aid package, please request an extension **IN WRITING**.
5. If you wish to use the 10 Month Payment Plan through the Student Accounts Office, work sheets and agreement forms may be found on the web site under that office. Plans need to be in place by July 31<sup>st</sup> to avoid a late fee.
6. If, after the term begins, you consider dropping a course or withdrawing from the college, contact our office to see how this action will affect your financial aid. If you withdraw, you may be required to receive loan exit counseling – you agreed to this requirement when you signed your loan Promissory Note.
7. After June Jump Start (Orientation) new students are able to access The Student Information System for BSC called TheSIS. Students may enter from the bottom of any BSC web page. Instructions to log-in may be found on the website and at the end of this document.

## **Procedures for Handling Scholarships from Outside Organizations and State Pre-Paid Tuition Plans or 529 Plans**

If you have received a scholarship or other monetary award from a local, regional, national organization or foundation which can be used to help meet your expenses at Birmingham-Southern College you are required to notify the Financial Aid Office. Please adhere to the following guidelines in order to be sure that your scholarships funds are received and credited to your student account in a timely manner.

1. Inform the Financial Aid Office in writing (email is acceptable) of all outside awards and the amount of each award you are receiving. Also, please let us know if the scholarship or award is a one-time award or a four-year renewable award.
2. Contact the organization that is providing the scholarship to inform them that you will be attending Birmingham-Southern College. Ask them to make the scholarship check payable to Birmingham-Southern College and to be sure to indicate your name on the "For" line on the check. Also, ask them to send the check to the Financial Aid Office by August 1, 2009 so that the funds can be credited to your account by the time school actually begins in late August.
3. If you have a pre-paid Tuition Plan from your home state such as the PACT program in Alabama, Florida Pre-Paid, or any other state pre-paid Tuition plan, you should contact the state agency that handles that program and indicate to them that you

will be attending Birmingham-Southern College. You should also notify us. If you notify the financial aid office that you will be using PACT funds, we will notify the Student Account Office so they will know to bill that agency and communicate with you.

4. If your church is participating with us in the Church and College Partnership Program, you should contact your church to request the funds be sent on your behalf by August 1.

Most organizations will comply with your request to remit the funds by August 1. However, many organizations will adhere to their own schedule; some require proof of your enrollment from the Records Office. In any case, these outside scholarships, awards, and pre-paid tuition plan funds will be credited to your account when the funds are received at BSC. Some scholarship organizations will send the check to you rather than to us. Some organizations will make the check co-payable to you and Birmingham-Southern. If you receive a co-payable scholarship check you should endorse the check and forward it to the Financial Aid Office in order to have the funds credited to your account in the Student Accounts Office in a timely manner.

### **About your 2009-2010 Financial Aid Package**

Your 2009-2010 financial aid award letter might include one or more of the following (Disbursement of aid will not occur before classes begin and enrollment is verified.):

**Federal Pell Grant:** This federal grant is available to undergraduate students who have NOT received a baccalaureate degree. Eligibility is determined by the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) as calculated using information provided on the FAFSA. Funds from this award will be divided equally between the Fall and Spring semesters and will be credited to the student's account accordingly.

**Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG):** This federal grant is awarded based on the student's EFC and the availability of funds. Eligibility is determined by the BSC Student Financial Aid Office using the results from the student's FAFSA and is targeted by law to Pell Grant recipients. This grant is available to undergraduate students who have not received a baccalaureate degree. Funds from this award will be equally divided between the Fall and Spring semesters and will be credited to the student's account accordingly.

**Federal Subsidized Stafford Loan:** This is a low interest loan that enters repayment six months after the student ceases to be enrolled at least a half-time basis (1.5 units). The term "Subsidized" means that the government pays the interest on the loan while the student is enrolled in school and during the six month grace period following the student's ceasing to be enrolled at least half-time.

**Freshman may be eligible to borrow up to \$3,500 sophomores \$4,500, juniors and seniors \$5,500 – see lender chart on the web site (students are also eligible to borrow \$2,000 in addition to these amounts through the Unsubsidized Stafford Loan – interest accrues on the unsubsidized loan – see below.)**

A separate loan request form must be filed by the student. A loan request form can be downloaded from our website, <http://www.bsc.edu/fa/forms/2009/forms.htm>. Only one loan request form is necessary per year for Stafford Loan processing; a Stafford Loan will not be processed until we receive the request form. Loan proceeds will be equally divided between the Fall and Spring semesters and will be credited to the student's account accordingly within 3 business days of the loan proceeds being disbursed by the lender and received by the school. Should the student not complete the loan request form, the loan will not be processed. In addition, should the student withdraw from the College prior to the school receiving the loan disbursement, the funds will be returned to the lender.

**Federal Unsubsidized Stafford Loan:** This loan program provides financial assistance to all eligible citizen students regardless of income. It is very similar to the Subsidized Stafford Loan in that the repayment terms and loan limits by class standing are the same. The difference is that the student, rather than the federal government, is responsible for paying the interest on the loan while he or she is enrolled. Loan proceeds from the Unsubsidized Stafford Loan will be disbursed like the Subsidized Stafford above, and the total amount of both the Subsidized and Unsubsidized Stafford Loans may not be more than the annual loan limits set for the student's class standing. Should the student withdraw from the College prior to the school receiving the loan disbursement, the funds will be returned to the lender.

**Federal Perkins Loan:** This federal loan is made to the student from BSC rather than an outside lender. It is awarded based on the student's EFC and the availability of funds. This is a long term, low interest (5%) loan which enters repayment nine months after the student ceases to be enrolled at least half-time (1.5 units). If the student accepts this loan, an electronic promissory note will be prepared for him or her to sign once the 2009-2010 academic year begins through Campus Partners. Proceeds from this loan will be equally divided between the Fall and Spring semester and will be credited to the student's account accordingly provided the promissory note has been signed. Campus Partners helps with the required Entrance Interview and MPN on-line. After you have been awarded, have accepted a Perkins Loan and have received our notification to do so, you may begin your session at <http://ipromise.campuspartners.com>. By following the directions on this Web site, you will be able to become a registered user and complete your Entrance Counseling session, your loan interview, and MPN. A FAFSA PIN is required.

**Federal College Work-Study:** This federal program provides part-time employment for eligible students. Students usually work 9 to 12 hours per week at \$7 per hour, and receive a paycheck once a month by direct deposit. Because the funds are disbursed directly into the student's checking or savings account, the student chooses how to use the money. Since these funds are never posted to the student's account in the Student Account Office these funds cannot be considered in the 10 Month Payment Plan. Eligibility for this program is determined by the Student Financial Aid Office and is based on demonstrated need and the availability of funds. New students may obtain forms from the web site and turn them in at June Jump Start.

**Federal Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students (PLUS):** This federal loan is a long term, low interest loan available to parents of dependent students regardless of income level. The annual loan limit is equal to the cost of attending BSC less any financial assistance the student is receiving. This loan enters repayment 60 days after the last disbursement of each year (most lenders offer interest only payment options or postponement of payment while the student is enrolled – contact your lender for details). The loan proceeds are divided equally between the Fall and Spring semesters, and the student must be enrolled when the disbursements are received by the school. A separate loan application must be filed in order to receive these funds. The PLUS Request Form is required and available on our web site as is a PLUS Lender List. If you choose this option in combination with the 10 month payment plan or instead of the payment plan, be sure to double the amount you need for the fall – base your request on the year.

**Alabama Student Grant:** This non-need-based grant is available to students who meet the following criteria: are Alabama residents attending a private college, are not religion majors and/or are not preparing for full time religious vocation, and have not received a baccalaureate degree. Students must prove residency of the State of Alabama for the last twelve months. The documentation required to prove residency is listed on the Alabama Student Grant application form. It is the STUDENT'S responsibility to make sure he or she completes the application on time. The annual amount of the Alabama Student Grant is subject to appropriations by the state government and could change from the amount on your award notification. The funds from this grant will not be disbursed to the student's account until the money is received from the State (usually in December -January for the Fall disbursement and April - July for the Spring disbursement). If the disbursement to the student's account creates a credit balance, the student may obtain a refund check from the Office of Student Accounts for the amount of the credit balance. A separate annual application is required and is available on our web site.

**Alabama Student Assistance Program (ASAP):** This grant is awarded to Alabama residents and is based on demonstrated need. Eligibility is determined by the BSC Student Financial Aid Office using the results from filing the FAFSA, and the amount awarded is based on the student's EFC and the availability of funds. Funds from this award will be divided equally between the Fall and Spring semesters and will be credited to the student's account accordingly.

**BSC Grants and Endowed Scholarships:** These grants and scholarships are awarded to students based on the FAFSA at the discretion of the Student Financial Aid Office. Endowed scholarships and their amounts may be renewable depending upon the guidelines of the scholarship. In most cases, endowed scholarships are considered to be the source of funding for the BSC merit-based scholarships and/or BSC need-based grants. Applying for need-based financial aid with the FAFSA is the only requirement to be considered for these scholarships. These scholarships are made possible through the generosity of BSC's alumni and friends. Each Fall Term, students who benefit from these endowed scholarships may be asked to write a letter of appreciation to the donor of the scholarship(s) they hold. A student's failure to comply with this request may impact future awarding of BSC endowed scholarships to that student and could result in cancellation of the subsequent (Spring Term) endowed scholarship disbursement.

**Outside Scholarships:** Federal regulations require that scholarships awarded to students from private sources outside the control of BSC become part of the student's financial aid package. They will be applied to the student's account after the scholarship funds are received by the College and within four weeks after classes begin. Unless otherwise directed in writing by the scholarship sponsor, the proceeds from the outside scholarship(s) will be equally divided between the Fall and Spring semesters. See Procedures for Handling Scholarships from Outside Organizations above.

### **Terms of Your Financial Aid**

- Students are awarded financial aid based on FULL-TIME enrollment status (at least 3 units) unless the student informs us otherwise. Financial aid packages for students enrolled less than full-time will have to be adjusted. It is the student's responsibility to notify Student Financial Aid Services of his or her less than full-time enrollment status. Eligibility for awards varies with enrollment status.
- If you receive any financial assistance from any source other than what is shown on your award notification, your financial aid package must be adjusted. BSC reserves the right to change the content and amount of any student's financial aid package based on additional financial assistance received by the student at any point in the academic year.
- Students may not receive more than one MERIT (non-need-based) scholarship from Birmingham-Southern College unless specified IN WRITING from the College. Students must choose the ONE merit scholarship they wish to accept if offered more than one scholarship. Scholarships declined by students will NOT be re-awarded. This policy applies to Fine Arts Scholarships and to the combination of Merit and Fine Arts Scholarships. The total MERIT and/or Fine Arts Scholarship (non-need-based) amount awarded to any one student cannot exceed the tuition cost at BSC (except for the McWane Honors Scholarship and The Thomas E. Jernigan Scholarship). For example if tuition is \$24,780 for the year, the student's total merit scholarship award (s) cannot exceed \$24,780. This policy also applies to students who have been awarded the National Merit/Achievement Full Tuition Scholarship and either the National Merit/Achievement BSC Sponsored Scholarship, the National Merit/Achievement Corporate and/or the National Merit/Achievement Corporation Scholarship, Tuition Exchange programs, Faculty/Staff Tuition Remission and the like.
- Students awarded merit scholarships are responsible for maintaining the majors and GPAs specified in their scholarship letters from the College, and these merit scholarships are awarded for a four-year (eight-semester) period only.
- During the academic year, a part of your financial aid package (non-federal) may be renamed to recognize the donor(s) who provided funds to support your education.
- Your financial aid award is subject to change or may be adjusted at any point in the academic year due to BSC's corrections and/or changes in federal/state appropriations. We routinely audit our financial aid files throughout the academic year to check for accuracy. BSC reserves the right to make corrections to a student's financial aid information as needed and these changes may alter a student's Expected Family Contribution (EFC) and subsequently the financial aid package. In addition, please remember that changes in your EFC due to student's/parent's failure to report accurate information on the FAFSA will result in award revisions as well. BSC reserves the right to adjust the content and/or the amount of the student's financial aid package based on the above conditions.
- If you correct your Student Aid Report (SAR) after you have been awarded, your financial aid package may be adjusted in accordance with federal regulations at any point in the academic year.
- You must enroll full-time (at least 3 units) and continue to be enrolled full-time throughout the term to continue eligibility for any institutional aid and scholarship(s).
- If you reduce your course load below 3 units for any term or any part of the term, you must notify our office immediately. Your financial aid package may be reduced accordingly. BSC reserves the right to adjust the content and/or the amount of the student's financial aid package should the student's enrollment status change.
- If you withdraw after the term begins, your financial aid package is subject to proration as set forth in the federal regulations. If, after the federally prescribed proration is calculated, we have to reduce your financial aid package, you may owe a balance on your account. This balance is your responsibility to pay, not BSC's responsibility. Institutional aid (including scholarships) will be prorated if tuition charges are adjusted.
- Students who are awarded a merit scholarship and choose not to enroll at Birmingham-Southern College should contact the Office of Admissions for a one year extension. Enrolled students who transfer out and then wish to re-enroll at BSC should submit a written appeal to the Financial Aid Office for the renewal of the scholarship.
- Contents of the student's financial aid file are property of BSC's Financial Aid Office, and are confidential information. Requests by the student to review his or her file must be made in writing. Requests by the dependent student's parent(s) to review the student's file must be made in writing, and the student must give his or her written consent to release this information. Once a request is received, BSC has 45 days to make the requested information available for review. This review will take place in the Student Financial Aid Office at a time convenient for the student, dependent student's parent(s)

and the Financial Aid Office. This review will NOT take place the same day the written request for review is received by the Student Financial Aid Office. This policy is in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

- In the case of a divorced/separated student, the ex-spouse is not privileged to any financial aid information on the student.
- In the case of a divorced/separated parent of a dependent student, the non-custodial parent is not privileged to any financial aid information regarding the student unless that non-custodial parent's financial information was used to calculate the student's eligibility for financial aid.
- For your protection as well as the protection of the Financial Aid Office, we will not release information regarding the student's financial aid package over the phone.
- Students must apply for need-based financial aid each year; financial aid awards are NOT automatically renewable. While we strive to keep students on the same level of need-based funding each year (provided demonstrated need is the same level), we cannot guarantee that this will occur. Funding levels from the federal government, the state, and the College change each year. As a result, need-based financial aid packages may vary annually in content as well as total amounts from year to year. The Student Financial Aid Office reserves the right to change packaging policies annually.
- If your permanent home address changes at any time, it is your responsibility to notify the College (Records Office) of your change of address immediately.
- Students who leave the College through transfer, graduation, or any other form of leave are not entitled to the remaining eligibility of institutional aid/scholarships and will forfeit such remaining eligibility.
- Students who are enrolled for the summer session are only eligible to receive Pell and/or student loans (if eligible according to federal computation). However all funds received during the summer session (Pell and/or loans) will be deducted from annual eligibility limits. Full-time enrollment for summer is 2 units or greater (financial aid eligibility is based on enrollment status).
- Current year financial aid may not be used to pay prior year balances. However, some lenders do allow students to borrow a private loan specifically to clear past due balances.

## Cost Summary

**An estimate of the direct and indirect 2009-2010 costs is listed below. The direct costs are subject to change when the new budget is approved in May, 2009.**

**TUITION: \$25,800**

**ACTIVITY FEE: \$390**

**COMPUTER USAGE: \$555**

**ROOM: \$5,000 (freshman)**

**BOARD: \$2,800 (light meal plan)**

**BOOKS: \$1,200**

**Est. TRANSPORTATION: \$1,310**

**Est. LIVING EXPENSES: \$1,550**

Students are required to have each semester's tuition paid before registration each term. However, students participating in the **Monthly Payment Plan through the Student Accounts Office are exempt** from this requirement. Students who have enough financial aid to satisfy this pre-registration requirement are not required to pay. For more information, contact **the Student Accounts Office at 205-226-7871**. Information about payment options and direct expenses in more detail is available from the Student Accounts Office at <http://www.bsc.edu/administration/finance/payment.htm>.

**Communication with Students:** Financial aid award information is confidential. Because such information is protected under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), all communication concerning a student's financial aid award will be addressed to the student. This policy includes communication of information about applying for financial aid, verification of information contained on the student's financial aid application, credentials needed to complete a student's file, etc. All communication to the student will be sent to the student's campus address during periods of regular enrollment (Fall, Interim, and Spring), residential and commuter students alike. If the student is enrolled for summer classes, the Student Financial Aid Office will send information to the student's campus address during the Summer term. Otherwise, we will mail information to the Student's homes during the summer. Students and parents should communicate regularly about the student's financial aid matters. General financial aid information and announcements may be displayed in the "Student Link" newsletter (distributed by the SGA), on student e-mail and voice mail boxes, and bulletin boards located inside the Financial Aid Office, and on BSC's financial aid web page at <http://www.bsc.edu/fa/>.

## Financial Aid Enrollment, Refund, and Repayment Policies

**Enrollment Policy:** To be eligible to receive need based financial aid other than the Federal Pell Grant, a student must be enrolled at least half-time (1.5 units) in a program leading to the receipt of a degree or certificate. A student who is enrolled less than half-time may be eligible to receive a Pell Grant as long as the student is seeking a degree. A student's financial aid award may be adjusted at any point in the term due to enrollment changes.

**Refund Policy after Official/Unofficial Withdrawals: (Two policies – one for College Charges and one for Title IV Aid):** To withdraw officially from the College, a student must obtain a "Withdrawal Request Form" from the Office of the Provost. For tuition adjustment purposes, the date of withdrawal is considered the date the withdrawal is processed by the Records Office. For federal financial aid adjustments, the date of withdrawal is the day the student notifies the Financial Aid Office of his or her intent to withdraw. If a student withdraws within 28 calendar days after classes begin as specified in the official college calendar, tuition, fees, room, and board charges will be prorated at specific percentages through the 28<sup>th</sup> day. No adjustment of these charges is made on account of withdrawal after 28 days, except in cases of illness certified by a physician and of students on reserve called for active military duty. In case of illness, tuition, fees, room and board charges are prorated through the week of withdrawal. In case of a student called for active military duty, tuition and fees are totally refunded and room and board charges are prorated through the week of withdrawal. Contact the Office of Student Accounts for more information at 205-226-7871.

**TITLE IV FUNDS (FEDERAL):** For those students who withdraw and are receiving federal funding, the refund policy of Title IV funds (back to the federal programs) is dictated by federal regulations governing Title IV financial aid programs. These programs must be refunded according to the calculations prescribed by federal regulations based on the date of withdrawal and percentage of time enrolled. Within 30 days of the date of withdrawal being determined, the amount of funding that must be returned to the Title IV programs will be calculated, and the student's financial aid award will be adjusted accordingly. This will occur within 30 days of the official date of withdrawal (the official date is the date of notification of intent to withdraw-not the date forms are submitted.) or, in the cases of unofficial withdrawals (see below), the date that the school has determined the student has withdrawn. Students who withdraw should always contact the financial aid office for exit loan counseling and to see how their financial aid will be adjusted.

**NON-ATTENDANCE/UNOFFICIAL WITHDRAWALS:** Students who register for classes, and do not attend at least one class session, are not eligible to receive any federal, state, or institutional funds. Students who attend at least one class, cease attending all classes, and do not officially withdraw from the College, are considered to have unofficially withdrawn and are subject to proration even if the school becomes aware of the lack of attendance at the end of the term or after the term has concluded.

**REPAYMENT POLICY AFTER OFFICIAL /UNOFFICIAL WITHDRAWALS:** In the case of an official or unofficial withdrawal from the College, a student who receives a cash disbursement of Title IV financial aid funds may have to repay the College a percentage of those Title IV funds depending on the length of enrollment and the amount of financial aid awarded to the student. If, according to the federal calculations, a student has been "overpaid", the student will be required to repay the excess amount to the College for reimbursement to the federal programs. If the student fails to repay the calculated amount, the student will be reported to the Department of Education and will be ineligible for any other Title IV assistance at any school.

### **The Student Information System - TheSIS allows registered students who have been through orientation (June Jump Start) to:**

1. Accept or decline certain awards
2. View your financial aid award letters for multiple years
3. View missing items requested by the financial aid office
4. Submit work-study time sheets for supervisor approval
5. View the credits and debits on your student account and the account balance.
6. Make payments on your student account
7. Check your grades
8. Register for classes

At the BSC web site main page go to the bottom of the page to the yellow menu and click on TheSIS then: Follow these four steps to log in for the first time: 1. Get your user ID – provided at June Jump Start; 2. Reset your password; 3. Check your BSC e-mail to receive your password; 4. Log in; Or click on TheSIS; then click on MAIN MENU. On the bottom right click on "I'm New to WebAdvisor" and follow the instructions.