2012-2013 Questions and Answers

1. I probably don't qualify for aid. Should I submit a FAFSA anyway?

   Yes. Many families mistakenly think they don't qualify for aid, and prevent themselves from receiving financial aid by failing to apply for it. In addition, there are a few sources of aid such as Unsubsidized Stafford, Graduate PLUS Loans, and PLUS loans that are available regardless of need.

   * The FAFSA form is free. There is no reason for not applying.

2. Do I have to reapply for financial aid every year?

   Yes, the financial aid covers Summer/Fall/Spring terms, then students apply for aid for the next Summer/Fall/Spring terms. The FAFSA can be completed starting Jan 1st for the following aid year.

3. Do I need to be admitted before I can apply for financial aid?

   No. You can apply for financial aid any time after January 1. Once you have been officially accepted to the University the Office of Financial Aid will process your aid application and then send you an award letter. To actually receive funds, however, you must be admitted and enrolled at the university.

4. If I take a leave of absence, do I have to start repaying my loans?

   Not immediately. The subsidized Stafford loan has a grace period of 6 months before the student must begin repaying the loan. When you take a leave of absence you will not have to repay your loan until the grace period is used up. If you use up the grace period prior to graduation, however, when you graduate you will have to begin repaying your loan immediately.

5. I received an outside scholarship. Should I report it to the financial aid office?

   If you are receiving any kind of financial aid from any source, you are required to report it to the financial aid office. SUNY Downstate will adjust your financial aid package to reflect the change.
6. Are work-study earnings taxable?

The money you earn from Federal Work-Study (FWS) is generally subject to federal and state income tax, but exempt from FICA taxes (provided you are enrolled full time and work less than half-time). You should consult the IRS or your tax consultant for detailed information.

7. When will I receive an offer of Financial Aid?

Applications are processed on a first come, first serve basis. Award letters for students with completed applications are mailed, beginning in around late February early March.

8. My tax return is not filed yet - How do I complete the FAFSA?

Just use estimated income. You want to apply as early as you can! One thing you can utilize is your last pay stub for the previous year to estimate total earnings and taxes paid.

9. Are there emergency loans available?

Yes. Contact the Financial Aid Office for further information. The faculty Student Association (FSA) offers advances of financial aid no earlier than 1 week before the semester begins. The FSA Office charges a fee for this loan, details are available on the FSA Emergency Loan application.

10. Is it too late to apply for financial aid after the priority deadline of March 1st?

No, SUNY Downstate will continue to process applications for all available programs including Federal Student Loans programs.

11. What if the student's/parents' financial situation changes during the school year?

Contact the Financial Aid Office immediately. Staff may be able to assist. Examples of changes in situations might include a loss of income, separation/divorce, or death of a parent. Unexpected expenses may also be considered which might allow the student to obtain additional financial aid.
12. Are my parent's required to pay the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) to the school?

No. The Expected Family Contribution is a Federal calculation that determines the amount the family (parent(s) and/or student) should pay towards the educational costs. The calculation reflects the contribution by assessing prior year earnings, savings, etc.

13. What is my FAFSA Pin?

The FAFSA PIN serves as your electronic signature and provides access to your personal information in various U.S. Department of Education systems. It's like the Personal Identification Number (PIN) that you get from your bank that enables you to access your account. Anyone— including parents of dependent students who has a valid Social Security Number and is a U.S. Citizen or eligible non-citizen may apply for a PIN.

14. If I apply for financial aid, will this hurt my chances of being offered admission?

No, Admissions decisions are made under a need-blind process, meaning that students' financial circumstances do not influence the decision.

15. What is SUNY Downstate's Federal School Code

002839

16. Can a non-matriculated student get financial aid?

No

17. Can an International Student get Federal Student Aid?

No