



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** All Presidents

**FROM:** John B. King, Jr., J.D., Ed.D., Chancellor

**DATE:** February 13, 2024

**RE:** Guidance on Responding to FAFSA Delays

---

The United States Department of Education (USDOE) has announced it does not expect to transmit FAFSA student record information data (ISIRs) to colleges and state agencies until early-to-mid March. This delay is creating a ripple effect in the timeline of all colleges processing financial aid awards. The students most likely to be impacted are those for whom attending a SUNY campus, especially as residential students, would be challenging or even impossible without federal and state grant aid, a fact that's especially true for Pell eligible students.

Despite these delays, I want to emphasize the importance of the FAFSA simplification efforts and am confident that once final, the new form will bring added financial benefits to many more students. That said, we know how difficult it is for families to endure the confusion and delays caused by the federal changes. So I want to underscore the importance of responding with compassion and understanding and providing as much flexibility as possible for our students and their families, so they can make informed college choices with a full understanding of the extent to which their financial aid awards will support the cost of attendance.

To minimize the impact of the FAFSA delays on our current and prospective students, campuses are asked to adopt the following guidelines:

- If campuses have not already done so, extend any deposit deadline for Fall 2024 enrollment to **no earlier than May 15** for New York State resident students. It is important to coordinate any extension with other deadlines that may be impacted, including residence hall deposits, honors programs/colleges, support and services programs, summer orientations, and EOP Summer Bridge Programs.
- Since Pell-eligible students will be the population most heavily impacted by these delays, campuses should do everything possible to ensure there are no reductions in Pell enrollments in the Fall 2024 incoming class due to uncertainty about pending financial aid awards. This includes specific communications to students who have applied to special programs for which financial eligibility or Pell receipt is a consideration (i.e.: EOP and ASAP/ACE), and any students/families who have expressed

challenges in completing the FAFSA. This also includes the removal of any listed priority deadlines for FAFSA completion. These deadlines should be listed as target dates only, rather than priority deadlines, given the current challenges to completion for many students and families.

- To ensure there is no delay in reviewing and determining EOP financial eligibility, campuses should continue to review all EOP applications using the currently available EOP Financial Form (or other appropriate forms) and review all supporting documents, including tax documents, separate and apart from the FAFSA process.
- Campuses should immediately communicate that SUNY is committed to expediting financial aid awards as soon as ISIR data becomes available so students/families will have a complete picture of their financial aid eligibility. Maintaining communication with students is critical to ensure they know your campus has a place for them this fall, and that staff are available to answer questions while they await their official financial aid awards. Campuses are also strongly encouraged to communicate directly with local K-12 district key stakeholders and community-based organizations engaged in college access to ensure there is broad awareness of deadline extensions and SUNY's commitment supporting students/families through this process.
- If they have not already, campuses should immediately identify any potential capacity needs in IT and financial aid offices and provide temporary support where necessary. This will ensure these offices are prepared to handle the FAFSA data expeditiously to produce accurate financial aid awards once the federal government releases the ISIR records. System administration stands ready to support campuses with capacity constraints to address those needs to avoid delays and backlogs. Requests for additional support can be conveyed in writing and will be evaluated. Please send to Associate Vice Chancellor and Chief Deputy for Student Success Valerie Dent at [valerie.dent@suny.edu](mailto:valerie.dent@suny.edu).
- In addition to the steps outlined above, I am directing SUNY System Communications and Marketing to develop a widespread communications and outreach campaign that underscores SUNY's ongoing commitment to providing affordable high quality college options despite FAFSA delays and challenges. We will also marshal our [FAFSA Completion Corps](#), made up of current SUNY students from seven campuses and funded by a generous grant from AmeriCorps, to increase FAFSA completion for current and prospective students.

I am confident that by working together we can get through this difficult period while ensuring all students understand the value of a SUNY education and receive adequate financial support to attain their goals. Thank you, as always, for your partnership.

**CC:** Ian Rosenblum, Senior Vice Chancellor for Policy Implementation and Chief of Staff  
Donna Linderman, Senior Vice Chancellor for Student Success  
Valerie Dent, Associate Vice Chancellor and Chief Deputy for Student Success  
Bart Grachan, Associate Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management  
Beth Berlin, Chief Operating Officer  
Josh Sager, Acting Chief Financial Officer  
Lane Filler, Chief Communications Officer