

DBU students have been experiencing delays in their financial aid requests. The financial aid office services 11,000 students, and has 11 professional Financial Aid Counselors, and eight student workers to help assist students. This issue has created a lot of stress for students who have to pay their way through school.

“I was offered a 2,000 dollar scholarship, and when DBU tuition rates changed the financial aid office made a mistake with my account, and I have not been awarded my scholarship money for two semesters now”, said Jeremiah Mainor, Junior at DBU,.

When students are offered a scholarship at DBU, according to the Financial Aid website the amount of money is determined by the students FAFSA information. Once they receive their financial aid offer, the student has to sign it, and abide by the rules. According to Transparency Matters: Improving Financial Aid Offer, “Majority of colleges (91 percent) fail to provide students with a complete estimate of the net price—or the amount they can expect to pay for college—in their financial aid offer”. (Abdul-Alim).

What does this mean for the students that are struggling to make ends meet? According to Hard Policy Lessons from 50 Years of Federal Direct Student Aid Policies, “State government disinvestment continues to challenge the nation's ability to provide affordable educational opportunities for the next generation of students”.(Alexander). Students at DBU have been greatly affected by the challenges that the nation has faced regarding the affordability of higher education.

“It affected my ability to stay at DBU because last semester I had to pay very little in tuition costs, and this semester I almost left because tuition rates went up, and the financial aid office made a mistake with my scholarships. When I brought this to their attention they said I was fine, but according to my account I was not, therefore I had to bring in reinforcements to help me resolve the issue.” said Halley Martinez, junior at DBU,

The financial aid office does their best to resolve all the issues that students bring to their attention, but “Resolution time varies based on the complexity of the issue. Simple questions may be resolved on the same day, while other issues require documentation or information from others on campus”, said Monica Smart, Director of Financial Aid,.

When asked about Martinez and Mainor's concerns, Smart claimed, "Our student service team assists students on the front lines. That team consists of two full-time staff members and all eight student workers. Some issues can be resolved immediately, while others require additional review due to federal regulations or university policies. Our goal is to serve students efficiently while ensuring accuracy in all financial matters".

While financial issues in college can be stressful, here are some things that students can do so ensure that their accounts are accurate, so they do not run into these issues. The first thing that students can do is regularly check their financial accounts. The second thing is, "During peak seasons, response times may be longer, but we offer multiple ways for students to connect with us, including email, phone calls, in-person visits, and virtual meetings.", said Smart. The last thing that you can do if you are a student who has experienced an ongoing issue "to connect with our office directly so we can review their situation and provide any available assistance within our policies", said smart.

"Financial Aid has been a positive experience for me. Here at DBU they are always willing to help with any issue that I bring to their attention. Even though I have had issues in the past regarding my account they always try their best to resolve it on the same day. I would not be at DBU if it was not for the amazing financial aid staff. I will forever be grateful", said Martinez, a junior at DBU.

Work cited

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