

Updated July 8, 2014

### **Basic Principles of Financial Aid for Students in Degree Programs**

1. **Students in degree programs offered through The Tseng College are eligible for financial aid.** The range of available financial aid options may be different for programs offered through CSU Executive Order 871 [PDF] (if you are unfamiliar with this kind of program, email the dean of The Tseng College for information) than for programs offered through self-support (referred to in the CSU as Special Session programs; these programs are covered by CSU E.O. 802 [PDF]). Financial aid options also differ from student to student reflecting their individual financial circumstances.
2. **Providing Financial Aid Information:** The Tseng College employs a financial aid counselor to coordinate financial aid for students in degree programs offered through The Tseng College. Degree programs offered through The Tseng College often have non-standard formats, and the students in these programs are often midcareer professionals. The Tseng College financial aid counselor focuses on the financial aid issues relevant for The Tseng College program formats and students. Program directors should work closely with The Tseng College financial aid counselor and The Tseng College director of Academic Support and Services to ensure that decisions about program scheduling and the choice of billing and payment schedules are compatible with financial aid and offer the widest range of options for the students (with the fewest possible financial aid distribution complications). Program directors should also work with The Tseng College financial aid counselor to ensure that financial aid and financial aid contact information is accurate and complete in program brochures and program web sites.
3. If it would be helpful to have the financial aid counselor attend program information sessions other special events planned to market the programs, program directors are encouraged to arrange for The Tseng College financial aid counselor's participation.
4. **Applying for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA):** Students must apply for Federal financial aid online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). FAFSA information is automatically uploaded to the CSUN Solar system from the FAFSA Web site. The FAFSA information is held in a suspense file until such time as the applicant's biographical and demographical information is entered into the Solar system at which time it is matched to the applicant and added to the financial aid application system.
5. The Tseng College financial aid counselor uses the preliminary cohort roster provided by The Tseng College program director/coordinator to identify financial aid applicants. The financial aid counselor then performs a preliminary assessment of the student's application.

6. The financial aid counselor must be mindful of FERPA issues when accessing student files so as not to violate privacy laws. Those with questions about student information or data security protocols should contact The Tseng College director of academic support.
7. As soon as all admission decisions are made and the program/cohort is confirmed to start, the program directors/coordinators must send the following information to The Tseng College financial aid counselor:
  - The selected and approved billing schedule
  - The selected and approved payment schedule
  - The full cohort course schedule including course start and end dates and the terms in which the courses will be offered
  - Names of students being reimbursed by their employers

**NOTE:** All information must be received before the Financial Aid Counselor can proceed with the award process.

8. **Awarding Financial Aid:** The Tseng College financial aid counselor uses a formula to determine the financial aid needs of each student. The CSUN financial aid office no longer uses paper notifications of financial aid awards. Each student must go online to see how much financial aid has been awarded. This information about financial aid award notification must be clearly communicated to The Tseng College students on the program Web sites as well as in communications from program directors to students entering the program. Students who have applied for financial aid also receive this information via an automatic notification from Solar (See also "Financial Aid Communications," below).

**NOTE:** Financial aid cannot be awarded to students who are not officially admitted to the university. If The Tseng College cohort students are late in submitting their completed application information, they may jeopardize their eligibility for financial aid.

9. **Financial Aid Communications:** Much of the communication to students from the financial aid system in Solar is automated and updates and notices are sent via email to each student who has applied for financial aid.
10. If an email comes back to the financial aid office as undeliverable, the student is automatically sent a postcard from the financial aid office telling the student how to get his/her account activated or re-activated. The Financial Aid link on the CSUN portal is very informative, providing students with the status of their awards, award amounts, disbursement dates and notifications about missing information.
11. **Financial Aid Disbursements:** When financial aid awards (including loans) are disbursed, the student's account is automatically credited to cover outstanding

tuition changes. Financial aid money will cover only tuition charges. If a student has other outstanding charges on the account, the financial aid award will not cover them, and the student is responsible for covering those charges personally and in a timely manner. The balance of the financial aid award will be sent to the student in the form of a check via US mail.

12. **Financial Aid and Prior-Year Tuition Debt:** Financial aid for the current financial aid year will not automatically pay for an outstanding tuition debt that remains due from the prior year. If there is excess financial aid in the current financial aid year, the student will receive a financial aid balance check. The student is personally responsible for paying prior year tuition debts in a timely manner.
13. **Financial aid is available only to students formally admitted to a degree program.** If a student takes courses prior to being admitted to a degree program (matriculated), he or she is personally responsible for paying the tuition for each such course taken as a non-matriculated student at the time of registration.
14. **Financial Aid Status Reports by Program:** The Tseng College financial aid counselor gives each program director/coordinator and the student accounts specialist at The Tseng College a report on the financial aid status of each student in the program/cohort on a monthly basis. Program directors who feel that more frequent reports would be useful should make arrangements for more frequent reports with The Tseng College financial aid counselor.