

# behind the money

UCCS FINANCIAL AID NEWS **SPRING 2016**



## 2016 - 2017 FAFSA TIME!

Guess what time it is? It's FAFSA time!

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is a federal form you need to fill out to receive financial aid at UCCS. As a student, you should be prepared to file your FAFSA as soon as possible after January 1 to be considered for priority funds. Here's some things to keep in mind:

You will need your 2015 federal tax information, as well as your parents 2015 tax information, if you are considered a dependent student. It is acceptable to submit the application using your best estimate of 2015 income information, meaning you can use prior year taxes or December paycheck stubs to estimate the income information. Once your taxes are filed, you will then correct any tax information that is different from what was initially estimated on the FAFSA. **Don't be late**, as many financial aid programs, such as state grants and work study, are limited to on-time applicants (called priority aid).

**The UCCS priority filing date is on March 1.** You should submit the FAFSA as early as possible before the priority filing date to be considered for the best possible financial aid opportunities.

Remember to add UCCS to your list of schools on the FAFSA. **The UCCS school code is 004509.**

We recommend that you download your federal tax return information directly from the IRS into the FAFSA (called the IRS Data Retrieval Tool or IRS DRT), which saves you time and improves accuracy. *Electronically filed tax return information will be available approximately 1-2 weeks after filing your taxes.*

In order to submit the FAFSA and to use the IRS DRT, you (and your parents) will need an FSA ID, which is used to sign legally binding documents electronically. **Don't give your FSA ID to anyone**, not even someone helping you fill out the FAFSA! Sharing your FSA ID could put you at risk of identity theft!

The UCCS Priority Filing Date and scholarship deadline is on March 1 at 11:59pm MST! Be sure to file early to maximize your financial aid eligibility!

To complete the FAFSA visit [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov)

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Office of Financial Aid, Student  
Employment, and Scholarships

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **COLORADO SPRINGS**



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# AVOIDING FAFSA SCAMS

**A**void scams and paying for free services when you're searching for scholarships, filling out the FAFSA, and sharing your personal information.

Commercial financial aid advice services can cost well over \$1,000. Charging you for help or information that's available for free elsewhere is not fraudulent. However, many of these companies are, at best, misleading you—and if they don't deliver on their promises, they are scamming you.

If you're unsure whether to pay a company for help finding financial aid, stop and think for a minute: What's being offered? Is the service going to be worth your money? Do the claims seem too good to be true? You might have heard or seen these claims at seminars, over the phone from telemarketers, or online:

- "Buy now or miss this opportunity." Don't give in to pressure tactics. Remember, the "opportunity" is a chance to pay for information you could find yourself for free. Check out our list of free sources of financial aid information below.
- "We guarantee you'll get aid." A company could claim it fulfilled its promise if you were offered student loans or a \$200 scholarship. Is that worth a fee of \$1,000 or more?
- "I've got aid for you; give me your credit card or bank account number." Never give out a credit card or bank account number unless you know the organization you are giving it to is legitimate. You could be putting yourself at risk of identity theft.

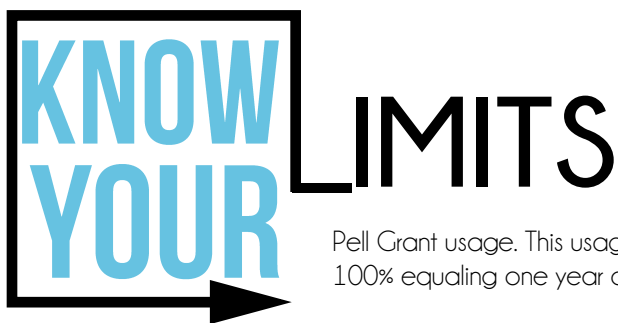


## Don't Pay for the FAFSA

Several websites offer help filing the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA) for a fee. These sites are not affiliated with or endorsed by the U.S. Department of Education. Don't pay these sites for assistance that you can get for free! You can find the official FAFSA at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov), and you can get free help in several ways:

- ***Come to College Goal Sunday on February 21 for free and personalized help completing the FAFSA!***
- ***Come to one of four FAFSAfest events happening every Friday in February for one-on-one FAFSA assistance with a professional financial aid administrator, (see calendar on page 4 for dates, location, and times).***
- ***Visit the UCCS financial aid office at any time for questions, concerns, or help with the FAFSA.***

Please remember that if you are ever asked to provide your credit card information while filling out the FAFSA online, you are NOT on the official FAFSA website. Remember, ***the FAFSA site address has .gov in it!***



Pell Grant usage. This usage amount will be listed under your 'Financial Aid Review' as a percentage with 100% equaling one year of full-time Pell Grant usage. The maximum percentage is 600%.

**T**here are federal PELL GRANT LIFETIME LIMITS for all undergraduate students pursuing a certificate, associates, or bachelor's degree. Students are only eligible to receive up to 12 semesters of Pell Grant aid at full-time enrollment. Part-time enrollment may increase the amount of eligible semesters. Using your Department of Education issued FSA User ID, you can log onto [www.nslds.ed.gov](http://www.nslds.ed.gov) and click on 'Financial Aid Review' to view your Lifetime

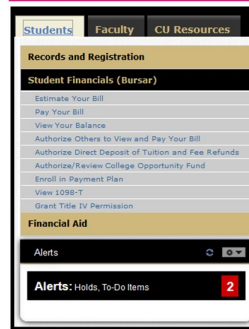
There are also AGGREGATE LOAN LIMITS for all students based on their current grade level. You can view the amount of loans you have already borrowed by visiting [www.nslds.ed.gov](http://www.nslds.ed.gov), under "Financial Aid Review." In addition, there is a Subsidized Loan Limit for students who first borrowed a Federal Direct Subsidized or Unsubsidized Loan on or after July 1, 2013 or who had a zero balance on all previously borrowed Federal student loans. These students are permitted to receive subsidized loans for up to 150% of the time it takes to complete their degree.

For more information on this, please visit <http://www.uccs.edu/finaid/types/loans/direct.html>.



## AUTHORIZE DIRECT DEPOSIT IN THE STUDENT FINANCIALS SECTION OF THE

**myUCCS**  
STUDENT PORTAL



WWW.UCCS.EDU/~PORTAL

WANT YOUR FINANCIAL AID  
REFUND FASTER?

# BIG

## FAFSA CHANGES COMING FOR 2016-17

On Sept. 14, 2015, President Obama announced significant changes to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) process that will impact millions of students. For the 2017-18 academic years, students will be able to:

- 1. Submit a FAFSA earlier:** Students will be able to file a 2017-18 FAFSA as early as Oct. 1 2016, rather than waiting until Jan. 1, 2017. The earlier submission date will be a permanent change, enabling students to complete and submit a FAFSA as early as October 1 every year.
- 2. Use Earlier Income Information:** Beginning with the 2017-18 FAFSA, students will report income information from an earlier tax year. For example on the 2017-18 FAFSA, students (and parents, as appropriate) will report their 2015 income information, rather than their 2016 income information.

The following table provides a summary of key dates as we transition to using the early FAFSA submission timeframe and earlier tax information.

When a Student Is Attending College (School Year)	When a Student Can Submit a FAFSA	Which Year's Income Information Is Required
July 1, 2015–June 30, 2016	January 1, 2015–June 30, 2016	2014
July 1, 2016–June 30, 2017	January 1, 2016–June 30, 2017	2015
<b>July 1, 2017–June 30, 2018</b>	<b>October 1, 2016–June 30, 2018</b>	<b>2015</b>
July 1, 2018–June 30, 2019	October 1, 2017–June 30, 2019	2016

## SUMMER 2016 FINANCIAL AID

No special summer application is necessary! All you need to do is be enrolled at least half time and have a completed 2015-2016 FAFSA on file. You will **automatically** be considered for summer financial aid! If you are interested in work study for the summer, that application will be available on April 1st in your myUCCS Student Portal.

The financial aid office will determine your eligibility for federal aid and you will be notified at your UCCS email account.

Please remember *the amount you borrow during the fall and spring semesters will affect what is available to you in the upcoming summer term!* If you are offered and you accept the annual maximum limits of loans and receive your maximum Federal Pell Grant eligibility for the fall and spring semesters, your financial aid for the summer term may be limited to private loans.



## IT'S SCHOLARSHIP TIME!

Now is the time to be applying for scholarships for next year! On **DECEMBER 1st**, the 2016-2017 UCCS Scholarship Application opened and the scholarship hunt for next year began! Here are just a few tips to keep in mind while applying for scholarships:

- **APPLY FOR ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING.** If you think you are eligible to receive the scholarship, apply for it!
- **COMPLETE THE APPLICATION.** If something is not applicable on the application, mark it as N/A or "does not apply." Do not leave lines blank.
- **FOLLOW DIRECTIONS.** Do not supply things that are not requested (i.e. transcripts and resumes)
- **NEATNESS COUNTS.** Make photocopies for working drafts. Save everything!
- **MAKE SURE TO LEAVE AN IMPRESSION.** Be personal and specific. Be complete and concise, but also creative!
- **WATCH ALL DEADLINES.** Do not wait until the last minute! This is one of the worst things you can do!
- **GIVE YOUR APPLICATION A "ONCE-OVER" BEFORE SUBMITTING.** Proofread (and have someone else proofread) the entire application carefully!

For more useful tips, a list of frequently asked questions about scholarships, and to begin your scholarship search, visit [www.uccs.edu/scholarships](http://www.uccs.edu/scholarships). Most scholarships have deadlines of March 1 or earlier, so the time to apply is now!



# IMPORTANT **SPRING** DATES

- Dec 1 UCCS Scholarship application available in myUCCS portal  
Student employment openings for spring post in SEAN
- Jan 1 2016-2017 FAFSA opens at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov)  
Jan 5 Spring 2016 Tuition can be viewed in myUCCS portal  
Jan 11 First Spring 2016 Financial Aid Disbursement  
Jan 12 First E-bills Available in myUCCS portal  
Jan 14 Emergency short-term loans Available  
Jan 19 First day of spring semester  
Jan 27 UCCS Scholarship Fair - UC 116
- Feb 1 UCCS scholarship merit deadline  
Feb 3 **Census Date!**  
Feb 4 Mountain Lion Money Matters Workshop "FICO Club" UC 122 @ 5pm  
Feb 5 FAFSAfest (free FAFSA Help, Top Floor Cragmor Hall, 10am-4pm)  
Feb 12 FAFSAfest (free FAFSA Help, Top Floor Cragmor Hall, 10am-4pm)  
Feb 19 FAFSAfest (free FAFSA Help, Top Floor Cragmor Hall, 10am-4pm)  
Feb 20 **Payment plan auto-deduction will process by end of day**  
Feb 21 College Goal Sunday - Columbine Hall computer lab 1pm - 3pm  
Feb 26 FAFSAfest (free FAFSA Help, Top Floor Cragmor Hall, 10am-4pm)
- Mar 1 **UCCS Financial Aid priority filing date/UCCS scholarship deadline!**  
Mar 17 Mountain Lion Money Matters Workshop "Investing 101" UC 122 @ 5pm  
Mar 20 **Payment plan auto-deduction will process by end of day**  
Mar 21 Spring Break Begins
- Apr 1 Summer work study application available in myUCCS portal  
Apr 3 **Spring short-term loans due in full!**  
Apr 10 National Student Employment Week  
Apr 14 Mountain Lion Money Matters Workshop "Be4 Final s and a Wedding"  
UC 122 @ 5pm  
Apr 20 **Payment plan auto-deduction will process by end of day**
- May 2 Mountain Lion Money Matters Workshop "Game of Loans"  
UC 122 @ 5pm  
May 13 Spring 2016 Commencement  
May 14 Semester Ends  
May 23 Summer award notices emailed to summer enrolled students
- Jun 7 Fall 2016/Spring 2017 award notices emailed to current students



**Congratulations 2016 Graduates!**

To complete your Loan Exit Counseling, please visit:

**[nslds.ed.gov](http://nslds.ed.gov)**

## Mountain Lion Money Matters Spring Schedule

- Feb 4 FICO Club**  
UC 122, 5pm  
*Learn the importance of your credit score.*
- Mar 17 Investing 101**  
UC 122, 5pm  
*Stepping stones for investing money.*
- Apr 14 Be4 Finals & A Wedding**  
UC 122, 5pm  
*Tips and tricks to save money and be prepared for the big day.*
- May 2 Game of Loans**  
UC 122, 5pm  
*Learn the ins and outs of federal student loan repayment.*

**Attend three of the spring workshops to receive a free prize!**



**MOUNTAIN LION**  
**MONEY MATTERS**  
[www.uccs.edu/~moneymatters/](http://www.uccs.edu/~moneymatters/)