

FAMU Financial Aid Director Responds to Criticism

Contributed by Marcia Boyd, FAMU Director of Financial Aid
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"There is another side of the story."

This fall unforeseen economic circumstances have impacted our office and provided grounds for speculation about our ability to render acceptable customer service.

Recently, the office of financial aid has received complaints from students and others including Famuan writer Mark Taylor about the quality of services we provide. It is important to note that there is another side of the story.

The current economic slump has affected just about every industry in the nation, including the banking and financial industries and their ability to provide loans for students.

Since mid-August, in the midst of attempting to secure refunds for students in the College of Law, we realized that EdAmerica, a lending agency for student loans, has been struggling to provide funds to release to Florida A&M University so we can disburse them to students. I was able to get EdAmerica then to email students to inform them of the delay, but now, in October, EdAmerica is still over extended and providing conflicting information to FAMU students and my staff.

In one case, EdAmerica has told students that funds will be released in three to four weeks, but told us that that they will be released in 10 days. What are we all to believe? When students come to the office of financial aid seeking answers, our staff is not sure how to answer.

Students who applied on or before our priority date have received their funds. In the meantime, the office of financial aid is providing emergency loans to assist our students through these difficult times. However, our funds for emergency loans are limited and are dwindling.

Although we have delays with other lenders, EdAmerica has been the most challenging to us and other institutions. As the federal government closed out its fiscal year on Sept. 30, banks are experiencing delays in securing funds. All of this is a part of the financial crisis the country is experiencing.

Issues with the lenders' ability to release funds have impacted the day-to-day operations at FAMU as well. FAMU cannot receive the dollars needed from student fees and tuition until the lenders release the funds for students.

This, in part, has affected the level of customer service at the office of financial aid. However, the absolute best in customer service is what is expected from employees in the office and we are committed to keeping our students informed about issues of concern. In the future, if there are issues that impact you as a student, we will work to keep you informed via FAMU email or through The Famuan.

We understand the significance of providing students with impeccable customer service and will continue to strive to deal with our current situation.

A major goal of our office is to help eligible students receive resources so that they are able to pursue their educational goals at FAMU. We understand the importance of the total college experience and how it impacts the student's ability to succeed. We will do all that we can to support them. Regardless of the situation, we remain committed to serving our students.

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Marcia Boyd is director of the FAMU Office of Financial Aid. She wrote this article as a letter to the editor of The Famuan.

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