

UT-AAUP Newsletter
September 13, 2021
Blaming the Faculty?

The following email was sent early this morning to students by the Office of Student Financial Aid:

From: utfinaid@utoledo.edu <utfinaid@utoledo.edu>
Sent: Monday, September 13, 2021 7:09 AM
To: XXXXXXX@rockets.utoledo.edu
Subject: UToledo Financial Aid

Dear Student XXXX,

The financial aid office has requested that your instructors confirm that you have begun attendance in the following course(s):
[List of Courses]

As of today, the information has not been uploaded. You are in danger of losing your previously disbursed financial aid. We would like to give you the opportunity to reach out to your instructor(s) and request that they comply with this important requirement. We have extended the availability of the Student Participation Tracker to them until the end of this week but would strongly encourage them to do this as soon as possible.

If your instructor(s) have questions about this process they can log in to self-service under the Faculty & Advisor tab and review the information under ATTENDANCE: MANDATORY CONFIRMATION OF STUDENT PARTICIPATION.

Thank you,
Office of Student Financial Aid

It was later followed by the below message sent to College Administrators:

Dear Deans, Associate Deans and Chairs,

Unfortunately, I was just notified of an IT error and that the email below went to *every* student who is receiving financial aid; it was supposed to go only to students who had at least *one* class where the student did not get reported.

As of today, the information has not been uploaded. You are in danger of losing your previously disbursed financial aid. We would like to give you the opportunity to reach out to your instructor(s) and request that they comply with this important requirement. We have extended the availability of the Student Participation Tracker to them until the end of this week but would strongly encourage them to do this as soon as possible.

If your instructor(s) have questions about this process they can log in to self-service under the Faculty & Advisor tab and review the information under ATTENDANCE: MANDATORY CONFIRMATION OF STUDENT PARTICIPATION.

Thank you, Office of Student Financial Aid

Financial Aid and IT are currently working to address and resolve the issue. Please do your best to communicate this within your respective colleges and to ease the minds of students. Thank you in advance for supporting and assisting our colleagues as we work through this technical glitch.

The above emails raise questions about the competence of two Postel Administration units – IT and the Office of Student Financial Aid.

1. Why was the Student Financial Aid letter sent by IT to **every** student receiving financial aid?
2. Why did Student Financial Aid write such a negative email frightening students with loss of financial aid, blaming faculty and requesting students to reach out to faculty to comply with the reporting request.

3. Why was the letter sent this morning (September 13, 2021 at 7:09 a.m.) before the deadline tonight as previously announced to the faculty?
4. Why does the letter advise students (but not faculty) that the deadline has been extended to the end of the week?
5. Why did Student Financial Aid notify the Deans, Associate Deans, and Chairs, but not the faculty?

Enrollment is declining, COVID is back, students are troubled, and the Postel Administration is encouraging students to attack faculty.

Many faculty members had already complied with the reporting request by Student Financial Aid. Nonetheless, faculty have received and are receiving numerous emails and telephone calls from frightened and angry students who believe that faculty are screw-ups and responsible for students losing their financial aid. What a great message to send to students, who we are trying very hard to retain, and to their parents!

Student Financial Aid calls this a “technical glitch” and covers its tracks by sending a mea culpa to Deans, Associate Deans, and Chairs – but not to the faculty.

All student emails to faculty should be forwarded to Postel, all phone calls from students should be forwarded to Postel, and all emails and phone calls from parents should be forwarded to Postel. Let Postel know what his administrative team is doing (or not doing) and the impact it has on this University.

UT-AAUP Executive Board