Often when you mention financial aid on Morgan’s campus, students’ eyes glaze over, or they heave a sigh of frustration. Approximately 95% of all students enrolled at Morgan State University (MSU) receive some type of financial aid. Understanding the financial aid process and how to “navigate” it successfully is critical. It does not have to be a frustrating experience. It does require that both parents and students are aware of the requirements and work together to complete the process.

The keys to success can be summed up in three words, EARLY! EARLY! EARLY!

Many of the seemingly overwhelming problems and long lines at the Financial Aid Office are caused by students submitting their applications at the latest possible date to meet the closing deadline, submitting incomplete information or even submitting their applications after the deadline.

Planning for college is a major undertaking for almost all families. There are so many decisions to make. One of the most daunting challenges usually is how will you finance your child’s education. What resources are available? What can you do?

If financial aid is to be the main source of funding for tuition and other college expenses, such as books, transportation and personal items, then the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is the key to obtaining those funds. You and your son or daughter should understand how it works.

You can file FAFSA as early as January 1 of every year. The FAFSA can be completed and submitted on line by going to www.fafsa.ed.gov. Again, remember if your child’s application is filed early with the required, accurate documentation, it will be processed more quickly. (Be sure that you provide documentation, such as copies of your income tax returns. File your income taxes early if possible.)

Moreover, the award letter indicating all of the aid for which the student qualifies will be received early. This affords time for the family to make arrangements to tap other financial resources because the aid awarded does not usually meet 100% of the student’s need.

FAFSA should be filed by March 1st of each year, especially for Maryland State students. Filing by that date enables Maryland residents to receive scholarships/grants for as much as $9,300. Applicants filing after that date do not receive an award.

We recommend that every student file no later than mid-February.

Timeliness of FAFSA is critical.

When applications are not filed in a timely manner, it can affect many aspects of the student’s college experience. It affects whether or not they will receive campus housing, which is very limited. This is especially critical for out-of-state students who may not be able to attend Morgan if they do not have a place to live on campus.
Parents’ FAFSA and turning in all requested information can be prevented by filing on time. Again, this often repeated scenario can be avoided. A student will now have to register again for payment. At that point, all class schedules are dropped. A student filing can cause a student’s class not to be available.

Students are not assigned rooms until their financial obligations have been met. The longer this process takes, the greater the likelihood that housing will not be available.

Filing late also affects whether a student qualifies for financial aid. It would be impossible to tell you everything you need to know about financing your child's college education in this newsletter. In this electronic age, however, all you would possibly want to know about the availability of financial aid at Morgan and scholarships and funding from other sources is accessible on the internet.

Listed below are a few sites, which you think will provide you with useful information:

www.morgan.edu or, finaid@moc@morgan.edu

Our site provides detailed information about the cost of attendance and financial aid process. Click on financial aid on the home page. Go directly to the financial aid page using the second address.

www.fafsa.ed.gov

This site provides complete, detailed information about FAFSA. Students can also complete the application on this site. It is preferred for students to do the FAFSA on the web where it takes about 3-5 days to get to MSU. To complete the FAFSA on paper, it takes 6-8 weeks to be processed and sent to MSU. Please make sure that Morgan’s school code (002083) is included on the form.

www.mhec.state.md.us/financial/ descriptions.asp

This site provides information about financial aid from the state of Maryland.

MSU WebSIS

This site provides access to check for students award status and to register for courses.

www.morgan.edu

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The late registration/drop-add period is January 18-24. Students not registered yet for the spring semester can register during this period. There is a late fee of $50. Pre-registered students can make changes to their class schedules. Classes begin January 25.

### Straight from the Students

**To “Bear” the Cost of College**

“Bearing” the cost of college often leaves students bogged, especially undergraduates. A higher education is an investment that most students cannot afford. Matriculating scholars at Morgan State University have a plethora of financial assistance programs that they can inquire about to facilitate their investing. Parents and guardians should continuously encourage their children to request financial assistance before paying cash or taking out loans. There are two main programs that should be discussed with students.

First, students should be encouraged to seek scholarships and grants before seeking loans. Many Morgan students receive scholarships from outside sources such as fraternal organizations, college alumni, and churches. Other students receive grants directly from the federal government. Second, Morgan State University’s Federal Work Study Program helps students with the cost of college. Some students work in departments of a particular school. In fact, a student might be an aide in the Biology Department or History Department. I work as a resident advisor in Blount Towers, the female residence hall. This job is helping me to pay for my room and board. Also, the experience is helping me to improve my interpersonal skills and to develop relationships with other students. These skills will definitely help me as an aspiring lawyer!

Just like I have, students can receive an education and gain the valuable experience needed for internships and jobs off campus. For example, the Academic Enrichment Program employs Morgan State University students as tutors and as lab assistants. Once students graduate, they have paid for college, gained skills, and networked.

In sum, financial aid programs such as scholarships, grants, work programs and loans were implemented to assist students and their families. Filling the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) should be the first hurdle in students’ attempts to pay for college. The earlier they file the more money the student is likely to receive. Higher education is one of the most essential investments that the student will ever make. They have learned how to walk. They have learned how to talk. Now, it is time to prove they have learned how to learn.

### The Cost of College

**Tuition & Fees**

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**Room & Board**

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**Total**

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<tr>
<td>$12,498.00</td>
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Add to that the cost of books - average cost $380 per semester (more for some majors) – and other personal expenses, then you have an estimate of how much your student will need for one year at Morgan State University.