

# Financial Aid at FAMU Is Not 'Excellent'

Contributed by Mark Taylor II -- Black College Wire  
Monday, 13 October 2008

## Lack of professionalism plagues institution

If "excellence with care" is Florida A&M University's motto, then why does the FAMU financial aid department conform to standard of mediocrity?

This question often comes to mind when visiting or calling various offices on campus. My simple searches for information frequently result in responses of: "I don't know," "He or she isn't here -- I can't take a message so try back later" and, the most shocking of all, "Well baby, this is FAMU."

It's now a joke among my friends who visit these offices and receive similar responses.

How do we get rid of this attitude -- the lack of professionalism that plagues our institution? Just look at Florida State University. While we may not have the same financial resources that FSU has, we certainly have the ability to adopt and exceed their level of customer service.

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Tiffany Lewis, an alumna of FAMU, had a conversation with me earlier this semester about her financial aid delays at FSU. All schools have delays, but FSU communicates with their students. She didn't have to march into its financial aid office on many different occasions to get limited, if any, progress on a time-sensitive situation. FSU and Lewis' student loan lender e-mailed her regularly with up-to-date information.

When I attended Valencia Community College and the University of Toledo, if I didn't get a letter in the mail regarding changes, I got a phone call or an e-mail.

FAMU has the same ability to provide communication to its students. When contacting Edamerica, my lender for financial aid loans, the customer representative said, "Edamerica is willing and able to communicate with all of its borrowers about loan delays and statuses, but the borrower's university has to make such a request."

What excuse does FAMU have regarding its inability to communicate better with its students? After trying to speak to Marcia Boyd, Director of Financial Aid & Scholarships, I was forwarded to Boyd's voicemail by an assistant, Danielle Bryant. This happened three times within a week. [Boyd's response]

What was Boyd's reply? None. Nothing. Nada.

Unfortunately, late fees, holds, and extremely delayed refund checks are FAMU's ways of communicating to students.

I believe in FAMU, and I strongly believe in President Ammons, yet I can't believe how many faculty, staff and administrators forgot about his statement, "This is a student-centered university," in June 2007 as he addressed them all in a forum.

After walking the highest of the seven hills to Foote-Hilyer, the answer students should receive to their questions is the same as the reassuring quote on the backs of students working hard in the bookstore - "Yes, I can help you." It should follow with a true commitment to solving every students needs and communicating effectively.

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Mark Taylor II writes for The Famuan, the Florida A&M University student newspaper, which originally published this article.

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