



# **STUDENT FINANCIAL SERVICES AND VETERANS AFFAIRS**

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

*Two Campuses – One College  
Financial Aid  
An Investment of a Lifetime*

### **SECTION 1.0: MANUAL INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Introduction to the Office of Student Financial Services**

Lawson State Community College's Office of Student Financial Services and Veterans Affairs is located on the main floor of the Academic Success Center on the Birmingham campus, and Room 193 of the Student Services wing of the Administration Building ("A") on the Bessemer campus. Hours of operation are 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Fridays. Staff may be reached at 205-925-2515. Financial Aid information can also be found on the college website at [www.lawsonstate.edu](http://www.lawsonstate.edu). Lawson State offers a broad program of financial aid to assist as many students as possible. The college is approved to participate in student financial aid programs by the federal government, state government, and State Board of Education policy. The college also provides a variety of financial aid resources through private educational sources.

## **1.2 Purpose & Philosophy of the Office of Student Financial Services**

- 1.2.1** The **purpose** of the Office of Student Financial Services and Veterans Affairs is to promote and enhance a “*comprehensive office*” that provides financial assistance to those students with financial barriers while simultaneously providing a comparable level of quality customer service through outreach and technology. If no policy or procedure addresses a given issue, the Office of Student Financial Services is expected to use professional judgment based upon the intent of all financial aid programs and practices.
- 1.2.2** While the **philosophy** of the federal government is that parents and students have the primary responsibility for financing postsecondary education to the extent that they are able, there is a variety of federal, state, and institutional financial aid programs that exist to supplement the expected family contribution (EFC). The Office of Student Financial Services and Veterans Affairs will assist students in obtaining these funds for expenses associated with college attendance. The programs at Lawson State include grants, work, scholarships, and veterans’ benefits.

## **SECTION 2.0: ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION & OFFICE MANAGEMENT**

### **2.1 Institutional & Divisional Structure**

Lawson State Community College is one of the many community, junior, and technical colleges in Alabama which are supervised by the Chancellor and the Alabama Community College Board of Trustees

- 2.1.1** The Chancellor is responsible directly to the Alabama Community College Board of Trustees.
- 2.1.2** The President of the College is appointed by the Chancellor and the Alabama Community College Board of Trustees, and is directly responsible for its total operation. In addition, the President employs or recommends all personnel for employment.
- 2.1.3** The Executive Vice President and Dean of Student Services reports directly to the President and is responsible for all fiscal operations, maintenance, and financial aid services and functions.
- 2.1.4** Student Financial Services is under the direct supervision of the Executive Vice-President and the Dean of Student Services.
- 2.1.5** The Director of SFS reports directly to the Executive Vice-President and the Dean of Students

### **2.2 Responsible Personnel**

A Student Financial Services and Veterans Affairs Committee has been established to ensure that all policies and procedures in accordance with federal, state and institutional regulations are followed by college personnel. The financial aid staff consists of the following:

**2.2.1 Director of SFS** - Responsible for administering and coordinating all aspects of the student assistance programs--according to institutional policies and procedures and in the best interests of students. Some specific functions are as follows:

**2.2.1.1** Ensure that proper records and documents are maintained in order to meet institutional and federal statutory requirements.

**2.2.1.2** Review applications and materials and select applicants for financial aid based on need according to financial aid policy.

**2.2.1.3** Provide counseling to students regarding their need for financial aid and funds management.

**2.2.1.4** Prepare and submit the required reports and documents to the U. S. Department of Education and other appropriate agencies.

**2.2.1.5** Develop annual financial aid budgets which determine the costs of attending Lawson State Community College.

**2.2.1.6** Supervise the office staff and maintain a program for staff training, program planning, and budget controls.

**2.3 Staff-** The staff is responsible directly to the director for administering and coordinating assigned phases of the Student Assistance Programs. Some specific functions are as follows:

**2.3.1** Receiving and processing students' Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR) – Process Applicants for the Federal Pell Grant, the Federal Work-Study program (FWS), the Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG); and the Alabama Student Assistance Program (ASAP); and applications for Veterans Benefits for determination of aid eligibility.

**2.3.2** Assisting in preparation and submitting of reports and documents to the U.S. Department of Education and other appropriate agencies.

**2.3.3** Maintaining accurate files for financial aid applicants/recipients and ensuring that all required information is filed.

**2.3.4** Insuring that work-study students job descriptions are prepared; and work-study assignments are made. Packaging and mailing award notifications; preparing letters /statements requested by students upon request.

**2.3.5** Assisting as needed in answering office telephones and receiving office callers; keeping the office operating in a professional manner at all times;

**2.3.6** And other duties assigned, as it relates to Financial Aid.

**2.3.7** Monitors students' enrollment to ensure that satisfactory academic progress is maintained.

**2.3.8** Advise and counsels students and parents about financial aid.

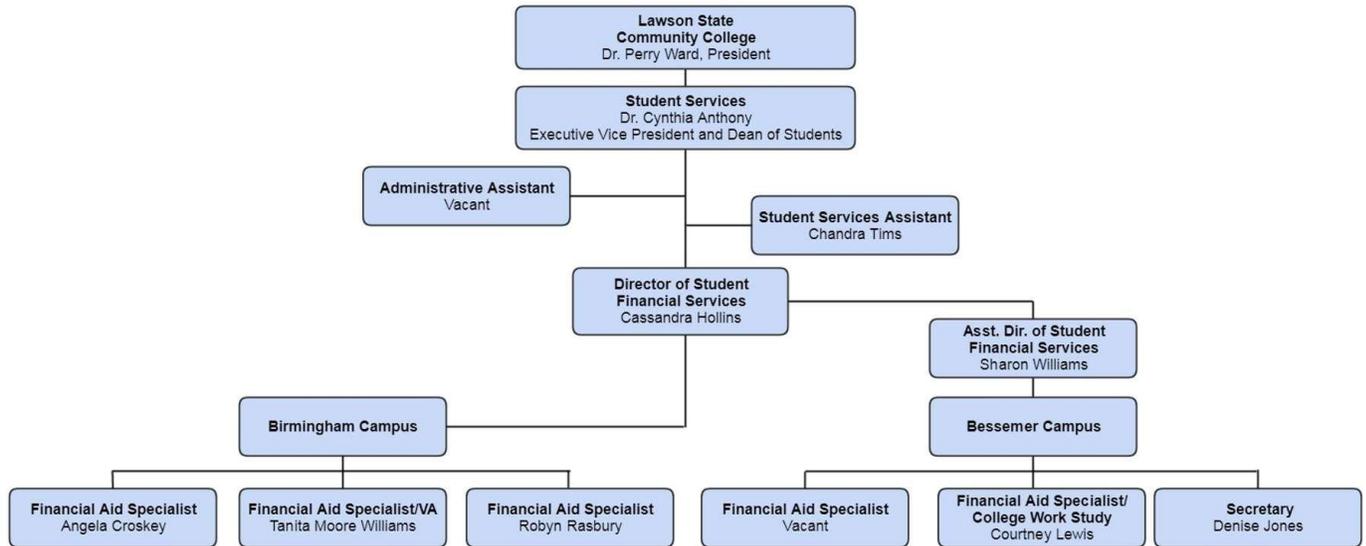
**2.4 Asst. Director of SFS/Veterans Coordinator** - To serve as veterans Coordinator and assist the Director of Student Financial Services in developing and implementing a comprehensive program and other functions as needed. Some specific functions are as follows:

**2.4.1** Coordinate activities with the Director of SFS for veterans' participation in federal aid, deferred tuition, and other student financial assistance programs.

- 2.4.2** Process veterans' applications for VA benefits; develop cordial working relationships with the Regional Office of the Veterans Administration (particularly the adjudication officer and the State Approving Agency (SAA).
- 2.4.3** Coordinate veterans' programs and activities with college officials relative to enrollment procedures that affect VA payments to students; ensure the accurate and timely processing and submission of VA reports, students' schedules, and other VA documentation.
- 2.4.4** Assure that current copies of the college's catalogs and other publications containing descriptions of programs and courses of study are submitted timely to the SAA.
- 2.4.5** Submit new program curriculum outlines and courses of study not included in the college catalog to the SAA immediately upon establishment by the institution (38 U.S.C. 1775 and 1776); maintain current lists of approved programs.
- 2.4.6** Assume accountability for all activities as VA coordinator--the accurate and timely submission of students' applications and schedules, organization and maintenance of files, keeping up to date on current VA regulations, and attending VA training seminars and workshops.
- 2.4.7** Select, hire and supervise qualified VA Work-Study Students.
- 2.4.8** Review, approve, and process students' financial aid applications and materials.
- 2.4.9** Counsel students concerning packaging financial aid awards, work study performance required documentation, and payroll procedures.
- 2.4.10** Submit Origination and disbursement information. Assist as needed with data-input, filing, and other functions for total effectiveness in the Financial Aid Office.

## Office of Student Financial Services – Organizational Chart

### Lawson State Community College Student Services



## SECTION 3.0: FINANCIAL AID PROGRAMS

### 3.1 Federal Pell Grant

The Federal Pell Grant program is the largest of the federal grant programs. Unlike some other programs, which provide the institution with limited funding for students, the Federal Pell Grant is available to any eligible student enrolled in an eligible program of study. This program is centrally administered by the federal government and is typically the foundation of a student's aid package.

The recently enacted Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2012 set new lifetime eligibility limits for Pell grant recipients. The duration of a student's eligibility to receive a Pell grant is set at 12 semesters (or its equivalent). This means that a student may receive up to 600% of the annual Pell award over the duration of his or her academic career.

Students who are applying for federal aid for the first time may submit a FAFSA electronically at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). Students who applied for federal aid in the previous award year may apply for aid in a subsequent year by completing the Renewal FAFSA on the Web at

[www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). A reminder is mailed or emailed directly to the student from the federal processor. Because the student only updates information that has changed from the previous year, the application process is simpler and quicker. The U. S. Department of Education encourages students to file the FAFSA or the Renewal FAFSA via the Internet at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). Students and parents of dependent students are also encouraged to apply for a FSA ID at <https://fsaid.ed.gov>. The FSA ID is the student's and parent's electronic signature. The application for a FSA ID requires that a student (and parent if applicable) create a username and unique password. The processing time is much faster than filing the paper version. However, students still have an option to file the paper version of the FAFSA, or the Renewal FAFSA. Students are required to submit their FAFSA on an annual basis. The Student Financial Services Office will accept results through electronic transmission from the Central Processing System(CPS). Student eligibility is determined using the Federal Methodology need analysis formula and as applied by the Department of Education Central Processing System. Student Financial Services must have an official Expected Family Contribution (EFC) before eligibility for funds may be determined.

**3.1.1** To receive federal aid from the major student aid programs, a student must meet the eligibility criteria listed below:

- 3.1.1.1** Demonstrate financial need,
- 3.1.1.2** Have a high school diploma or General Education Diploma (GED), meet other standards established by the state that are approved by the U. S. Department of Education, or complete a high school education in a home setting that is treated as a home school or private school under state law,
- 3.1.1.3** Be enrolled as a degree seeking student in an eligible program of study,
- 3.1.1.4** Be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen,
- 3.1.1.5** Have a valid Social Security number,
- 3.1.1.6** Make satisfactory academic progress in a higher program of study,
- 3.1.1.7** Not owe a refund on a federal grant or be in default on a federal loan,
- 3.1.1.8** Be registered with the Selective Service if required,
- 3.1.1.9** Not receive a Pell Grant from more than one institution concurrently.
- 3.1.1.10** Not have exceeded the 600% lifetime eligibility limits.

Each year the Director of Student Financial Services computes a Cost of Attendance (COA) for the federal Pell Grant and other federal programs. For Pell purposes, this cost is calculated on a 9 month academic year basis. This cost, the student's expected family contribution (EFC), and the student's enrollment level (full-time, 3/4 time, 1/2 time, less<1/2 time) determine the amount of the Pell Grant. The Department of Education annually provides institutions the Pell Payment Schedule. For the current award year, the document indicates the maximum Pell Grant for a full time student. The schedule also outlines reduced eligibility for part-time enrollment levels.

When registering for classes for the upcoming term, eligible students receive a federal Pell Grant award notification to use in Lawson State's Business Affairs Office, Cashier, or Bookstore toward the costs of tuition, fees, books, supplies, meal tickets, exam fees, uniforms, etc. Students may continue to make charges against the award until after the drop/add period. The

enrollment status of a student is not determined until after the end of the drop/add period of the term. At that time, the actual amount of Pell Grant is determined for each student. Pell awards are recalculated when there is a change in the EFC or if there are enrollment status changes. Modifications in cost of attendance also may impact Pell awards.

Pell Grant funds are disbursed to those students who have an official EFC and a completed financial aid file. Before disbursement, an Estimated Student Payable report is reviewed to ensure the student remains eligible for the grant and registered for the appropriate number of credit hours.

### **3.1.2 Summer Aid**

If a student has eligibility for a Pell grant and has not used his/her entire allocation during the academic year, the appropriate remainder may be used during the summer enrollment period. Remaining monies may be used for summer only.

The Summer term is considered a trailer period. All hours attempted and completed during a Summer term are treated as any other in determining SAP status and SAP will be checked following each Summer term.

### **Year Round Pell**

Beginning with the 2017-2018 academic year, eligible students are able to receive up to 150% of their scheduled Pell award. Once a student has exhausted 100% of their first scheduled award, they can receive up to an additional 50% Federal Pell award, based on the current academic year EFC award. To be eligible for Federal Pell over the first 100% scheduled award, the student must be enrolled in at least six Title IV eligible credit hours. For example, if student enrolled in 12 credit hours in Fall 2017 and 12 credit hours in Spring 2018, they will be eligible for up to an additional 50% Federal Pell if they enroll in at least 6 Title IV eligible credit hours in Summer 2018. Student Financial Services will monitor a student's enrollment status at the point of disbursement to ensure that a student is enrolled in at least 6 Title IV eligible credit hours before disbursing Federal Pell in excess of 100% of the first scheduled award. Student Financial Services will submit the AEI (Additional Eligibility Indicator) flag via EdExpress to COD, for all students we disburse over their first 100% scheduled award. SFS will reconcile the AEI flag for students who did not attend, or had an R2T4 calculation performed which caused them to have less than 100% Federal Pell disbursed.

Any Federal Pell eligibility used over the initial 100% first scheduled award will still count towards a student's Pell LEU.

### **Crossover Payment Periods**

Lawson State Community College (LSCC) is a trailer institution in regards to crossover payment periods and year round Federal Pell. We will apply this policy to all students without exception. Therefore, we did not award Federal Pell for any students in Summer 2017, from the 2017-2018 academic year scheduled award.

Even though LSCC is a trailer institution in regards to crossover payment periods, we will still accommodate students who used a Summer 2017 header at a different institution, then transferred to LSCC mid-year. In this scenario, we will still verify that a transfer student who

used a Summer Header of Federal Pell will be enrolled in at least 6 Title IV eligible credit hours prior to disbursing any Federal Pell over the first 100% scheduled award, whether enrolling in a Spring or Summer term.

### **3.2 Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG), Alabama Student Assistance Program (ASAP), and Federal Work Study (FWS).**

In awarding FSEOG, ASAP, and FWS, the student's cost of attendance (COA), the EFC, and other aid or resources (such as Vocational Rehabilitation, employer tuition assistance, scholarships, etc.) must be considered. COA is determined prior to any awarding of these funds. It includes an average cost for tuition and fees, books and supplies, and allowances for room and board, transportation, and miscellaneous personal expenses. Other costs such as daycare and expenses associated with a disability can be included on a case-by-case basis with appropriate documentation. The COA is adjusted proportionately for students enrolling  $\frac{3}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{2}$ , or less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  time. EFC and other aid or resources are subtracted from the COA, and the result is the student's financial "need." Any remaining need after Pell Grant is awarded may be met with FSEOG, ASAP, and FWS based on Department of Education guidelines.

In practice, most awardees of FSEOG and ASAP are Pell eligible students with "0" EFCs who have dependents and who meet at least one of the other criteria. Some funds are held for use for high priority new students enrolling later in the year. Additionally, funds awarded to students who leave school are awarded to other needy students during the year. ASAP funds are made available to the institution in the fall at which time the Office of Student Financial Services begins to make those awards. When awarding FSEOG, ASAP, and FWS, a student's award for the year is prorated according to the course load. Unfortunately, funds for both grants are so limited that many Pell eligible students with "0" EFCs go un-awarded.

#### **3.2.1 Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (FSEOG) Institutional/Program Policy**

The Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant Program (FSEOG) is federally funded for the purpose of helping financially needy students to meet the cost of postsecondary education. The institution administers this program. When awarding FSEOG funds for the award year, students with the lowest expected family contribution will be selected first, who will also receive Pell Grant in that award year. This is the first selection group. A student who receives Pell Grant at any time in the award year maybe awarded FSEOG for that award year; the student does not have to receive a Pell Grant in the same period as the FSEOG. Part-time students enrolled in a degree-seeking program are eligible for FESOG.

In addition to a "0" EFC, other criteria are considered to more finely delineate need when awarding FSEOG. Those priority criteria may include, but are not limited to:

- 3.2.1.1** Students with dependents,
- 3.2.1.2** Students who live somewhere other than with parents or relatives,
- 3.2.1.3** Students who show unusual need due to class load,
- 3.2.1.4** Students who receive no other resources.

Financial aid award information is entered into the Alliant data system, which provides critical information for awarding such as, EFC, COA, need and other resources. Award notifications are generated and provided to eligible students. The award notification provides the amount and type of the award for each semester. If FSEOG funds are canceled due to withdrawals, etc., additional students will be awarded unexpended funds.

FSEOG awards are reported to the Business Office through the Alliant data system in time for FSEOG checks to be generated. The Business Office provides students with a FSEOG paycheck stub showing the amount of the grant. Students receiving payment via direct deposit may contact LSCC Payroll for a copy of the payment stub. Students are strongly encouraged to retain this information for tax purposes. Students may also view payment information via Student Suite in the Alliant data system.

### FSEOG Analysis

**CWS Reconciliation**  
**ASAP & SEOG Reconciliation**  
**Pell Reconciliation**

#### Award Minimum & Maximum

<b>FSEOG MINIMUM</b>	<b>\$ 100.00</b>
<b>FSEOG MAXIMUM</b>	<b>\$ 4,000.00</b>

#### **Code of Regulations Title 34-Subtitle B-Chapter VI-Part 676**

**Clearly provides purpose, definitions, student eligibility, selection of Students, payment, and minimum and maximum award.**

#### **3.2.2 Alabama Student Assistance Program (ASAP)**

When funded by the State of Alabama, the level of funding for each college is based on an institution's relative need as determined by the federal FWS allocation formula, the percentage of state residents enrolled at the college, and the percentage of non-theology majors.

These funds are awarded to the neediest Pell Grant recipients, who are also Alabama residents (see FSEOG awarding criteria). Awarding of ASAP funds begins with the Fall term because allocation amounts are submitted to the institution at that time. All recipients receive an ASAP paycheck stub showing the amount of the grant. They are strongly encouraged to retain this information for tax purposes. Students receiving payment via direct deposit may contact LSCC Payroll for a copy of the payment stub. Students may also view payment information via Student Suite in the Alliant data system.

To request ASAP funds for the college, the Director of Student Financial Services sends an invoice to the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) each term requesting a portion of the total allocation. The check is sent to the institution and is deposited into an

account designated by the Business Office. A report on each student recipient (name, social security number, and dependency status, amount of award, fall term enrollment level, and family income) is generated and submitted to ACHE by the required deadline date each year.

### **3.2.3 Federal College Work Study Program (FCWS)**

The Federal College Work Study Program is a part-time employment program for eligible financial aid applicants, providing a monthly income to assist with the costs of attending college. FCWS students usually work between 10 and 19 hours weekly at a wage in alignment with other student workers. Interested students are identified by completing a FCWS Work-Study application in the Office of Student Financial Services prior to each academic year as well as their response to Question #31 on their FAFSA, asking if they would like to be considered for the FCWS program or by advising the Office of Student Financial Services of their desire to work. A student's eligibility for FCWS is determined by reviewing the student's data in the ALLIANT Data system to determine if there is unmet need. If sufficient need exists for a reasonable number of work-study hours once other financial aid is awarded, work-study can be awarded. FCWS funds are awarded to as many students as possible. Eligible students are matched with job requests according to type of work, time of work, and skills required. Various departments throughout the campus notify the Office of Student Financial Services of their need for student workers via a request form. Eligible students are sent to interview, and work-study is awarded if the student is accepted for a position.

The student is provided with an award notification indicating the amount of earnings available each term. The student must complete a packet of forms including the Student Employment Form, the Federal Work-Study Agreement, the Form W-4, Form A-4 or A-4E. Supervisors must sign the Student Employment Form indicating the student worker has been accepted. The form also serves as a work approval. After the student has completed all requirements including an orientation session with an administrator from the Office of Student Financial Services, the student is approved to work. All students are given time sheets each month which must be completed in ink. Time sheets must be received by the Office of Student Financial Services on the first working day of the subsequent month, and not later than the third (3<sup>rd</sup>), in order to prepare for check disbursement. Upon receipt of time sheets, the Office of Student Financial Services personnel check the time sheets for accuracy and total them. Payroll disbursement occurs on the tenth day of the subsequent month after 1:00 p.m. in the Business Office.

All students receiving a paper check receives FCWS paycheck stub showing the amount of the check and are strongly encouraged to retain stubs for tax purposes. Students receiving payment via direct deposit may contact LSCC Payroll for a copy of the payment stub. Students may also view payment information via Student Suite in the Alliant data system. In January, the Business Office provides to all work-study students a Form W-2 indicating total wages for the prior calendar year. If the student files a tax return for that year, work-study earnings must be included as part of wages.

To request a student worker, faculty and staff must complete a request form, which is available in the Office of Student Financial Services and electronically at [www.lawsonstate.edu](http://www.lawsonstate.edu). All potential supervisors must complete these request forms. The request form must include a job

description, job qualifications, and the supervisor's signature. All supervisors are given a set of guidelines regarding the supervision of work-study students; and their signatures on the request form acknowledge their agreement to be bound by these guidelines.

Federal work-study is awarded each term to students depending upon their desire to work, the availability of work, the student's skills and hours of availability, the student's financial need, and the amount of FWS funds allocated from which to pay students. Students typically work 10-19 hours weekly at a wage rate in alignment with other student workers. Students on the work-study program receive \$8.00 - \$9.00 per hour and are paid monthly by the Business Office. An effort is made to place students in work situations that will complement their academic training if possible.

### **3.3 Awarding and Disbursement Procedures for Scholarships**

**3.3.1 Institutional Scholarship Programs** - Deadlines for submission of scholarship applications to the Office of Student Financial Services are April 15<sup>th</sup> and June 15<sup>th</sup> of each year. Scholarship applications are submitted to the Office of Student Financial Services on the designated scholarship submission form.

**3.3.1.1 Academic Scholarship.** Recipients are reviewed and selected by the LSCC Scholarship Committee from currently enrolled students. Applicants must have a grade point average of 3.0 or higher in at least 12 completed hours of non-developmental credit at LSCC and be recommended in writing by an instructor. They must also submit a completed scholarship application and letter of recommendation by the deadline listed in college publications. Recommendations are made to the President who makes the final decision regarding selection of recipients.

**3.3.1.2 Ambassador Scholarship.** Applicants must have a grade point average of 3.0 or higher, and submit the application with required essay and letter of recommendation. Applicant must also interview with the institution's Public Relations Director, and complete at least 50 hours of community service as directed by the Public Relations department.

**3.3.1.3 Interfaith Partnership Outreach Program (formerly Pastoral Scholarship).** Applicants are selected by Community Ministers and referred to the Office of Public Relations and Office of Student Financial Services to determine eligibility. Recipients must be a first time student, having never attended any collegiate institution, and have a 3.0 grade point average. Students must submit supporting documentation, including application, FAFSA, and high school transcript to be considered.

### **3.3.2 Awarding and Disbursement Procedures for External Scholarships**

In addition to a number of external scholarships, up to 500 tuition and fee scholarships (tuition and fee waivers) are available annually to Lawson State Community College students from the Alabama Community College System.

A number of externally controlled academic scholarships are given each year to LSCC students. The external organization selects the recipient, sometimes at the recommendation of LSCC faculty and/or staff, and sends the name of the student and funds to the Business Office or the Office of Student Financial Services.

The amount is posted to the student's account and the Business Office deposits any remaining funds via direct deposit or by generating a check for the amount to the student. Students are encouraged to write a letter of thanks to the donor.

The tuition waivers for other internal scholarships are awarded according to the criteria below:

### **3.2.1 Achievement, Skills USA/VICA, and Academic Scholarships**

- 3.3.2.1.1 Achievement** Scholarship recipients are selected in the spring by the LSCC Scholarship Committee from a group of high school seniors who have made application for the scholarship. Applicants must have at least a 3.0 grade point average and submit application with essay and a letter of recommendation from a high school teacher, counselor, community leader, or principal by the published deadline. The Scholarship Committee reviews all applications, and makes recommendations to the President who makes the final decision regarding the selection of recipients. Appropriate school personnel present scholarship certificates to recipients at high school Awards and Honors ceremonies in April and May. Scholarships are awarded for the upcoming Fall semester.
- 3.3.2.1.2 Skills VICA USA** contest scholarship recipients are identified each spring from a list of Skills USA District II first, second, and third place winners, including individuals, as well as teams, the top three finishers in certain state competitions, the first and second place in other districts in certain fields. Offers are made to students in these categories. Scholarship certificates may be presented to recipients at high school "Awards and Honors" ceremonies in April or May. Scholarships are awarded for the upcoming Fall semester.
- 3.3.2.1.3 Senior Adult** state funded tuition waivers are available each term to students in attendance at LSCC who are 60 years of age or older on a space available basis. Waiver may be used for Developmental courses, as well as credit bearing courses. Eligible students must document their age before being given a tuition waiver. A computer entry recording enrollment and tuition data is kept on each recipient.
- 3.3.2.1.4 Employee and Employee Dependent Scholarships – Policy 612.02 03/08**  
**3.3.2.1.4 Employee and Employee Dependent Scholarships – Policy 612.02 03/08** state funded tuition waivers for full-time employees and their dependents (spouse and unmarried, natural or adopted children or stepchildren still residing in the employee's household). Scholarship will pay for required courses only.

One-third tuition is paid for employees with at least 12 months of employment; 2/3 for employees with at least 24 months; full tuition for employees with 36 or more months of employment. Participants are required to maintain a "C" average.

**3.3.2.1.5 Other Scholarships**, such as Performing Arts, Career Technical, are available. Criteria for these scholarships include, but are not limited to active participation and or auditions set by the advisors of each area.

**3.3.2.1.6 Leadership and Presidential Scholarships** are available to students majoring an approved program at Lawson State Community College. Awards are based on a variety of criteria depending on the type of scholarship, and are not based on financial need.

## **GUIDELINES FOR POLICY 612.02: TUITION ASSISTANCE**

### **I. GENERAL**

This tuition waiver program is designed for all full-time and Salary Schedule H-35 employees of The Alabama College System and the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education and their dependents as defined under Section II. Courses taught by Athens State University are not subject to this policy.

The program will be coordinated by each institution for employees within The Alabama College System and the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education. An application form for the tuition assistance program is available at each institution and should be completed prior to registration for classes. A copy of the completed form must be maintained by the employing institution and the institution offering courses (if different).

### **II. DEFINITIONS**

**Employee:** Any full-time or Salary Schedule H-35 employee of any System institution and the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education. This program will not include temporary or part-time employees (other than Salary Schedule H-35 employees), or persons serving as independent contractors to any of the System institutions or to the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education.

**Dependent:** The spouse of any full-time employee, the unmarried, natural or adopted children of any full-time employee, residing in the household of the employee or the employee's former spouse; the unmarried stepchildren of any full-time employee, residing in the household of the employee; a legal ward (a minor child placed by the court under the care of a guardian).

### **III. ELIGIBILITY**

#### **A. Requirements**

**Employees:** Employees must have been employed by a System Institution or the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education for one full academic year or at least 12 months, whichever is less restrictive, prior to the first scheduled day of class for the term for which the employee is applying. Employee eligibility will remain in effect for the duration of their employment in The Alabama College System or the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education.

## **B. Termination of Eligibility**

Employees: Eligibility terminates if the employee discontinues full-time employment at the respective institution for any reason except on an approved leave of absence.

Dependents: Dependents will be ineligible when said employee becomes ineligible, except that dependents of any employee who has 25 years of more of continuous service in The Alabama College System or the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education upon retirement from The Alabama College System or the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education are eligible to participate in the program for a five-year period commencing with the date of the employee's retirement.

## **IV. AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE, LIMITATIONS, CONDITIONS, AND AUDITING**

### **A. Tuition Cost**

All eligible employees and their dependents will be allowed a waiver of one-third of the normally-charged tuition after the first year (full academic year or 12-month period) of employment; a waiver of two-thirds tuition after the second year of employment; and a waiver of full tuition after the third year of employment (partial tuition adjustments are to be rounded down to the nearest dollar). Salary Schedule H-35 employees will be allowed a waiver calculated at a prorated rate of full-time employment. Expenses for supplies, books, and fees other than tuition will not be waived. Each institution will be allowed to count the credit hours generated by these enrollees.

### **B. Limitation**

There is no limitation as to the number of credit hours taken, other than the regular academic limitations that apply at the respective institutions. All students will be required to abide by the academic policies that are in effect at the institution they are attending.

Dependents: Dependents will be eligible when said employee is eligible, and to the same degree to which the employee is eligible, except as herein modified.

### **C. Conditions**

To be eligible for tuition waiver, the student-employee or dependent must maintain at least a "C" (2.0 on a 4.0 scale) in the courses for which he/she receives tuition assistance. Failure of the student-employee or dependent to meet this grade requirement will result in the employee or dependent's having to pay tuition for courses taken until his/her average grade is "C" or better. The student-employee or dependent can then again be eligible when his/her cumulative grade point average is brought back up to the "C" requirement.

### **D. Auditing**

The student-employee or dependent will be allowed to audit one course (up to five credit hours) per term at no cost.

The student-employee or dependent must meet all attendance requirements, class participation, and assignments as required of credit-enrolled students except the final examination is not required. Failure to comply with these requirements will result in the student-employee or dependent becoming ineligible for further participation as an audit student in credit hour-producing courses reported for funding purposes.

### **E. Repeating Class**

Tuition costs for courses repeated will be the responsibility of the student-employee or dependent and consideration under the tuition assistance program will be disallowed. Tuition assistance will be disallowed for repeating a class for which the grade of "W" was originally received.

## **F. Records Transmittal**

The student-employee or dependent must re-certify eligibility, as specified in Condition IV.C. above, prior to registering for a new term by providing verification of course completion.

### **3.3.2.1.15 Career and Technical Education (CTE) Tuition and Fees**

Waives in-state funded tuition and fee (no other expenses) waivers for student seeking a two-year Associate degree or certificate program in specific Career/Technical programs. Eligible students are incoming freshmen and currently enrolled students. Incoming freshmen must have a high school cumulative grade point average of 2.0 or higher. The waiver covers two years of tuition and fees.

Currently enrolled students must have and maintain a cumulative grade point average of 2.50 or higher. The waivers cover one year of tuition and fees.

### **3.3.3 General Education Diploma – GED – Policy 805.03**

Colleges are authorized to award up to three (3) credit hours of instruction to students in attendance at LSCC who successfully passed the General Education Diploma (GED) test and obtained the certificate on or after July 1, 2002.

### **3.3.4 Ready to Work – Policy 805.3**

Students who completed the Ready to Work (previously known as Focus in Industry Training (FIT) program and obtained a high school diploma on or after July 1, 2002.

The waivers for these students include tuition and mandatory fees. The waiver will not count as institutional scholarships.

## **SECTION 4.0 INSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO EDUCATIONAL LOANS:**

- 4.1** Lawson State Community College does not participate in any Federal and State Loan Programs.
- 4.2** Lawson State Community College is, however, approved for deferment of previous loans.

## **SECTION 5.0 CONSUMER INFORMATION REQUIRMENTS**

The Student Financial Services and Veterans Affairs committee is composed of representatives from the Office of Student Financial Services and Veterans Affairs, the Office of Admissions and Student Records, faculty, and staff. Also included on this committee are a counselor, and a member of the student body may also be included. Student Financial Services and Veteran Affairs understand the complexities of Financial Aid, accurate and timely dissemination of information to consumers is vital.

### **5.1 Documents and Methods**

The documents that are used to determine institutional, program, and student eligibility for financial aid include current regulations published in the Federal Register, Department of Education handbooks and guides, Dear Colleague letters, the *National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators Newsletter*, Federal Legislation Authorizing Financial Aid Programs, Verification guide and other laws or regulations that impact student aid. There are many forms that may be required to evaluate student aid eligibility. However, a student need only submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to apply for aid.

- a. Additional documents may be requested to complete processing of the aid request. Notification of these additional required documents is sent to students through a Missing Information Email or Letter.
- b. Free Application of Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) - a need analysis document published by the Department of Education (ED). Information is sent to the Central Processing System (CPS) for an analysis of the expected family contribution (EFC). Students receive a Student Aid Report (SAR) that shows the results of the analysis. Federal aid may only be awarded based on the official results of the FAFSA.
- c. Verification Worksheet - a document that collects updated information submitted on the FAFSA. Students who are selected for verification in groups V1, V4 and V5 must complete a verification worksheet. Dependent students' worksheet must include a parent's signature. A Verification Worksheet may be required if institutionally selected to resolve conflicting information.
- d. Federal Tax Return Transcripts - Federal Income Tax Return transcripts will be requested if a student is selected for verification, or if it is deemed necessary to verify conflicting information. Dependent students must submit their tax return transcripts and the tax return transcripts of their parents. If student's Student Aid Report indicates that tax information was transferred via the IRS Data Retrieval method, a Tax Return transcript is not required to be submitted, unless there is conflicting information that needs to be verified.
- e. Independent students must submit their tax return transcripts and their spouse's if applicable. Amended tax returns (if applicable) must be signed or have the preparer's section completed, with typed name and signature, W-2's, and a complete copy of the original tax return transcript is necessary if we required the taxes be amended.
- f. Student/Parent Signature Page
- g. Student/Parent Asset Worksheet
- h. Selective Service Registration/Authorization
- i. Question 23 – Illegal drug questionnaire to determine eligibility
- j. Clarification on Income and Support – Students, parents, and spouses who are required to submit income, but appear to have significantly low income and resources must submit this form to substantiate their means of living if not clear on the Verification Worksheet. It can also be used to verify receipt of SNAP and other benefits, child support paid, support of other household members in question, parental non-support of a dependent student, and dislocated workers.
- k. Citizenship/Residency Verification - a legal document that proves that the student has citizenship status eligible for financial aid purposes.
- l. Dependency Appeal – If a student notifies FA that they have unusual circumstances that they feel warrants them being classified as an Independent Student, they may submit this

form along with a personal statement and supporting documentation for consideration of an override.

- m. Identity and Statement of Educational Purpose– This form is used for verification groups V4 and V5 to verify a student’s intended use of financial aid funds and their identity.
- n. Unusual Enrollment History (UEH) – If a student is flagged by CPS for Unusual Enrollment History (comment codes 359 & 360 or flags #2 and # 3 on the ISIR), they must submit this form along and any previous college transcripts (official or unofficial) for the appropriate award periods being assessed to determine continued federal aid (TIV) eligibility.
- o. Professional Judgment Application and Student Certifications – documents used to make adjustments when a student/or the student’s family experiences unusual circumstances which affect their current financial situation.

## **5.2 Confidentiality of Student Records**

All records and conversations between an aid applicant, his/her family, and the staff of the Office of Student Financial Services and Veterans Affairs are confidential and entitled to the protection ordinarily given a counseling relationship. Failure to abide by the policies and procedures of the institution will result in termination from employment with the institution.

## **5.3 Information Sharing and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

Lawson State assures the confidentiality of student educational records, in accordance with LSCC policies, state laws, and federal laws, including the Family Educational Right to Privacy Act (FERPA). As a rule, all currently enrolled and former students have the right to review their records to determine their content and accuracy. Parents of dependent students, as defined by the Internal Revenue Code and Federal Financial Aid Methodology, who give evidence of this status, have the same rights. For the cost of photocopying, students may generally have copies of any documents in their financial aid file, except for financial aid transcripts from other institutions. A student who wishes to obtain access to his/her financial aid records in the Alliant data system or XTender, our scanning system, must schedule an appointment with the Director or Assistant Director of Student Financial Services and Veterans Affairs.

## **5.4 Internal Disclosure**

The Office of Student Financial Services and Veterans Affairs maintains a master record for each student receiving financial assistance. Information from a student’s financial aid records may be released internally to other college officials on an as-needed basis. All financial aid folders are retained **for three years after** submission of the Fiscal Operations Report and Application to Participate (FISAP) report. Any records involved in any claim or expenditure that has been questioned by an audit are retained until all questions are resolved.

## **5.5 External Disclosure**

A student's consent is not required for disclosure of portions of his or her educational record defined by the institution as "Directory" information. For example, the college may release the student's name, address, phone number, and dates of enrollment. Written consent is required for the disclosure or publication of any other information (not defined as "Directory" information) that is a part of the education record. A written release must be submitted to the Office of Admissions and Student Records for any additional information to be released to any other person or agency. The release must contain the date, student's social security number, student's signature, contact information of the person to whom the information may be released, and a summary of the information to be released.

## **SECTION 6.0: APPLICATIONS, VERIFICATION, & DOCUMENTATION**

### **6.1 Verification Policy**

Verification is required by the federal government to ensure that applicants are submitting correct information. This information is the determining factor in receiving Title IV funds and is of the utmost importance. The federal processor selects applicants for verification. The College may also select applicants for verification. **Because the College is liable for disbursements made prior to verification, students must complete the verification process before aid is awarded or disbursed.**

### **Verification Tracking Group Changes**

In prior processing cycles, an applicant selected for verification remained in the original verification-tracking group for the entire cycle. Beginning with the 2016-2017 processing cycle, the CPS may move applicants from previously assigned Verification Tracking Groups V1, V4, and V6 to Verification Tracking Group V5 based on corrections made to the applicant's record or other information available to the Department of Ed. The Department of Ed believes that the number of applicants who may change verification tracking groups will be minimal.

A new Verification Selection Change Flag value of C (change in Verification Tracking Group) was added to notify schools when the Verification Tracking Group changes to a different verification-tracking group on a subsequent transaction. Verification Selection Change Flag Y (Transaction now selected for verification when the transaction being corrected was not selected) will continue to be used. Verification Selection OSFS VERIFICATION 4-4 Discretionary Verification Change Flag C will only be assigned when a prior transaction was selected for verification and the CPS is moving the new transaction to the V5 Verification Tracking Group. In FAA Access to CPS Online, you can find the Verification Selection Change Flag in Student Inquiry on the FAA Information and ISIR Compare pages on the SAR (PDF and HTML). In addition, a Verification Selection Flag is now printed in the FAA section on the SARs and SAR Acknowledgements mailed to students. The Verification Selection Flag has the same valid values of Y, C, or blank.

### **6.2 Who Must Be Verified**

1. The College will verify applicants selected by the U.S. Department of Education via federally approved edits.
2. The College will verify all Title IV eligible applicants selected by the U. S. Department of Education for verification.
3. The college will verify all applicants selected by the U.S. Department of Education, even if previously verified by another institution.
4. The College will verify any applicant with missing, inaccurate, or conflicting information.
5. The college may select any applicant for verification.

### **6.3 Items to Be Verified**

1. For applicants selected under Item 1 above, the College will verify the items specified in 34 CFR Part 668.56.
  - a. For the award year, the following data elements are required to be verified:
    1. Household size
    2. Number enrolled in college
    3. Snap Benefits
    4. Child Support Paid/Received
    5. Adjusted Gross Income
    6. U.S. income tax paid
    7. Certain untaxed income benefits
2. The College will resolve and document discrepant application information for all applicants prior to disbursing Title IV aid and in compliance with 34 CFR Part 668. Some examples of conflicting or discrepant information include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Married, but both filed Head of Household
  - b. Under age of 24 (female), with children but has no income
  - c. No taxes filed but income over filing requirement.

### **6.4 Applicant's Responsibility**

1. Applicants selected for verification by the U.S. Department of Education are required to provide requested information or documentation in order to be eligible to receive Title IV student aid funds.
2. The applicant must repay any overpayment discovered during verification or updating.

## 6.5 Documentation:

The College will require applicants selected for verification to submit acceptable documentation as specified under 34 CFR Part 668.

<u>Verification Item</u>	<u>Acceptable Documentation</u>
Household size	Independent/Dependent Federal Verification Worksheet (V1-V6)
Number enrolled in college	Independent/Dependent Federal Verification Worksheet (V1-V6)
Adjusted Gross Income	IRS Tax Return Transcript for required year
U.S. income tax paid	IRS Tax Return Transcript for required year
Untaxed Income/Benefits	IRS Tax Return Transcript & W2 for required year

### Additional Documentation:

The list below is not all inclusive and may vary depending on a student's situation.

Low/No Income	Non- Filing Statement Low Income Resource Form
Marital Status	Marriage/Divorce Certificate Documentation of Legal Separation
Miscellaneous	Birth Certificates Legal Guardianship Documentation

## 6.6 Conflicting Information

If the Office of Student Financial Services has conflicting information for an applicant or has any reason to believe application information is incorrect, the Office of Student Financial Services staff is required to resolve any discrepancies discovered in a student's file. Because need analysis information is only collected from the DOE, and additional information is typically not requested from students who are not selected for verification, conflicting information is systematically rare.

## 6.7 Corrections/Notifications:

If the required documentation reveals that corrections are necessary, the Office of Student Financial Services will make the corrections electronically. Upon receipt of the corrected Student Aid Report/ISIR, an Award Notification will be generated and provided to the student via mail. Students may also view their award via Student Suite.

## 6.8 Revision of Financial Aid Awards

Award packages may be revised at the request of the student. Requests for adjustments must be in writing (if initiated by the student) and generally should be considered only once per year, provided funding is available. A revised award notification will be

produced indicating the total amount awarded. All revisions resulting in an increase or decrease of a student's award must be documented. Allowable reasons for revisions include but are not limited to the following:

1. Changes resulting from verification
2. Change in availability of funds
3. Staff member error
4. Student requested income adjustment
5. Additional scholarship

## **6.9 Over Awards**

An over award is any amount paid directly to the student greater than what the student is entitled to receive. This may occur when:

1. Awards/disbursements are made incorrectly
2. A student reports incorrect information on his/her financial aid application
3. A student withdraws from school

## **6.10 Treatment of an Over Award**

Any information, which the financial aid administrator discovers as incorrect, must be corrected according to procedures outlined in federal regulations. The student will be notified, collections of these funds will be attempted by the Office of Business Affairs, and the collected funds will be repaid to the appropriate source of funding. If the student refuses, the appropriate agencies will be notified.

## **SECTION 7: FILE REVIEW**

**7.1** To receive federal aid from the major student aid programs, a student must meet the eligibility criteria listed below:

- 7.1.1** Demonstrate financial need
- 7.1.2** Have a high school diploma or General Education Diploma (GED); meet other standards established by the state that are approved by the U. S. Department of Education, or complete a high school education in a home setting that is treated as a home school or private school under state law,
- 7.1.3** Enroll as a degree seeking student in an eligible program of study,
- 7.1.4** Be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen,
- 7.1.5** Have a valid Social Security number,
- 7.1.6** Make satisfactory academic progress in a higher program of study,
- 7.1.7** Not owe a refund on a federal grant or be in default on a federal loan,
- 7.1.8** Be registered with the Selective Service if required.
- 7.1.9** Not receive a Pell Grant from more than one institution concurrently

**7.1.10** Not have exceeded the 600% lifetime eligibility limits

## **7.2 Procedures:**

Students at Lawson State Community College apply for federal aid (Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant, Federal Work-Study, and Alabama Student Assistance Program) using the "Free Application for Federal Student Aid" (FAFSA). Using Federal Methodology (FM), a need-analysis method prescribed in the HEA Reauthorization of 1992, the contracted federal processor determines the "expected family contribution" (EFC) based on the family's income, assets, number in the family, number in college, and other relevant information gathered on the FAFSA. The EFC determines the student's eligibility for the Federal Pell Grant. The EFC is also used in determining "need" for other federal aid by deducting the EFC number, the amount of Pell Grant eligibility, and other resources from the cost of attendance at the college. The Pell Grant is the foundation of a student's award package because eligibility is determined by the Federal Government.

After a student has filed the FAFSA or Renewal FAFSA, the central processor will process the information and send an electronic report called the Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR) to the Office of Student Financial Services. Typically, the report is printed and placed in the student's file. Supporting documentation such as tax return transcripts, etc. may also be part of a student's file if deemed necessary. Other pertinent data formerly gathered on a Financial Aid Transcript from previously attended colleges is now available on the website of the National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS) or the Common Origination and Disbursement website (COD). This information is used primarily when processing aid for transfer students.

The Office of Student Financial Services uses the Alliant data systems software, which is in compliance with federal regulations. Although individual student folders are maintained, the software stores most of the necessary information needed for awarding aid. The software also maintains all funds, expenditures, and balances of awards made. In addition, the Office of Student Financial Services uses EdExpress and EdConnect software, provided by the Department of Education, to facilitate the timely and accurate awarding of aid to students.

When a student's file is complete, office personnel checks computer records generated by the Admissions and Records Office to document that the student is a high school graduate, or has the General Education Diploma (GED). If this documentation is not yet received, the student is informed and he or she must provide the necessary documentation to the Office of Student Financial Services before an award can be made. Other student information such as type of award sought and expected entry date is also checked. The SAR/ISIR and supporting documentation for those students selected for verification are checked for accuracy. Corrections are submitted electronically by Office of Student Financial Services personnel, or the student.

## **SECTION 9.0: AWARDING & PACKAGING FINANCIAL AID**

### **9.1 Awarding Financial Aid**

Once a file is completed and reviewed, the specific amounts and types of aid for that student can be determined. A student's eligibility for the Federal Pell Grant is determined according to the Cost of Attendance (COA), the student's enrollment level, the length of the program of study, and the EFC. An EFC of "0" through "5576" normally means the student is eligible for the Pell Grant, if all other eligibility conditions are met. A Payment Schedule is provided annually by the Department of Education showing adjustments for  $\frac{3}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{2}$ , and less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  time enrollment. A student's federal Pell Grant is always awarded first and is not impacted by receipt of external resources or aid. The Office of Student Financial Services submits the federal aid award information of each eligible student to the Business Office. After tuition, fees, and other charges are deducted from the award, students receive a disbursement check for any credit balance approximately 14 days after the first day of classes.

### **9.2 Determination of Total Funds to be Awarded**

The Department of Education sends the Office of Student Financial Services information detailing annual fund allocations through the Federal Authorization Letter with Official Notice of Funding. Determining the total funds available includes an evaluation and projection of available funds and administrative expense. Careful projections are made to enable the Office of Student Financial Services staff to offer fair and equitable packages to students. In addition to these funds, we receive funding from the Alabama Commission on Higher Education.

## **SECTION 10.0: PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT**

### **10.1 Professional Judgment Policy**

#### **10.1.1 Authority:**

Authority to exercise professional judgment is found in [Section 479 A of the Higher Education Act of 1965 as amended](#) (a) of the federal financial aid regulations. Both current regulations and law recognizes that the Office of Student Financial Services may sometimes need to make adjustments to the costs of attendance and/or to the expected family contribution to allow for special circumstances.

The Higher Education Act provides that professional judgment may be exercised and Section 479 A (a) states: Nothing in (Title IV) shall be interpreted as limiting the authority of the student financial aid administrator, on the basis of adequate documentation, to make necessary adjustments to the cost of attendance and expected family contribution (or both) to allow for treatment of individual students with special circumstances. In addition, nothing in this title shall be interpreted as limiting the authority of the student financial aid administrator to use supplementary information about the financial status or personal circumstances of eligible applicants in selecting recipients and determining the amounts of awards under the Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant, Federal College Work-Study, Federal Perkins Loan, Federal Family Educational Loans, or Federal Direct

Loans.

### **10.1.2 Areas Under Which Professional Judgment Can Be Exercised:**

- 10.1.2.1 Expected family contribution/need analysis
- 10.1.2.2 Cost of attendance
- 10.1.2.3 Independent student status
- 10.1.2.4 Loss of Employment-Use estimated projected year income based on paystubs, unemployment benefits, and calculate estimated taxes using IRS tax tables or the FAFSA “Estimated Tax” calculator;
- 10.1.2.5 Death of Parent or spouse (remove deceased spouse/parent from household size and income
- 10.1.2.6 Divorce or separation-remove noncustodial spouse/parent from household size and income
- 10.1.2.7 One-Time Lump Sum Disbursement or Other Inflationary Income-Reduce the AGI by the payment and add to asset if applicable, not more than once (i.e. non-recurring income).
- 10.1.2.8 Excessive out of pocket medical expenses

**10.1.3 Documentation:** Documentation to be used in exercising professional judgment will include, but not be limited to the following:

- 10.1.3.1 Information from the SAR or ISIR
- 10.1.3.2 Supplemental information furnished by the parents and/or the student
- 10.1.3.3 Supplemental information provided by external agencies
- 10.1.3.4 Supplemental information provided by other school offices or departments

**10.1.4 Procedures:** All students requesting special circumstances will use a designated form to explain their situations, attaching additional documentation as necessary. Each case will be reviewed by the Director or Assistant Director of Student Financial Services at LSCC and evaluated according to the student or family circumstances to determine if an adjustment needs to be made to an element of need analysis affecting the expected family contribution, the cost of attendance, independent student status, or satisfactory academic progress.

### **10.1.5 Rationale for Making a Decision:**

The rationale for exercising professional judgment or rejecting a request for special consideration will be recorded on the Income Adjustment Request or Dependency Override forms in an area for office use only.

### **10.1.6 Adjustments to Need Analysis or Independent Student Status:**

The following are situations in which professional judgment might be exercised. Professional judgment is not limited to these situations.

- 10.1.6.1** A parent, the student, or a student's spouse who earned money in the previous year has lost his or her job and is not presently working or is working at a substantially lower rate of pay.
- 10.1.6.2** A parent, the student, or a student's spouse who received some source of untaxed income in the previous year is no longer receiving that income or is receiving a substantially reduced amount. Examples of untaxed income include but are not limited to: Social security benefits, child support, untaxed retirement or disability benefits, welfare benefits, ADC/AFDC.
- 10.1.6.3** The student has already applied for federal student aid and since that time, the student's parents or the student and spouse have separated or divorced.
- 10.1.6.4** The student has already applied for federal student aid and since that time, the student's parent(s) or the student's spouse has died.
- 10.1.6.5** The student's parents or the student and spouse experienced an illness or accident that resulted in unusually high medical expenses not covered by insurance.
- 10.1.6.6** The student's parents or the student and spouse incurred business losses not reflected on the federal tax return (bankruptcy, etc.)
- 10.1.6.7** The student does not meet the definition of independence as determined by Congress, but given family circumstances, should be treated as an independent student for the purposes of applying for federal financial aid. These family circumstances include but are not limited to physical, emotional, or sexual abuse as documented by counselors, teachers, ministers, etc. who personally know the family circumstances.

## **SECTION 11.0: DISBURSEMENTS**

- 11.1** In preparation for the disbursement of student aid checks, the Office of Student Financial Services staff checks all files to verify enrollment, make adjustments as needed, and ensure all information is complete. If any information is missing or incomplete, the student may not be included in the payroll or the check may have a hold placed on it until the problem is resolved.
- 11.2** Pell Grant checks are prepared and disbursed by the Business Office. All students receive a paycheck stub showing the amount of the grant and all deductions. They are strongly encouraged to retain this information for tax purposes. Students may view payment information via Student Suite in the Alliant system. Students receiving their refund via direct deposit may also view their information via Student Suite. Any grant or scholarship exceeding the cost of tuition, fees, books, supplies, and tools is taxable.
- 11.3** If the Pell Grant recipient withdraws from all classes within a prescribed time frame, a refund of tuition and fees is calculated by a designee' within the Business Office, and the amount is returned to the Pell Grant program if the student is a recipient of federal Title IV funds. For more information on refunds, please see the policy on Refunds.

**11.4** The procedure described above is followed each term. Several printouts are generated after each payroll to appropriately document the disbursements. These printouts are used in preparing Pell Payment records, which are electronically submitted to the U. S. Department of Education throughout the year.

**11.5** If a student has eligibility for a Pell grant and has not used his/her entire allocation during the academic year, the appropriate remainder may be used during the summer enrollment period. Remaining monies may be used for summer only.

### **11.6 Retroactive Payments**

If the college did not make a disbursement to an enrolled student for a payment period the student completed and the **student was eligible**, in the current award year, or loan period (e.g. because of an administrative delay, or because the student's ISIR was not available until a later date), the **College may** pay the student for this payment period.

A retroactive Pell Grant payment must be calculated based on the student's enrollment status according to work already completed, as required by 34 CFE 690.76(b).

## **SECTION 12.0: SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS:**

**12.1** The U.S Department of Education requires institutions of higher learning to establish standards of satisfactory academic progress of students receiving financial aid. Students must declare a major and be working towards completion of that major in order to receive financial aid. Failure to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) will result in the loss of federal and state grants and scholarships after the probationary terms. Students receiving federal financial aid through the Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Opportunity Grant (FSEOG), or Federal Work Study Program (FWSP) are required by federal regulations to make satisfactory progress toward a degree, diploma, or certificate in order to receive and retain eligibility for these funds.

In order to receive aid, a student must be making SAP regardless of whether he or she previously received aid.

Students are responsible for maintaining an acceptable level of progress regarding quality and quantity of work. Progress will be reviewed at the end of the every pay period. Records are reviewed after grades are posted at the end of each semester.

*Note: New students and/or transfer students are considered to be making Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)*

SAP includes three components:

**12.1.1 Qualitative Grade Point Average (GPA) (Cumulative):** Students enrolled in a certificate, diploma, AS, AAS, AAT or AOT program requiring more than 26 credit hours must achieve a *cumulative* Grade Point Average (GPA) of:

- 1.50 after attempting 12-21 credit hours
- 1.75 after attempting 22-32 credit hours
- 2.00 after attempting 33 or more credit hours

Students enrolled in Short Certificate programs equal to 26 credit hours must achieve a *cumulative* Grade Point Average (GPA) of

- 1.50 after attempting 12-17 credit hours
- 2.00 after attempting 18 or more credit hours

The GPA is cumulative (includes entire Academic history). Students must have a minimum GPA of 2.0 when they transfer programs in order to receive financial aid for the new program

**12.1.2 Quantitative Hours Completed (Cumulative)** Students must successfully complete at least 67% (2/3) of the **hours** attempted each term. Grades of A, B, C, or any derivative of these letters are “satisfactory” for financial aid purposes.

**12.1.3 Time Frame:**

The purpose of Federal Title IV financial aid programs is to assist students in meeting their educational expenses while they progress toward timely completion of their educational objectives. Lawson State, in compliance with Federal Regulation guidelines, will allow students to receive financial aid for up to 1.5 times the normal number of terms required for the degree or certificate. Part-time students' terms will be prorated accordingly.

Examples:	<u>Normal Length of Program</u>	<u>Number of terms allowed on financial aid to complete program</u>
	6 terms	9 terms
	5 terms	7.5 terms
	4 terms	6 terms
	3 terms	4.5 terms
	2 terms	3 terms
	1 term	1.5 terms

A student in violation of either of the first two components will be placed on **Financial Aid Warning for one term**. During this warning term, the student will continue to receive federal aid but must improve his/her academic record so that the grade point average and hours completed are in compliance with policy. Failure to do so will result in **suspension** of financial aid. A student who completely withdraws from all classes during a warning period, will be placed on suspension. To be reinstated on financial aid, the student must attend full-time for at least one term at his/her own expense and bring his/her academic record into compliance with the policy. When policy requirements are met, the student must request in writing that his/her academic record be reviewed for reinstatement. If unusual circumstances contributed to the student’s inability to make satisfactory academic progress, the student may appeal the decision to suspend federal aid by co

**Remedial Hours** – A financial aid recipient may not be paid for more than 30 credit hours for enrollment in remedial courses.

## **12.2 Financial Aid Warning**

Students who fail to maintain the required GPA or 67% (0.667) cumulative completion rate will be placed on financial aid warning. Students on financial aid warning will continue to be eligible to receive financial aid for one term only. Students on financial aid warning must meet all SAP requirements by the end of their warning period in order to receive financial aid in subsequent terms. Students placed on financial aid warning who fail to raise their required GPA and their completion rate to 67% (0.667) or higher by the end of their next term will be ineligible for all forms of Federal financial aid.

## **12.3 Financial Aid Probation**

If a student fails to achieve satisfactory academic progress by the end of the financial aid warning, or if a student fails to complete a program within the maximum time frame allowed he/she may request a term of probation by completing the appeal form. The student may have probation lifted and thereby regain eligibility for financial aid during subsequent terms if he/she makes satisfactory academic progress or if he/she receives approval from the Appeals Committee to complete the program of study.

## **12.4 Appeal Process**

The student may file an appeal by submitting a Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Form along with a Plan of Action to the Financial Aid Appeals Committee. The Plan of Action must provide an academic resolution in addition to discussing the circumstances of their current financial aid situation. The Financial Aid Appeals Committee meets **three** times a semester to consider appeals. Appeals must be written, specifically addressing the extenuating circumstances. Students may appeal financial aid suspension and termination from financial aid when they believe there are extenuating circumstances such as illness, personal problems, death in the immediate family, income loss or documented undue hardship. **Supporting documentation must be provided or the appeal will be denied. All appeals will be considered on a case by case basis. A student who pays for his/her tuition and fees or sits out for one or more terms does not automatically regain financial aid eligibility.** The decisions of the Financial Aid Appeals Committee is final.

## **12.5 Financial Aid Suspension**

If the student fails to follow the Plan of Action he/she will be suspended from federal financial aid. If placed on academic suspension, a student is NOT eligible to receive financial aid for the duration of suspension, even if he/she is readmitted to the College upon academic appeal. The student may gain eligibility for financial aid when satisfactory academic progress is obtained.

## **12.6 Academic Plans**

Students who successfully appeal a financial aid suspension and are placed on probation may be required to follow an Academic Plan as determined by the Financial Aid Appeals Committee in

order to continue receiving financial aid. Students on an Academic Plan are required to meet all requirements of the Plan each term. The fulfillment of these requirements will be evaluated at the end of each term. Failure to meet all requirements of the Academic Plan will result in the student being placed financial aid suspension. A student has the right to appeal the financial aid suspension if there are extenuating circumstances that prevented him/her from meeting the requirements of the plan.

Academic Plans will be developed for each student on an individual basis, but at a minimum will include the requirement that the student should successfully complete all attempted courses with a grade of C or better and cannot withdraw from any course while on probation. The Office of Student Financial Services will verify that all requirements of the Academic Plan have been met prior to posting aid for the next term.

### **12.7 Reinstatement of Aid**

A student who has been placed on financial aid suspension due to unsatisfactory progress will regain eligibility for financial aid when he/she has met the minimum cumulative requirements for Satisfactory Academic Progress.

### **12.8 Notification of SAP Status**

All students who fail to meet SAP requirements will be notified of their SAP status. SAP is evaluated each term after final grades have been by posted. Students who appeal a financial aid suspension will be notified as soon as a decision is reached by the Financial Aid Appeals Committee regarding their status.

### **12.9 Monitoring Progress**

Academic progress for certificate and short certificate programs will be monitored at the end of each semester

### **12.10 Other Important Information:**

Excessive withdrawals, incompletes, and/or repeated classes may also result in a probationary term or suspension of federal financial aid because these classes are considered as attempted hours not successfully completed. Transfer hours are considered when determining total hours and number of terms.

## **SECTION 13.0: RETURN OF TITLE IV FUNDS**

**13.1** In Section 484B of the Higher Education Amendments of 1998, Congress wrote new provisions governing what happens to a student's federal financial assistance if that student officially or unofficially withdraws from all classes before 60% of the semester has passed.

By instituting these provisions, Congress and the Department of Education have determined that a student is not entitled to 100% of his or her federal grant(s) until he or

she has completed 60% of the semester. In most cases, the student will have received 100% of his or her grant before that time. Therefore, if a student receives a federal grant and withdraws before 60% of the term has passed, he or she will likely owe a portion of the grant back to the grant program.

- 13.2** The amount of federal aid to which the student is entitled is determined by comparing the total number of days the student attended to the total number of days in the semester:

$$\text{Percent earned} = \frac{\# \text{ of days attended}}{\# \text{ of total days in the semester}}$$

**13.2.1 Withdrawals**

Withdrawal date is used to perform the R2T4 calculation is the date the student officially notifies of their intent to withdraw

**Unofficial Withdrawal**

The withdrawal date used to perform the R2T4 calculation for students unofficially withdrawing from all courses will be the last day of academically related activity.

**Lawson State Community College is considered to be a non-attendance taking College!**

**13.2.2 Post Withdrawal Disbursement**

A student maybe eligible to receive a post withdrawal disbursement if after performing a R2T4 calculation it is determine that a student has earned additional awarded aid not yet disbursed. Students eligible to receive a post withdrawal disbursement will be sent an email notification and must provide authorization prior to the institution posting funds to the student's account. All funds will be applied to any outstanding charges related to tuition and fees prior to issuing a credit balance to the student.

- 13.3** To determine the amount that must be returned to the federal program, the percent earned is subtracted from the total award:

$$100\% \text{ of award} - \text{percent earned} = \text{aid to be returned}$$

- 13.4** In accordance with the percentage of aid that must be returned, LSCC will return that percentage of tuition and fees to the federal program and the student must return a portion of any grant funds received or used for items other than tuition, fees, and insurance. The law provides that the amount owed by the student be reduced by 50%. This means the student only returns half of any excess funds used in the college's bookstore or received by check.

## **FINANCIAL AID CALENDAR**

<b>January</b>	Spring attendance verification, notification of no-show status, and No-Show Appeal deadline  Credit balance refunds are disbursed
<b>February</b>	Financial Aid Awareness Activities
<b>March 15</b>	Summer FA deadline
<b>April 15</b>	Scholarship Deadline – Currently Enrolled Students & High School Students
<b>May</b>	Summer attendance verification, notification of no-show status, and No-Show Appeal deadline
<b>June</b>	Credit balance refunds are disbursed
<b>June 15</b>	Fall FA deadline  Scholarship Deadline – Currently Enrolled Students All Final Scholarship Documentation Due
<b>July 1</b>	New grant year begins
<b>August</b>	Fall attendance verification, notification of no-show status, and No-Show Appeal deadline
<b>August 31</b>	The College’s ASAP application is due to the State
<b>September</b>	Credit balance refunds are disbursed Constitution Day Observed
<b>September 30</b>	Last date to submit disbursement records
<b>October 1</b>	FISAP is due Publish & distribute annual institutional security report
<b>November 1</b>	Spring FA deadline
<b>December 15</b>	FISAP corrections deadline
<b>Weekly</b>	Calculate official withdrawal R2T4; notify students, return Title IV funds
<b>Monthly</b>	Reconcile Title IV program disbursements













