

Attachment C

Financial Aid Representative Perspective

If a student attends winter term, we not only get inquiries from students wanting to make sure their aid disbursed correctly for winter, or wondering why their loans haven't paid out and they were charged a late fee, but these questions come during our busiest processing time for the following aid year. This takes time away from our customer service staff when their time could be better spent inputting and processing documents for the following aid year.

There are also certain grants, the Credential Pell grant for example, that we cannot work on until after census date, which is in the middle of the term. By the time our staff runs the necessary reports for that term, gets through the reports, and applies the grant towards the student's accounts, winter is practically over causing many upset students because their grant was applied too late. These students cause more work for the advisors because not only do we need to explain that there is not enough time in winter to process these grants on time, but the time is then taken to notify financial services of late fees that have been accrued and need to be reversed.

With that said, the majority of the problem isn't with students attending winter; the problem lies with the students who do not attend winter. If the University did not have a winter term, students would not be budgeted for winter and then we would be able to eliminate the following problems and increase our productivity in other needed areas:

- Students who do not attend winter do not realize that they have been budgeted for winter so when they don't attend, their budget gets reduced therefore sometimes causing a reduction in their spring aid.
- The workload increases for the advisors because they have to go through lists of students that don't attend winter, remove their winter budget, and then decide whether or not their aid needs to be reduced. If it does need to be reduced, the advisors make the appropriate adjustments and then send email notifications to those students affected.
- Once those students realize their aid has been reduced for spring, they come in upset or angry because money that they have been counting on for spring tuition or book money is no longer enough to cover. This increases the workload for all staff:
 - the front counter staff gets the students wanting an explanation
 - the advisors get the students wanting to make sure their adjustments were made correctly to their aid
 - the rest of the staff notices an increase in calls and emails to the financial aid office from all other students wanting explanations for their reduction in aid

On average, the staff at the front counter, the staff answering phones, and the staff answering emails spend at least a good two to three hours per day answering these questions, on top of the inquiries from students who do attend winter term. Again, these complaints come from students during one of our busiest processing times for the following aid year therefore our time is better spent processing documents and packaging students for future terms. If we had more time to process paperwork for incoming students, we would hope that it would have an impact on the number of applications submitted to the University. Whether or not a student receives financial aid is usually a big deciding factor on whether or not a student will accept their intent to enroll, so hopefully we would be able to increase our enrollment levels in the future due to our timely processing.