



Office of Financial Aid  
Policies and Procedures

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## **Introduction**

Federal regulations mandate that institutions have written policies and procedures. Beyond the federal requirement, there are many benefits to having a written document outlining financial aid office policies and procedures: 1) for distribution to appropriate others outside the Office of Financial Aid; 2) for Office of Financial Aid staff as a referral guide to assist in maintaining consistence in the problem-solving process; and 3) as an important component of a comprehensive training program.

## **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to record policies and procedures surrounding the delivery of Financial Aid at Southwest Mississippi Community College.

### **This Manual:**

- Provides the Office of Financial Aid staff with current policies and procedures surrounding federal, state and institutional programs.
- Provides each staff member with the general responsibilities of the Office of Financial Aid and the office's relationship with other departments and divisions of the institution.
- Provides each staff member with general office procedures ensuring that similar situations would be handled consistently.
- Provides quick reference to various programs, problems, forms, rules, and regulations.
- Provides a clear understanding of policy, authority, and responsibility in matters relating to operational practices.
- Provides orientation and training materials for new personnel.

## **Financial Aid Reference Documents**

There are many resource guides which assist the Office of Financial Aid staff. These citations may be found via the electronic publications provided by the Federal Student Aid U.S. Department of Education at [ifap.ed.gov](http://ifap.ed.gov). The Information for Financial Aid Professionals (IFAP) website consolidates guidance, resources, and information related to the administration and processing of Title IV federal student aid into one online site for use by the entire financial aid community.

The documents which are used to determine a student's eligibility for financial aid include current regulations published by the Federal Register, Department of Education guides (i.e. the Federal Student Aid Handbook, Verification Guide, Formula Books, and Audit Guides), Dear Colleague Letters, and Electronic Announcements.

Institutional scholarship funds are awarded based on Southwest Mississippi Community College Policies and Procedures that are outlined in the SMCC Catalog and/or the SMCC Student Handbook.

State Financial Aid funds are awarded based on regulations put in place by the State of Mississippi, and are provided by the State of Mississippi Institution of Higher Learning.

Other outside scholarship funds are awarded based on regulations and qualifications put forth by each particular agency.

This Policies and Procedures Manual does not include all details of the administration of financial aid programs and the related references should be used for more in-depth detail.

### **Financial Aid Philosophy and Objectives**

Through its Strategic Plan, Southwest Mississippi Community College evaluates its mission, purpose, and objectives. The objectives of the Office of Financial Aid revolve around the major functions of this office. Those functions include, but are not limited to: 1) awarding and disbursing Financial Aid; 2) reporting at the institutional, state, and federal levels; 3) providing a satisfying, open-door policy to assist students.

### **Institutional Mission**

Southwest Mississippi Community College provides academic, technical, and continuing education, meeting the diverse needs of the population at a reasonable cost. SMCC promotes community services and promotes economic development through consultative workforce training.

### **Institutional Goals:**

- To provide a two-year college transfer program applicable to a bachelor's degree.
- To provide career and technical programs leading to employment or skills enhancement.
- To provide programs enabling students to overcome specific deficiencies and achieve success.
- To provide curricula, instruction, guidance, extracurricular activities, and other support services enhancing student development.
- To provide facilities, technology, methodology, and staff sustaining an appropriate environment conducive to learning.
- To provide lifelong learning opportunities.
- To provide facilities and services supporting cultural, educational, and economic needs.
- To publicize offerings of the institution and the opportunities it affords.

### **Office of Financial Aid Purpose**

The Southwest Mississippi Community College offers scholarships, Federal Pell Grant, Federal Work Study, and Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant. These funds are for qualified, deserving students who can benefit from further education, but who lack financial resources to continue their education. Federal aid is granted according to individual need as determined by the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

### **Office of Financial Aid Philosophy**

The Southwest Mississippi Community College Office of Financial Aid believes that a consistent and equitable approach to the awarding of financial aid will enable students to attend SMCC who would not otherwise have the financial means to enroll. It, therefore, encourages a student population which is culturally, economically, socially, and geographically diversified.

### **Office of Financial Aid Code of Conduct**

Southwest Mississippi Community College is a current member of MASFAA, the Mississippi Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, and a past member of NASFAA, the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators. The Office of Financial Aid abides by NASFAA's Code of Conduct for Institutional Financial Aid Professionals which states that an institutional financial aid professional is expected to always maintain exemplary standards of professional conduct in all aspects of carrying out his or her responsibilities, specifically including all dealings with any entities involved in any matter in student financial aid, regardless of whether such entities are involved in a government sponsored, subsidized, or regulated activity. In doing so, the Office of Financial Aid at Southwest Mississippi Community College is bound by the following:

- Refrain from taking any action for our personal benefit.
- Refrain from taking any action that we believe is contrary to law, regulation, or the best interests of the students and parents we serve.
- Ensure that the information we provide is accurate, unbiased, and does not reflect any preference arising from actual or potential gain.
- Remain objective in making decisions and advising the administration of Southwest Mississippi Community College regarding relationships with any entity involved in any aspect of student financial aid.
- Refrain from soliciting or accepting anything other than of nominal value from any entity involved in the making, holding, consolidating, or processing of any student loans, including anything of value (i.e. reimbursement of expenses) for serving on an advisory board or as a part of a training activity or of sponsored by any entity.
- Disclose to the administration of Southwest Mississippi Community College any involvement with or interest in any entity involved in any aspect of student financial aid.

### **Office of Financial Aid Goals**

The primary goal of the Office of Financial Aid is to provide financial means by which a student can continue his/her education. The financial aid programs at Southwest Mississippi Community College are administered according to the following principles:

- The primary responsibility for financing education lies with the student and his/her family. When the total resources the family can provide does not meet their educational expenses, SMCC will guide students and assist them with seeking alternate funds for their post-secondary education.
- Interested individuals will be made aware throughout the year of financial aid opportunities. A student must submit a FAFSA application each year in which he/she expects to be considered for financial aid. A confidential financial aid package will be developed and offered to the student

based on individual need and circumstances, but without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, or disability.

- Planning and counseling sessions are important and help students plan for the most efficient use of financial aid and the student's resources for education. They are held on an as-need basis with any student.
- The Office of Financial Aid at SMCC operates within federal and state guidelines and other standards of individual aid programs.

### **Administrative Organization of the Office of Financial Aid**

- President
- Vice President of Student Affairs
- Director of Financial Aid
- Financial Aid Counselor 1
- Financial Aid Counselor 2
- Financial Aid Counselor 3
- Work Study Student (if applicable)

Job descriptions may be obtained from the Office of Human Resources.

### **General Office of Financial Aid Administration**

#### **Office Hours**

The Office of Financial Aid is located in the Britte E. Hughey Administration Building on the Southwest Mississippi Community College campus in Summit, Mississippi. Office hours are typically 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday – Thursday and 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Friday. Hours on holidays and during student breaks may vary.

#### **Correspondence**

General correspondence is routed to the appropriate personnel. When appropriate, correspondence should be responded to within one week. If a staff member is responding to a specific complaint, it is standard procedure for the staff member to have the Director of Financial Aid review the correspondence, allowing him/her to be aware of potential issues.

#### **Telephone**

Telephone calls are answered in a friendly and professional manner. Typically, each staff member answers his/her incoming calls. If the caller requires specific information, the staff member should screen the call thoroughly and transfer the information and caller to the appropriate individual.

#### **Distribution of Forms**

General financial aid forms and information may be obtained from the Office of Financial Aid and via the SMCC website.

### **Staff Meetings**

Office customer service meetings are typically held twice per semester. Office of Financial Aid staff meetings are generally held weekly or as needed.

### **Personnel Policies**

The personnel policies of faculty and staff are outlined in the SMCC Employee Handbook.

Southwest Mississippi Community College does not provide any commission, bonus, or other incentive payment based directly or indirectly on success in securing enrollments or financial aid to any individual or entity engaged in recruiting or admission activities or in making decisions about awarding FSA program funds.

### **Appointments with Office Staff**

Students and parents who require general information may see a staff member at any time during normal business hours. If a student requests an appointment with their counselor, an appointment is arranged.

## **Records Management**

### **Confidentiality of Records**

All records and conversations between an aid applicant, his/her family and the Office of Financial aid are confidential and entitled to the protection ordinarily given a counseling relationship. SMCC strives to assure the confidentiality of student educational records.

As of January 3, 2012, the U.S. Department of Education's FERPA regulations expand the circumstances under which your education records and personally identifiable information (PII) contained in such records – including your social security number, grades, or other private information – may be accessed without your consent. First, the U.S. Comptroller General, the U.S. Attorney General, the U.S. Secretary of Education, or state and local education authorities (“Federal and State Authorities”) may allow access to your records and PII without your consent to any third party designated by a Federal or State Authority to evaluate a federal – or state – supported education program. The evaluation may relate to any program that is “principally engaged in the provision of education,” such as early childhood education and job training, as well as any program that is administered by an education agency or institution. Second, Federal and State authorities may allow access to your records and PII without your consent to researchers performing certain types of studies, in certain cases even when we object to or do not request such research. Federal and State Authorities must obtain certain use-restrictions and data security promises from the entities that they authorize to receive your PII, but the authorities need not maintain direct control over such entities. In addition, in connection with Statewide

Longitudinal Data Systems, State Authorities may collect, compile, permanently retain, and share without your consent PII from your education records, and they may track your participation in education and other programs by linking such PII to other personal information about you that they obtain from other federal or state data sources, including workforce development, unemployment insurance, child welfare, juvenile justice, military service, and migrant student records systems.

Southwest Mississippi Community College will release directory information to any reasonable inquiry about any student unless the student has notified the registrar's office in writing. This written request to Southwest Mississippi Community College complies with all provisions of the federal law entitle Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) which affords certain rights with respect to a student's education records. These rights are outlined in the SMCC Student Handbook. Copies of a policy statement indicating the records affected by this law, the student's rights and obligations, and the college's rights and obligations may be obtained in the Registrar's Office. Directory Information includes the student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees received, honors and awards earned, the most recent educational agency attended by the student, e-mail addresses, and other similar information.

### **Records**

The Office of Financial Aid is required by federal law to obtain verification documentation for a minimum of three years from the end of the award year. If a student wishes to obtain copies of submitted documentation, they must request the information be pulled. The student must present current identification in person to the Office of Financial Aid in order for the documentation to be transferred and/or returned.

### **Student Consumer and Safety Information and How to Obtain it**

In order to understand the complicated field of financial aid, accurate and timely dissemination of information to consumers is vitally important. Several policies have been implemented to ensure appropriate dissemination is achieved.

It is the policy of SMCC to not award a student an estimated amount of financial aid. If a student is selected for verification, all requested documentation must be submitted and processed through the Office of Financial Aid before an award will be posted. This alleviates the notification to students if a change in eligibility occurs because of verification. If a student's eligibility changes due to a subsequent ISIR, an updated award letter will be sent to the student.

SMCC will make any necessary corrections to a student's FAFSA application once the application has been submitted and received by the school. Any corrections that are made will be backed up by collected documentation proving the information requires a correction. If the student is not selected for verification and he/she discloses conflicting information to the Office of Financial Aid, it is the policy of the Office of Financial Aid to use professional judgment to select the student and perform standard verification.



Information regarding Southwest Mississippi Community College financial aid policies and procedures is distributed through the Student Handbook via the SMCC website and paper copies are available upon request. This information is listed below:

### **General Information**

- Academic, Career-Technical, and Adult Basic Education Programs
  - Academic
  - Career-Technical
  - Adult Basic Education
- Constitution Day
  - Constitution Day is observed each Fall semester in Ms. Ginn’s classroom. Details on dates and times will be distributed through the SMCC Newsletter.
- Copyright Infringement Policies and Sanctions
  - Copyright Infringement - Unauthorized distribution of copyrighted material, including through peer-to-peer file sharing, may subject users of computers and networks to civil and criminal liabilities. Copyright infringement is the act of exercising, without permission or legal authority, one or more of the exclusive rights granted to the copyright owner under section 106 of the Copyright Act (Title 17 of the United States Code). These rights include the right to reproduce or distribute a copyrighted work. In the file-sharing context, downloading or uploading substantial parts of a copyrighted work without authority constitutes an infringement. Penalties for copyright infringement include civil and criminal penalties. In general, anyone found liable for civil copyright infringement may be ordered to pay either actual damages or “statutory” damages affixed at not less than \$750 and not more than \$30,000 per work infringed. For “willful” infringement, a court may award up to \$150,000 per work infringed. A court can, in its discretion, also assess costs and attorney’s fees. For details, see Title 17, United States Code, Sections 504, 505. Willful copyright infringement can also result in criminal penalties, including imprisonment of up to five years and fines of up to \$250,000 per offense. For more information, please see the website of the U.S. Copyright Office at [www.copyright.gov](http://www.copyright.gov). Anyone who knowingly violates the principles outlined in this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. The SMCC website is copyrighted by Southwest Mississippi Community College and may not be copied, reprinted, published, translated, hosted or otherwise distributed for any means, unless explicit permission is granted. If you have received a copyright infringement notice and it is your first complaint, you will be given 3 options: (1) delete the infringing files and let the Director of IT know that you have done so therefore resolving and closing the case, (2) challenge the complaint in federal court, (3) do nothing resulting in the removal of internet access. In the event of your second complaint, internet access will be removed and the case will be referred to the Vice President of Academic Affairs. The third complaint will result in suspension for the institution.

- Cost of Attendance
  - Estimated Cost of Attendance can be found on the SMCC website – [www.smcc.edu](http://www.smcc.edu). Click on Quick Links at the top of the page and select Tuition and Fees. This file reflects an estimated cost for the academic year and should only be used as a cost-estimating tool. Educational costs may vary from the information based on program of study, educational, dining, and living needs.
- Facilities and Services for Students with Disabilities
  - Disability Support Services assists in determining the classroom accommodations that are most appropriate for students with disabilities based on documentation of their disability. DSS encourages communication with instructors regarding accommodations. DSS will provide eligible students with Accommodation Letters regarding their classroom and testing accommodations to give their instructors. Examples of classroom and testing accommodations are varied, but may include: Adapted test arrangements, extended time on tests, testing in a distraction-free environment, assistance with alternative formats of textbooks, and advocacy with the SMCC Housing Department for help with living arrangements. Any student that wishes to receive accommodations for a disability must register with the Disability Support Services Office each semester. To ensure timely delivery of accommodations, students are advised to begin the intake process at least six weeks prior to registration for classes.
- FERPA – Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
  - FERPA protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act, passed by Congress in 1974, requires educational institutions to provide students access to their educational records to allow students to correct inaccurate or misleading information in these records, and limit the release of information to third parties. The rights parents exercise with respect to their children’s education records transfer to the student when he/she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Any individual who is taking or has taken a course at SMCC, regardless of age including, but not limited to: dual enrolled/ dual credit students, transient students, students auditing a course, students taking courses online, non-degree seeking students, etc. SMCC may disclose any of the following directory information items without prior written consent, unless the student has submitted a written request to the Registrar’s Office not to release directory information pertaining to them: Student’s name, email address, local and permanent mailing address, telephone numbers, semesters of attendance, enrollment status, date of admission, date of expected or actual graduation, program of study/major, current enrollment status, classification, type of degree being pursued, degrees, honors, and awards received (including scholarships), weight and height of members of athletic teams, SMCC ID photo, whether the student has participated in officially recognized activities and sports sponsored by the institution. Parents may obtain directory information unless the student has placed an affirmative restriction on its release. Parents may obtain non-directory information

by obtaining a signed consent from their child. FERPA release forms may be obtained from the Registrar's Office. Parents may obtain non-directory information if the child is a legal dependent for tax purposes and files a FERPA release form with the Registrar's Office.

- The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) protects students with regard to their education records. Understand what your rights are.
  - The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the institution receives a request for access – students should submit to the registrar, dean, head of the academic department, or other appropriate official, written requests that identify the record(s) they wish to inspect. The institution official will make arrangements for access and notify the students of the time and place where the records may be inspected. If the records are not maintained by the institution official to whom the request was submitted, that official shall advise the student of the correct official to whom the request should be addressed.
  - The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the student believes are inaccurate or misleading – students may ask the university to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the university official responsible for the record, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading.

If the university decides not to amend the record as requested by the student, the university will notify the student of the decision and advise the student of his or her right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the student when notified of the right to a hearing.
  - The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent – Southwest Mississippi Community College will disclose information from a student's education records only with the written consent of the student, except:
    - To school officials with legitimate educational interests (a school official is a person employed by the university in an administrative, supervisory, academic or research, or support staff position); a person or company with whom the university has contracted to perform required functions (such as an attorney, auditor, service provider, or collection agent); a person serving on the Board of Trustees; or a student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an educational record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

- To officials of other institutions in which the student seeks or intends to enroll provided that the student had previously requested a release of his/her record;
  - To authorized representatives of the U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Defense (Solomon Amendment), U.S. Attorney General, INS, the Comptroller General of the United States, state education authorities, organizations conducting studies for or on behalf of the institution, and accrediting organizations;
  - In connection with a student's application for, and receipt of, financial aid;
  - To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
  - To parents of dependent students as defined by the Internal Revenue Code, Section 152;
  - To appropriate parties in a health or safety emergency; or
  - To the alleged victim of any crime of violence or the results of any disciplinary proceedings conducted by the institution.
  - The institution may disclose the result of a disciplinary proceeding to a parent or guardian so long as the student is under the age of 21 at the time of the incident and the proceeding has resulted in a violation of institution drug or alcohol policies, or any federal, state, or local law.
  - To students currently registered in a particular class, the names and email addresses of others on the roster may be disclosed in order to participate in class discussion.
  - SMCC has designated the following items as Directory Information: a student's name, email address, local and permanent mailing addresses and telephone numbers, semesters of attendance, enrollment status (full- or part-time), date of admission, date of expected or actual graduation, school, major and minor fields of study, whether or not currently enrolled, classification (freshman, etc.), type of degree being pursued, degrees, honors, and awards received (including scholarships), SMCC identification card, weight and height of members of athletic teams, and whether the student has participated in officially recognized activities and sports sponsored by the institution.
  - SMCC may disclose any of these items without prior written consent, unless the student has submitted a written request to the Office of the Registrar not to release directory information pertaining to them.  
Requests will be processed within 24 hours after receipt.
- Students have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by Southwest Mississippi Community College to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is: Family Policy Compliance Office

U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington D.C. 20202-8520

- Missing Persons Policy
  - The Missing Persons Policy can be found by contacting the Vice President for Student Affairs at 601-276-4810, the Director of Housing and Student Activities at 601-276-3237, or Campus Police at 601-551-3838 or 601-551-3837.
- Mississippi Commission on College Accreditation
  - Pursuant of Miss. Code Ann. 37-101-241, Southwest Mississippi Community College is included in the approved list of institutions of higher learning authorized as academic degree-granting postsecondary educational institutions in the State of Mississippi as prepared and approved by the Mississippi Commission on College Accreditation. This letter may be obtained from the Office of the President on a yearly basis.
- Net Price Calculator can be found on the Financial Aid tab of the SMCC website.  
[https://www.smcc.edu/financial-aid/net\\_price\\_calculator.php](https://www.smcc.edu/financial-aid/net_price_calculator.php)
- SACS Accreditation
  - Southwest Mississippi Community College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award Associate Degrees.
  - Southwest Mississippi Community College is a member of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, Mississippi Association of Community and Junior Colleges, and Mississippi Association of Colleges.
  - Southwest Mississippi Community College has programs that are accredited, approved, and/or licensed by the following associations, agencies, and/or governmental bodies:
    - Associate Degree Nursing
      - Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning of Mississippi  
3825 Ridgewood Road  
Jackson, MS 39211  
601-423-6501
      - Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing, Inc. (ACEN)  
3343 Peachtree Road NE  
Suite 850  
Atlanta, GA 30326  
404-975-5000  
[www.acenursing.org](http://www.acenursing.org)
    - Practical Nursing
      - Mississippi Board of Nursing  
713 Pear Orchard Road, Plaza II  
Suite 300  
Ridgeland, MS 39157

601-957-6300

- Healthcare Assistant
  - Mississippi State Department of Health  
Bureau of Health Facilities  
P.O. Box 1700  
Jackson, MS 39215  
143B LeFleur's Square  
601-364-1100
- Health Information Technology
  - Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education  
200 East Randolph Street, Suite 5100  
Chicago, IL 60601  
312-235-3255  
[www.cahiim.org](http://www.cahiim.org)
- Cosmetology
  - Mississippi State Board of Cosmetology  
239 N. Lamar Street, Suite 301  
Jackson, MS 39201  
601-359-1820
- MS Commission on Higher Education Complaint Procedure
  - Southwest Mississippi Community College has an administrative procedure in place which is designed to receive, investigate and resolve student complaints, whether academic or nonacademic. Students who fail to use the existing appeal committees will forfeit their right to future due process.
  - A student has the right to express their dissatisfaction about action or lack of action relative to a matter either academic or non-academic in nature. For complaints violating state law, students may follow the state complaint process. The MCCA will not respond until the student has exhausted all grievance procedures provided by the institution.
  - Southwest Mississippi Community College is accredited by the Mississippi Commission on College Accreditation. The Student Complaint Process can be found on the student tab of the SMCC website [www.smcc.edu](http://www.smcc.edu), or directly at [http://www.mississippi.edu/mcca/student\\_complaint\\_process.asp](http://www.mississippi.edu/mcca/student_complaint_process.asp)
- Student Diversity
  - Student diversity is reported annually to IPEDS. This report can be found at [www.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/](http://www.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/)
- Student Shopping Sheet
  - Students (including U.S. Armed Forces Veterans and service members) can view their Student Shopping Sheet through their AccessSW account. Instructions can be obtained from the Office of Financial Aid.
- Transfer of Credit Policies

- Courses equivalent to SMCC courses in description, content, and length are listed as transfer work on the student's Southwest transcript. All grades of "D" or above will be accepted as hours attempted and hours passed. If a student has less than a 2.00 GPA on transfer work as determined by the current method of computing grade point average, sufficient quality points must be earned at Southwest in order to graduate. Excessive quality points from another institution cannot be used to raise a deficient grade point average on courses taken at Southwest. A transfer student currently enrolled at another college or university intending to return to that college or university after enrolling for one semester at Southwest (typically during the summer) must submit a transient letter/letter of good standing from his or her current institution. The transient letter/letter of good standing will be used in lieu of an official transcript from the student's current college or university to satisfy admission requirements for a period of one semester. Current course placement guidelines at Southwest will apply unless the transient letter/letter of good standing specifically lists the courses in which the student has permission to enroll.
- Transfer out credits are determined by the articulation agreement between the Mississippi Trustees of the State Institutions of Higher Learning and the Mississippi Community College Board. A copy may be obtained at [www.mississippi.edu/cjc/](http://www.mississippi.edu/cjc/) or from the office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs.
- Title IX Compliance
  - Southwest Mississippi is in compliance with the Title IX, Campus SaVE Act, and the Campus Sexual Assault Victims' Bill of Rights. The policies can be accessed at [www.smcc.edu](http://www.smcc.edu).
- Voter Registration
  - SMCC makes voting easy. SMCC encourages all students to stay aware of upcoming elections and have the information needed for students to vote with confidence. The voter registration application can be completed at <https://www.sos.ms.gov/Elections-Voting/Pages/Voter-Registration-Information.aspx> or a paper application may be obtained from the Office of Financial Aid.

### **Information About Student Financial Assistance**

- Aid Recipient Responsibilities
  - The Office of Financial Aid awards aid based on need and merit. Federal regulations require our office to consider all estimated financial aid in determining eligibility for federal student aid. It is the student's responsibility to notify the institution of any financial aid received from other sources not provided through FAFSA. If additional aid is received after the initial assessment of a student's award package, aid may be adjusted. The Office of Financial Aid will notify the student via email and/or mail that an adjustment has been made. If further action is needed, the student will be made aware through this notification. Other financial assistance includes but is not limited to: institutional scholarships, state aid, and any other outside scholarships.
- Assistance Available from Federal, State, Local, and Institutional Programs

- To help make the college experience more affordable, SMCC administers different types of aid, including grants, scholarships, and student employment. Students must make satisfactory academic progress in order to continue receiving these types of aid.
  - Grants – are a type of financial aid funded by the federal government. This aid is need-based.
  - State Aid – is limited to resident of the state of Mississippi and is awarded by the State Financial Aid office.
  - Scholarships – information can be found in the institutional scholarship section of this manual.
  - Student Employment – are supported by the federal financial aid program and Southwest Mississippi Community College. More information can be found in the Federal Work-Study section of this manual.
- Contact Information for Assistance in Obtaining Financial Aid Information
  - Financial Aid Counselors are determined by last name
    - A – F Tammy Cain [tlc@smcc.edu](mailto:tlc@smcc.edu) 601-276-3707
    - G – N Stacey Hodges [slee@smcc.edu](mailto:slee@smcc.edu) 601-276-4805
    - O – Z Surbrina Cameron [scameron@smcc.edu](mailto:scameron@smcc.edu) 601-276-4804
    - Director Amber Kelly [akelly@smcc.edu](mailto:akelly@smcc.edu) 601-276-3708
- Federal Student Financial Aid Penalties for Drug and Law Violations
  - The Higher Education Act of 1965, in its amended status, is very clear on the responsibilities of students and what violations warrant loss of eligibility to receive financial aid. If you are an aid recipient and have been convicted under federal or state law of the possession or sale of drugs while you are enrolled in school, your federal – and in some cases your state – financial aid eligibility will be suspended. If you are convicted of a drug offense after you submit the FAFSA, you will lose eligibility for federal student aid and you may be liable for returning any financial aid you received during the period of ineligibility.
  - If you have lost your federal student aid eligibility due to a drug conviction, you can regain eligibility. You must pass two random drug tests conducted by a drug rehabilitation program, but the program must also meet the criteria established by the United States Department of Education. If you regain eligibility during the academic year, please notify the Office of Financial Aid immediately. We encourage student to complete the FAFSA application, even if they know they are not eligible for federal aid. Students could be eligible for non-federal aid.
- Refund Policy and Return of Federal Financial Aid
  - A student who withdraws from school during the first full week of classes will receive a refund of 100 percent of tuition and the board charges (meal ticket), the second week, 50%; and the third week 25%. After the third week, no refund will be made. No refund will be made for room rent. No refund will be made of any out-of-state, online, technology or student services fees. No refund will be made of special department, EU, or non-credit fees. No student will be allowed to officially withdraw until all fees are paid. The complete procedure for Refunds is outlined in the Refund section of the this manual.



- A student who withdraws is one who either officially goes through an official withdrawal from the institution, is administratively withdrawn, suspended, or withdraws from all of his/her courses. The institutional responsibilities, the determination of a student's withdrawal date, how aid is earned, the difference in official, unofficial and administrative withdrawals, how funds are earned and what needs to be returned, what happens after a student withdraws, an example of calculation, the order of fund returns, what determines a post withdrawal disbursement and the time frame for returning an unclaimed Title IV Credit Balance is outlined in the Return to Title IV section of this manual.
- Financial Aid Disbursement Dates are calculated each semester based on the academic calendar provided by the Registrar. This date usually falls around the 50% mark in the semester. SMCC sends financial aid refunds via paper check through mail to the address the student has on file with the Registrar's Office. Once the initial refund process is complete, checks are processed on a weekly basis for students who have become eligible for refunds.
- Requirements/Procedures for Withdrawal
  - If a student withdraws from the college prior to the last day to drop a course without penalty as listed in the catalog, the student's transcript will show a "W" (withdrawal) for each course. If a student withdraws from the college after the last day to drop a course without a penalty as listed in the catalog, the student's transcript will show a "WP" (withdrawal passing) or "WF" (withdrawal failing) for each course depending upon the student's grade at mid-term reporting period unless specific program policies state otherwise. To begin the process of officially withdrawing from the college, the student must first secure an OFFICIAL WITHDRAWAL form from the appropriate counselor (academic or career technical). The student will then be required to obtain signatures from other administrative offices on campus before taking the completed form to the business office. Failure to withdraw properly will forfeit the student's right to any refund due and will result in a grade on each subject for the semester being recorded as "F" (failure) on the student's transcript. A student must pay all fees due to complete the withdrawal. A student will not be allowed to withdraw from school during final exam week.
- Satisfactory Academic Progress
  - To be eligible to receive any federal, state, or institutional funds, students must adhere to the SMCC Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards. The intent of this policy is to ensure that students who are receiving aid are making measurable progress toward completion of a degree in a reasonable period of time. Students are measured on GPA, Completion Rate and Maximum Timeframe. Students who fail to meet SAP standards will be ineligible to receive any federal funds. Students who are found to be ineligible may appeal this determination under specifically prescribed conditions. These conditions and the full SAP policy can be found in the Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy section of this manual.
- Verification of Student Financial Aid Files

- SMCC will make any needed corrections to a student's FAFSA application based on information submitted by the student/and or parent. Once verification is complete and corrections have been received through Financial Aid Administrators Access and Central Processing Systems, the student will be notified and their award amount will be placed on their AccessSW Account. An award letter will also be sent to the student via mail and/or email.

### **Student Outcomes**

- Student outcomes are reported annually to IPEDS. This report can be found at [www.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/](http://www.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/)
- Average Freshman-to-Sophomore Retention Rates
  - Average freshman-to-sophomore retention rates are reported to IPEDS annually. This report can be found at [www.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/](http://www.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/)
- Graduation Rates
  - Graduation rates are reported annually to IPEDS. This report can be found at [www.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/](http://www.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/)
- Retention and Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity
  - Retention and graduation rates by race and ethnicity are reported annually to IPEDS. This report can be found at [www.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/](http://www.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/)
- Retention Rate
  - Retention rates of certificate or degree-seeking students, first time, undergraduate students are reported annually to IPEDS. This report can be found at [www.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/](http://www.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/)

### **Health and Safety**

- Campus Security Policies, Crime Statistics and Crime Log
  - Procedures for Campus Security Warnings, Emergency Information Alerts and announcements can be found at [www.smcc.edu](http://www.smcc.edu). Statistics for the past three years for occurrences on or near campus for various crimes, including crimes of prejudice (hate crimes) and liquor, drug and illegal weapon violations are included in these statistics. Institution crime reporting and response policies, campus security and access, campus law enforcement policy and personnel, crime prevention, crime monitoring and crime preventative programs are made available for students. The law enforcement agencies including agreements and crime reporting encouragement policies are also made available. This information may be obtained from the Chief of Police in the office of Campus Police located in the Brumfield Building.
  - Crime data is reported annually by SMCC to IPEDS. This report can be found at [www.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/](http://www.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/)
  - This data includes only on-campus data. This does not include instances that:
    - Took place on a public property
    - Took place on any building or property owned or controlled by a student organization

- The full policy outlining the Clery Act, Federal Crime Awareness and Campus Security Act Statistical Data & Guidance for Campus Security Authorities (CSAs) can be found in this manual.
- Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention Program
  - Standards of conduct that clearly prohibit, at a minimum, the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of drugs and alcohol by students and employees on the school's property or as part of the school's activities are prohibited. A description of the sanctions under Local, State and Federal law for unlawful possession, use or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol, a description of any drug and alcohol counseling, treatment or rehabilitation programs available to students and employees, a description of the health risks associated with the use of illicit drugs and alcohol, a clear statement that the school will impose sanctions on students and employees for violations of the standards of conduct (consistent with local, state and Federal law) and employment and referral for prosecution can be found in the student and employee handbooks. Students convicted of the sale or possession of illegal drugs may lose eligibility for Federal Student Aid. This information may be obtained on the SMCC website at [www.smcc.edu](http://www.smcc.edu) A paper copy may be obtained from the Vice President of Student Affairs in Kenna Hall. SMCC College students, personnel and organizations are required to comply with Institutional, State and Federal Laws regarding the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of a controlled substance, illegal drugs and/or drug associated paraphernalia except as expressly permitted by law. All violations will be presented to the appropriate authorities for prosecution. Any drug conviction while receiving Federal Student Aid could result in a loss of eligibility for these funds. REFERENCE; MISSISSIPPI CODE 1972 ANNOTATED OR UNITED STATES CODE. 13
  - In keeping with its educational mission, SMCC will emphasize educational strategies in addressing problems related to the abuse of alcohol and other drugs by any member of the college community (students, faculty and staff). However, any of those who violate the drug and alcohol abuse policy will be subject to prosecution by the civil authorities and to disciplinary action by the college. Thus, all employees, athletes, band members, and cheerleaders must undergo drug testing.
  - The full Drug and Alcohol Prevention policy can be found in this manual.
- Fire Safety Policies, Fire Statistics, and Fire Log
  - In compliance with the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act of 1990, our latest Combined Annual Security and Fire Safety Report includes information and crime statistics for the three previous calendar years. We provide this information to help the SMCC community increase awareness of current policies, practices and programs that exist for the student's safety at SMCC.
  - The full Drug and Alcohol Prevention Policy can be found in this manual.
  - The Annual Security Report is posted to the SMCC website at <https://www.smcc.edu/about/public-notice.php>
- Vaccination (Immunization) Policies

- SMCC does not have a vaccination policy for all students. However, students admitted to an SMCC healthcare professional program require certain vaccinations, in addition to other admission requirements specific to each healthcare program. Prospective students may review these requirements, as well as faculty contact information, at [www.smcc.edu](http://www.smcc.edu) by clicking on the respective program of study and/or calling 601-276-3705 or 601-276-3720 for more information.

### **Intercollegiate Athletic Program**

- Graduation Rates for Students Receiving Athletically Related Student Aid
  - Graduation and completion rates of student athletes can be obtained in the Office of the Registrar in the Administration Building.
- Intercollegiate Athletic Program Participation Rates and Financial Support Data (Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act)
  - The number of male and female undergraduate athletes, team sports of participation, information regarding number of participants, expenses, head and assistant coaches and financial information including revenues and expenses of various team sports, scholarships, recruiting expenses and coaches' salaries may be obtained from the Athletic Director and from the Business Office in the Administration Building or at [www.ope.ed.gov](http://www.ope.ed.gov).

### **Participation in Financial Aid Programs**

The Office of Financial Aid participates in financial aid programs funded through a variety of sources. Types of assistance include grants, scholarships, and work opportunities.

Grants and scholarships are gift awards which do not have to be paid back. Grants are primarily need based. Scholarships may be merit or need based. Work opportunities are generally considered self-help awards in which performance of duties are required. Work programs provide on-campus employment with hourly pay meeting minimum wage requirements.

The type of aid awarded depends upon the student's financial need and is generally a combination of gift and self-help assistance.

Southwest Mississippi Community College bears some responsibility in administering the programs listed below. Descriptions and eligibility requirements for each program can be found in the federal publication for federally funded programs.

The Program Participation Agreement between Southwest Mississippi Community College and the U.S. Department of Education entitles the Office of Financial Aid to participate in the following federal programs:

- Federal Pell Grant
- Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant
- Federal Work-Study

The Director of Financial Aid determines the total aid funds to be awarded during an award year. The U.S. Department of Education sends the Office of Financial Aid information detailing annual fund allocations for Campus-Based Funds through the Federal Authorization Letter with the Official Notice of Funding. Federal Pell Grant Payment Schedules are determined by the U.S. Department of Education and the school is notified annually.

Southwest Mississippi Community College also participates in the following state-funded programs:

- Mississippi Tuition Assistance Grant
- Mississippi Eminent Scholars Grant
- Higher Education Legislative Grant

Southwest Mississippi Community College Foundation, Inc. and individual donors also provide numerous scholarships.

Unique circumstances often qualify students for financial aid from a special agency or group. Awards from other sources are used in computing the total aid package for students. These agencies include, but are not limited to Veterans' Administration, Mississippi State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Tuition Assistance Program, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, etc.

Current federal, state and institutional regulations, policies and guidelines are followed in awarding and disbursing aid from all financial aid programs in which we participate.

### **Awarding Financial Aid Policy**

The Southwest Mississippi Community College Office of Financial Aid is adequately staffed and uses rules and regulations generated by the U.S. Department of Education to offer accurate aid packages to current and potential students.

### **Institutional Packaging Procedures**

Title IV aid is packaged electronically via the Alliant system. Students are packaged once all outstanding documentation is received and reviewed by the Office of Financial Aid. Pell Grant is awarded based on the U.S. Department of Education Pell schedules. Once Pell Grant is awarded, students are eligible to apply for other Title IV funds, such as Federal Work Study. Funds disbursed by the State of Mississippi are manually awarded based on reports provided to the Office of Financial Aid via the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning portal. Institutional funds are initiated via direct contact from the corresponding department and are awarded manually based on criteria outlined in the Southwest Mississippi Community College Catalog. Outside funds are awarded manually once payment has been submitted to the Office of Financial Aid. The total amount of all aid awarded to the student cannot exceed the student's actual cost of attendance.

## **Campus-Based Awarding Policy**

**Questionable High School Diploma Review** – Before awarding students any Campus-Based funds, the Registrar's Office verifies that the student has submitted a High School or its equivalent transcript. If the Registrar's Office receives a questionable transcript, the office staff will perform due diligence to verify that the credential is valid. This process could include asking the student how much time was spent in obtaining the credential or asking the student to describe the teaching methods and instructional content of their curriculum. The Registrar's office staff notifies the Office of Financial Aid, where the same procedures are followed with documentation being placed into the student's file.

**Federal Pell Grant** - The Federal Pell Grant is available to the student pursuing a first undergraduate degree or certificate who demonstrates exceptional financial need. A student who has earned a baccalaureate degree or first professional degree is not considered an undergraduate and cannot receive a Pell grant. A student is eligible to receive a Pell Grant for up to 12 semesters or the equivalent. If you have exceeded the 12-semester maximum, the student will lose eligibility for additional Pell Grants effective July 1, 2012. Equivalency is calculated by adding together the percentage of the student's Pell eligibility received each year to determine whether the total amount exceeds 600%. The Student Aid Report (SAR) from the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is used by the financial aid administrator to determine eligibility for this grant. The Federal Pell Grant is an entitlement program and once final eligibility is established, the award is the base for all other financial aid. The eligible student must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress for continuation. The FAFSA is available online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). SMCC school code is 002436. Help is available for students online or by calling the Federal Student Aid Information Center (FSAIC) at 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243).

**Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)** - The Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG) is available to a limited number of undergraduate students who demonstrate substantial financial need. The SAR from the FAFSA is used by the financial aid administrator to determine eligibility for this grant that is typically \$100 – \$1,000 per year, but cannot exceed the student's eligible award of Federal Pell Grant. Priority consideration is given to the full-time student with the most demonstrated need based on the Estimated Family Contribution generated from the FAFSA application. The eligible student must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress for continuation. The selection process begins the week prior to the first day of classes each semester. All students who are enrolled full time (12 credit hours) with a zero (0) EFC are selected and the aid is distributed evenly among these students. The selected students are awarded for both the Fall and Spring semesters. If the student does not meet SAP standards or does not attend for the Spring semester, the unused funds will be disbursed to new students who meet the initial criteria.

**Federal Work Study** - The Federal Work-Study Program allows eligible students to apply for part-time, on-campus employment. This program, like other Financial Aid Programs, is based on need. The SAR from the FAFSA is used by the financial aid administrator to determine eligibility for this work-study program. The eligible student must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress for continuation. An additional Federal Work Study assignment form must be completed to receive consideration. This form can be obtained from the Office of Financial

Aid. The student then arranges with the supervisor to apply/interview for open positions. Students hired must complete a USCIS Form I-9 and submit two (2) forms of identification before employment can begin. No student will receive less than minimum wage per hour. Work study pay periods are documented on monthly time-sheets. The pay period runs four (4) weeks and work study paychecks are available the following Friday in the Business Office.

Work study students could be granted access to personally identifiable information in the educational records of other students for the limited purpose of performing tasks assigned by and under the supervision of an educational official with whom the college has determined to have a legitimate educational interest in the educational records of students.

Work study students who are assigned tasks dealing with educational records of other students will receive instruction on Southwest Mississippi Community College's policies and procedures concerning access to student educational records, and will be provided with a Model Notification of rights under FERPA for Postsecondary Institutions policy. They will also be advised that information contained in the educational records of other students is confidential and must not be discussed or shared with anyone other than their immediate supervisor.

### **Community Service**

Southwest Mississippi Community College expends at least 7% of Federal Work Study final allocation to compensate students employed in community service learning positions. The following departments are included:

- Early Childhood Education Center in the Simmons Building
- William C. and Luna B. Ford Library
- Cafeteria in the Horace C. Holmes Student Union Building

### **Institutional Aid**

Southwest Mississippi Community College awards institutional scholarship funds to students based on need, academic merit, enrollment status, and athletic ability. Institutional scholarship funds consist of college, departmental, and athletic scholarships that are requested on behalf of students who meet the criteria outlined in the Southwest Mississippi Community College Catalog. Institutional Aid is awarded manually via communication from the fund manager. To be eligible to receive any institutional scholarship funds, a student must complete the FAFSA application and have the results forwarded to SMCC.

- ACT/ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIPS –SMCC strives to provide eligible scholars with funds to cover as much of the actual costs as possible. If any institutional scholarships exceed the actual cost of attending SMCC, the balance may be credited to the student's account and may be used in the college bookstore, cafeteria, or applied to student fees.

**ALL ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIPS ARE SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING STUDENT QUALIFICATIONS:**

- Must complete the FAFSA application and add SMCC's school code – 002436.
- Must be a full-time student

- Must not have a college degree but must have a high school diploma or equivalent
- Must maintain an overall 3.0 GPA or higher on all college course work
- Must not have attended more than three full-time semesters
- Must successfully complete at least 12 hours for each semester the scholarship is awarded

Scholarships may be renewed up to three subsequent semesters based on eligibility.

Southwest Mississippi Community College awards ACT Scholarships to qualifying students in the following categories for Fall and Spring semesters. ACT scholarships are awarded only for scores earned before enrolling in college courses (excluding dual enrollment courses).

- A student with a composite or super composite ACT score of 21 to 24 is eligible for up to a \$750 scholarship
  - A student with a composite or super composite ACT score of 25 to 28 is eligible for up to a \$1500 scholarship
  - A student with a composite or super composite ACT score of 29 or higher is eligible for up to \$2000 plus room/board or commuter meal plan
- INSTITUTIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS – Should institutional scholarships exceed the actual cost of attending SMCC, the balance may be credited to the student’s account and may be used in the college bookstore, cafeteria, or applied to student fees.

ALL INSTITUTIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS ARE SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING STUDENT QUALIFICATIONS:

- Must complete the FAFSA application and add SMCC’s school code – 002436
- Must be a full-time student
- Must not have a college degree, unless otherwise specified, but must have a high school diploma or equivalent
- Must maintain an overall 3.0 GPA or higher on all college work unless otherwise specified
- Must successfully complete at least 12 hours for each semester the scholarship is awarded

Scholarships are awarded by semester subject to specific GPA requirements being met.

This application should be submitted electronically to the Director of Financial Aid, member of the Scholarship Committee, during the January 15-April 30 application window prior to fall enrollment. Applicants must also complete the application for Federal Pell Grant at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). MTAG application may be completed at [www.msfinancialaid.org](http://www.msfinancialaid.org).

Scholarships will not be considered nor awarded until the FAFSA has been completed and all required documentation has been submitted to the Office of Financial Aid. These scholarships are awarded as funds are available. For more information concerning Institutional Scholarships, contact the Office of Financial Aid at 601-276-3707.

- PERFORMANCE SCHOLARSHIPS (BAND, CHEERLEADING, MUSIC, OTHER) – Scholarships are given to a select student body who is involved in small singing groups, chorus, band, student publications, and residence life. Please contact the director of the activity you plan to join or participate in to determine how you may apply for scholarships. If institutional



scholarships exceed the actual cost of attending SMCC, the balance may be credited to the student's account and may be used in the college bookstore, cafeteria, or applied to student fees.

#### ALL PERFORMANCE SCHOLARSHIPS ARE SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING STUDENT QUALIFICATIONS:

- Must complete the FAFSA application and add SMCC's school code – 002436.
- Must be a full-time student.
- Must maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 2.0.

#### CONTACT INFORMATION

- Bear Voices and Chorus: Choral Director, 601.276.2003
- Band and Stage Band: Director of Bands, 601.276.3725
- Student Publications: Journalism Instructor, 601.276.3843

- **ATHLETIC SCHOLARSHIPS** – Athletic scholarships are based on ability and need. Athletic scholarships are available for baseball, men's basketball, women's basketball, football, men's soccer, women's soccer, tennis, and softball. These scholarships are renewable up to four consecutive fall/spring semesters. To remain eligible, the student must maintain satisfactory academic progress and complete full-time enrollment (minimum of 12 earned credit hours) each semester. Applicants are required to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Maximum and minimum awards are subject to guidelines established by the Mississippi Association of Community and Junior College (MACJC) and the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA). The deadline is based on tryout date/signing date.

#### CONTACT INFORMATION

- Baseball: 601.276.3716
- Cheerleading: 601.276.4813
- Football: 601.276.3892
- Men's Basketball: 601.276.4843
- Women's Basketball: 601.276.4836
- Men's Soccer: 601.276.4841
- Women's Soccer: 601.276.4841
- Softball: 601.276.4842
- Tennis: 601.276.3843

- **State Aid**

The state of Mississippi offers need and merit based grants to students who reside within the state of Mississippi. Mississippi Tuition Assistance Grant (MTAG), Mississippi Eminent Scholars Grant (MESG), Higher Education Legislative Plan (HELP) are state based grants available to students who are graduates of an accredited high school in Mississippi and/or state residents. State aid is awarded manually based on reports provided to the Office of Financial Aid via the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning portal.

- **MTAG** – Offers up to \$500 per year for eligible students who are residents of Mississippi and do not qualify for a full Pell Grant. The SAR from the FAFSA is used by the

Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid to determine eligibility for this grant. Eligible students should have a high school grade point average of 2.5 and a minimum ACT score of 15. Students must maintain 15 credit hours and a 2.5 grade point average to remain eligible once they are awarded. Other eligibility criteria may apply. Interested students should apply on-line at [www.msfinancialaid.org](http://www.msfinancialaid.org). DEADLINE - SEPTEMBER 15.

- MESH – Offers up to \$2,500 per year (not to exceed actual tuition) for students who are residents of Mississippi with a high school grade point average of 3.5 and a minimum ACT score of 29. Students must maintain 15 credit hours and a 3.5 grade point average to remain eligible once they are awarded. Other eligibility criteria may apply. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is not used to determine eligibility for this grant. Interested students should apply on-line at [www.msfinancialaid.org](http://www.msfinancialaid.org). DEADLINE - SEPTEMBER 15.
- HELP – Provides full tuition to qualified, college-bound Mississippi residents who meet certain eligibility criteria. The SAR from the FAFSA is used by the Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid to determine eligibility for this grant. Interested students should review the full criteria available at [www.msfinancialaid.org](http://www.msfinancialaid.org) and apply on-line DEADLINE – MARCH 31.

- Outside Scholarships

Southwest Mississippi Community College Foundation, Inc. and individual donors also provide numerous scholarships. Unique circumstances often qualify students for financial aid from a special agency or group. Awards from other sources are used in computing the total aid package for students. Current federal, state, and institutional regulations, policies and guidelines are followed when awarding and disbursing aid from all financial aid programs in which Southwest Mississippi Community College participates.

### **Processing Student Aid Reports**

The Office of Financial Aid participates in the Electronic Data Exchange (EDE) with the U.S. Department of Education. Student information from the FAFSA and the processed results and the Institutional Student Information Records (ISIRs) containing the official EFC are imported on a daily basis.

Correction of a data element requested by the student or required as a result of verification or other review, is processed and submitted electronically to the U.S. Department of Education via the Central Processing System. Within approximately 72 hours, a new official EFC is delivered back to the Office of Financial Aid. Processing of the ISIR is continued and an award, if eligible, is made.

SMCC is required to review all subsequent ISIR transactions for a student for the entire processing year, even if an earlier transaction was verified. This process includes first determining if the EFC or the “C” flag has changed or if there are any new comments or NSLDS information that impacts eligibility for aid. Any updates and corrections are also checked. If the

EFC has not changed and there are no changes in the “C” flag or NSLDS information, there is generally no action required. If the EFC does change but it either doesn’t affect the amount and type of aid received or the data elements that changed were already verified, no action is required. If the EFC changes and the pertinent data elements were not verified, the ISIR must be investigated. Any time that the “C” flag changes or NSLDS data has been modified, SMCC must resolve any conflicts.

Once enrolled, it should not be necessary for students to make FAFSA corrections. If a student feels a correction is necessary, they should contact the Office of Financial Aid for assistance.

All corrections to a student’s FAFSA application will create a subsequent ISIR. When review is complete, the Office of Financial Aid may flag the new transaction for verification if information is changed that will affect the student’s EFC.

### **Student Budgets/Cost of Attendance**

Southwest Mississippi Community College Cost of Attendance (COA) budgets are constructed for students who are residents and non-residents that live on campus, off campus, or with parents. Listed below are the direct and estimated college costs that make up COA budgets.

- Direct College Costs
  - Tuition and Fees are estimated by the Director of Financial Aid in February for early awarding. The estimates are based on the previous year’s Tuition and Fees charges.
  - Books and Supplies allowances are based on previous year’s campus-wide book fee.
  - Room and Board are estimated by the Director of Financial Aid in February for early awarding. The estimates are based on the previous year’s Room and Board charges.
    - Three categories are averaged to determine the in-state and out-of-state Room and Board expense.
      - Living on campus
      - Living with parents
      - Living off-campus for residents and non-residents
        - based on annual 3% increase of housing and meals on campus
- Estimated College Costs
  - Transportation allowances are based on the projections and previous year’s estimated costs.
  - Other personal expense allowances are based on the projections and previous year’s estimated costs.

### **Books and Supplies Policy**

All Southwest Mississippi Community College students are assessed a fee for course materials, including e-books, digital supplements, and other material provided by the textbook publishers. All students (traditional, dual enrollment/credit, evening, online, and senior citizens) must pay this fee each semester.

If Southwest Mississippi Community College posts financial aid that exceeds the student’s cost of total charges of their student account, these funds may be used in the campus bookstore.

These funds are uploaded by the Business Office to the student's ID card once all account charges have been paid. If a student uses these excess funds in the campus bookstore, they are consenting for financial aid funds to pay for the charge created on their student account by signing the bookstore receipt. Any unused funds will remain on the student account as a credit balance until released.

### **NSLDS Transfer Monitoring**

In order to participate in any Title IV, HEA program, SMCC must demonstrate that the institution is capable of adequately administering aid under each of the standards established by the Department of Education.

Before disbursing Title IV funds to a transfer student, SMCC must obtain a financial aid history for the students and inform NSLDS of the transfer of the student allowing SMCC to receive updates through the Transfer Monitoring Process. This process ensures that the student has Pell Grant eligibility remaining for the current aid year, as well as flagging the student's ineligibility due to default, overpayment, if the student has reached or exceeded the annual or aggregate loan limits, or if the student has reached the Pell Lifetime Eligibility Used limit.

There is no action needed by the student during this process.

### **Verification Policy**

Verification is the process established by the U.S. Department of Education to check the accuracy of aid applications. Students are selected randomly and based on certain criteria. The U.S. Department of Education randomly selects approximately 30 percent of applications each year. If you are selected for verification, you will need to complete the specific worksheet for the aid year requested based on your dependency status; you may also be required to turn in certain tax information and financial documentation. If selected for verification the verification process must be complete before professional judgment can be used to adjust the FAFSA. The Southwest Mississippi Community College Office of Financial Aid may require additional information.

#### **Verification Process**

Each year the U.S. Department of Education informs schools of the FAFSA data elements that must be verified. The department also lists the documentation the applicant must provide to the school to verify the accuracy of each required data element. The following segment reflects the items to be certified for tax filers and non-tax filers as well as acceptable documentation for each item. Items will vary based on the category of verification that the Department of Education assigns to the student. The tracking groups apply to both dependent and independent students. A complete list of tracking groups and requirements are listed after Acceptable Documentation.

#### **Acceptable Documentation**

For the 2020 – 2021 academic year the Department of Education requires that schools verify IRS data for 2018. This can be satisfied by submitting an IRS tax return transcript, a signed

copy of a 1040 that was submitted to the IRS, or by using the IRS Data Retrieval Tool on the FAFSA application to verify federal income tax information. When submitting federal income tax information, a dependent student must also submit the parent tax information. The IRS data retrieval process is by far the simplest and most efficient method for a student to meet the income tax return segment of the verification process.

## **2021 - 2022 FAFSA Information Required to be Verified and Acceptable Documentation**

Tax Filers:

- **Household Size**—Completed verification worksheet listing the name and age of each household member and the relationship to the applicant
- **Number in College**—Completed verification worksheet listing the name and age of each household member attending a Title IV-eligible school at least half time for the award year, and the name(s) of the applicable school(s)
- **AGI (Adjusted Gross Income)**—IRS Data Retrieval Tool, IRS Tax Transcripts or a signed copy of the 2019 1040 that was submitted to the IRS for the student (and the parent if the student is dependent)
- **U.S. Tax Paid**—IRS Data Retrieval Tool, IRS Tax Transcripts, or a signed copy of the 2019 1040 that was submitted to the IRS for the student (and the parent if the student is dependent)
- **Untaxed IRA Distributions**— IRS Data Retrieval Tool, IRS Tax Transcripts, or a signed copy of the 2019 1040 that was submitted to the IRS for the student (and the parent if the student is dependent)
- **Untaxed Pensions**— IRS Data Retrieval Tool, IRS Tax Transcripts, or a signed copy of the 2019 1040 that was submitted to the IRS for the student (and the parent if the student is dependent)
- **Education Credits**— IRS Data Retrieval Tool, IRS Tax Transcripts, or a signed copy of the 2019 1040 that was submitted to the IRS for the student (and the parent if the student is dependent)
- **IRA Deductions**— IRS Data Retrieval Tool, IRS Tax Transcripts, or a signed copy of the 2019 1040 that was submitted to the IRS for the student (and the parent if the student is dependent)
- **Tax-Exempt Interest**— IRS Data Retrieval Tool, IRS Tax Transcripts, or a signed copy of the 2019 1040 that was submitted to the IRS for the student (and the parent if the student is dependent)
- **High School Completion Status**—Copy of applicant's high school diploma or final high school transcript that shows the date the applicant completed secondary school OR copy of one of the recognized equivalents of a high school diploma OR copy of homeschool documentation/state-issued homeschool certification credential
- **Identity & Statement of Educational Purpose**—Government-issued photo identification AND Signed Statement of Educational Purpose for the 2021 – 2022 award year (presented to the school in person) OR Copy of government-issued photo identification AND original notarized Statement of Educational Purpose signed by the applicant for the 2021 – 2022 award year (if the student is unable to appear in person at the school).

Non-Tax Filers:

- **Household Size**—Completed verification worksheet listing the name and age of each household member and the relationship to the applicant
- **Number in College**—Completed verification worksheet listing the name and age of each household member attending a Title IV-eligible school at least half time for the award year, and the name(s) of the applicable school(s)
- **Income Earned from Work**—Copy of a W-2 Form from each source of employment from 2019, signed statement certifying the applicant has not filed and is not required to file taxes for 2019, and a signed statement indicating sources and amounts of income earned from work in 2019 not listed on a W-2 Form.
- **High School Completion Status**—Copy of applicant’s high school diploma or final high school transcript that shows the date the applicant completed secondary school OR copy of one of the recognized equivalents of a high school diploma OR copy of homeschool documentation/state-issued homeschool certification credential
- **Identity & Statement of Educational Purpose**—Government-issued photo identification AND Signed Statement of Educational Purpose for the 2021 – 2022 award year (presented to the school in person) OR Copy of government-issued photo identification AND original notarized Statement of Educational Purpose signed by the applicant for the 2021 – 2022 award year (if the student is unable to appear in person at the school).

<p><b>V1 Verification Flag</b></p>	<p><b>Standard Verification Group</b></p>	<p><b><u>Tax Filers</u></b>            Adjusted Gross Income            U.S. Income Tax Paid            Untaxed Portions of IRA Distributions            Untaxed Portion of Pensions            IRA Deductions and Payments            Tax Exempt Interest Income            Education Credits            Number of Household Members            Number in College</p> <p><b><u>Non-Tax Filers</u></b>            Income Earned from Work            Number of Household Members            Number in College</p>
<p><b>V4 Verification Flag</b></p>	<p><b>Custom Verification Group</b></p>	<p>High School Completion Status            Identity/Statement of Educational Purpose</p>

<b>V5 Verification Flag</b>	<b>Aggregate Verification Group</b>	<p><b><u>Tax Filers</u></b>  Adjusted Gross Income  U.S. Income Tax Paid  Untaxed Portions of IRA Distributions  Untaxed Portions of Pensions  IRA Deductions and Payments  Tax Exempt Interest Income  Education Credits  Number of Household Members  Number in College  High School Completion Status  Identity/Statement of Educational Purpose</p> <p><b><u>Non-Tax Filers</u></b>  Income earned from work  Number of Household Members  Number in College  High School Completion Status  Identity/Statement of Educational Purpose</p>
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**Verification of Students with Special Circumstances**

**Identity Theft**—Victims of identity theft who are selected for verification must provide Form 14039 **OR** a signed copy of the filed tax return and a copy of a filed police report **OR** a signed copy of the filed tax return and a signed statement that the filer was the victim of identity theft that the Internal Revenue Service is investigating.

**Amended Returns**—Individuals must provide the school with a signed copy of the original filed tax return or tax transcript and a signed copy of the Form 1040X.

**Foreign Tax Returns**—Individuals who filed foreign tax returns and who cannot obtain a tax transcript must provide the school with signed copies of the foreign tax returns or other information listing similar income and tax information, converted to U.S. dollars. If the individual is not required to file taxes under that nation’s process, the student should provide a signed statement certifying income and taxes paid for the applicable period.

**U.S. Territory or Commonwealth Tax Returns**—If the student filed a tax return with Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, or the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, the student should provide a signed copy of the applicable tax return. If taxes were filed with the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau or the Federated States of Micronesia (the Freely Associated States), the student should provide a signed copy of the individual’s wage and tax

statement for each employer in addition to a signed statement that lists all income and taxes for the tax year.

### **Consequences**

Failure to complete all verification by August 1st could result in the applicant being required to pay one half of all fees. Failure to complete verification and failure to pay one half will result in the loss of any pre-registered classes.

### **Unusual Enrollment History**

Beginning with the 2013-2014 award year, the U.S. Department of Education added the Unusual Enrollment History (UEH) Flag to the ISIR. According to Dear Colleague Letter GEN-13-09, the purpose of the UEH Flag is to identify instances of potential fraud and abuse of the Federal Pell Grant Program.

The Financial Aid Counselors view each ISIR that is imported to verify the existence of a UEH flag. If there is a flag on the ISIR, information is requested from the students to determine if there is any reason to believe the student only attended school long enough to receive a Federal Pell Grant award. Eligibility for all Title IV aid is either approved or denied based on the found results.

### **Enrollment Status**

Financial Aid is awarded and paid according to the student's enrollment status:

12 + hours = full time enrollment

9 – 11 hours =  $\frac{3}{4}$  time enrollment

6 – hours =  $\frac{1}{2}$  time enrollment

Less than 6 hours = less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  time enrollment

### **Repeat Coursework Policy**

#### **If a Student Receives a “W” or a “F” in a Course**

- A student is allowed to repeat the same course and receive Title IV aid (assuming the student is meeting all SAP requirements) until a “D” grade or better is earned for the class.
- Once the student has achieved a “D” grade or better, a student can repeat the same course a second time and still receive Title IV aid.

#### **If a Student Elects to Take a Repeat Course a Third Time**

- Once a “D” grade or better has been earned, the class cannot be factored into Title IV enrollment eligibility.
- This rule applies whether or not a student received Title IV for previous enrollment.

### **Clock Hour Program Conversion**

Southwest Mississippi Community College uses the U.S. Department of Education's formula to determine the credit hours for programs that do not meet the following guidelines, deeming the programs a part of Gainful Employment:



- The program is at least two academic years in length and provides an associate degree, a bachelor's degree, a professional degree, or an equivalent degree as determined by the U.S. Department of Education.
- Each course within the program is acceptable for full credit toward a single associate degree, bachelor's degree, professional degree provided by SMCC, or equivalent degree as determined by the U.S. Department of Education, provided that 1) the school's degree requires at least two academic years of study; and 2) the school demonstrates that students enroll in, and graduate from, the degree program.

Each program submitted to the U.S. Department of Education for eligibility must include at least 37.5 clock hours of instruction per semester hour. The formula used is the number of credit hours \* 37.5.

At this time, Cosmetology is the only program SMCC awards Title IV aid based on the number of completed clock (rather than credit) hours.

### **Resolving Conflicting Information**

The Southwest Mississippi Community College Office of Financial Aid is responsible for resolving any discrepancies between a student's FAFSA and any other information in which the school becomes aware. If information is received from any source that conflicts with the information provided on the FAFSA, it must be verified and updated, if necessary. If, for any reason an income or tax document is submitted, SMCC will review the information for possible conflicts with the applicant's FAFSA responses.

### **Professional Judgment**

The Higher Education Act of 1992 allows financial aid administrators to make professional judgment decisions when there are special or unusual family or student circumstances that may call for adjustments in determining a student's eligibility for financial aid. Circumstances requiring professional judgment must be analyzed on a case-by-case basis. These circumstances must be documented.

Professional judgement adjustments may increase or decrease a student's estimated family contribution or cost of attendance. Specified adjustments may be made to data elements, but not to the formula. Adjustments made will apply to all institutional, state and Title IV aid awarded.

An applicant whose FAFSA information is selected for verification will be verified before professional judgement is performed. An applicant whose FAFSA is not selected for verification and is requesting professional judgment must complete the verification process before professional judgment is performed.

Circumstances which may warrant a professional judgment decision include, but are not limited to the following:

- A change in income of the student's family that would affect the family's ability to pay for college expenses.

- Examples would be loss of employment, loss of untaxed benefits, a separation, or death.
- Documentation Required: verification of change, examples listed on Special Conditions Application.
- Student requests consideration for dependency override.
  - Documentation Required: verification of dependency status, mark Other on Special Conditions Application.
- Excessive medical expenses.
  - Documentation Required: verification of payments, examples listed on Special Conditions Application.

The required documentation listed for each of these circumstances explains what information is necessary for each situation. The documentation must be complete before approval will be considered. Documentation of professional judgment decisions will be maintained in the student's financial aid file.

Professional judgement situations are unique. Circumstances other than those listed may be considered and will require documentation specific to the situation. The Director of Financial Aid has the final authority to make professional judgment decisions.

### **Order of Financial Aid Awards**

The Office of Financial Aid at Southwest Mississippi Community College has developed an institutional packaging philosophy to ensure consistent, equitable and fair distribution of financial aid funds.

SMCC's policy is to provide the financial aid needed to each applicant to ensure that a program will be completed; to minimize the adverse effects of financial concerns on academic performance; to provide the most advantageous combination of aid funds for which the student qualifies (subject to the availability of funds); and to make maximum use of all financial aid funds available to the institution.

SMCC awards funds in the order of Federal, State, Institutional and Other aid to enrolled, eligible students.

- Federal – Pell Grant, FSEOG, Federal Work Study, Veteran benefits
- State – MTAG, MESH, HELP
- Institutional – Institution funded scholarships
- Other – Outside agency funding, miscellaneous scholarships from outside sources

Students are ready to be packaged with aid and a Financial Aid file is made when three (3) things are completed:

- FAFSA is received by SMCC
- All documentation requested by the Office of Financial Aid is submitted
- Student is fully admitted and registered for courses at SMCC

Student files are divided alphabetically by last name between three Financial Aid Counselors. Students are awarded in the order that their files are completed. A student must meet at least 50% of their semester charges in order to complete registration. Aid is always awarded making sure the student's cost of attendance is not exceeded. There are some state and other grants and scholarships that a student can apply for at a later date and they will be awarded as they become known to the Office of Financial Aid. Students are awarded funds based on their actual enrollment rate.

### **Southwest Mississippi Community College Academic Year Definition**

Southwest Mississippi Community College treats summer school as a trailer to the aid year (Fall, Spring, Summer). Institutional aid is not available for the summer semester. State aid is not available for the summer semester. If a student has remaining eligibility for Pell Grant, the remainder may be used during the summer semester.

The following examples are used to determine if a student is eligible for Title IV funding during the summer semester and are for demonstrational purposes only. Pell Grant award amounts vary from student to student, based on their Expected Family Contribution (EFC), a student's program of study, and are contingent on remaining Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) and remaining Lifetime Eligibility Used.

- **Full-Time Fall and Spring**  
If a student received full-time Pell Disbursements in both the fall and spring terms, they have used 100% of their Pell allocation and will need to follow Year-Round Pell guidelines to receive Pell Grant for the summer semester. These students are required to enroll in a minimum of six (6) credit/Title IV eligible hours to be awarded Pell for the summer semester.
- **Part-Time Fall or Spring**  
If a student received part-time Pell disbursements for the fall or spring terms, they will first use the remainder of their original 100% Pell allocation. After 100% of their Pell allocation is used, students will then pull from Year-Round Pell funds. Example: student receives a full-time disbursement for fall and a  $\frac{3}{4}$  time disbursement for spring. This student would still be eligible for a  $\frac{1}{4}$  time disbursement for summer. The student will be disbursed the remaining allocation of their Pell, then access their Year-Round Pell. Anytime a student uses funds from Year-Round Pell, they must enroll in a minimum of six (6) credit/Title IV eligible hours.
- **Did Not Attend Fall or Spring**  
If a student did not attend fall and/or spring semesters, they will simply use the remainder of their original 100% Pell allocation. These students are not required to enroll in a minimum of six (6) credit/Title IV eligible hours to receive Pell because they are not utilizing Year-Round Pell funds. However, SMCC encourages all students to enroll in six (6) credit/Title IV eligible hours.

### **Award Letter and Acceptance of Awards**

Students receive notice of financial aid awards via a hard copy award notification. After the initial award notification, all future correspondence concerning financial aid awards will be sent

to the student's SMCC email address and/or the student's Access Southwest account. All grants and/or scholarships are automatically accepted on the student's behalf.

### **Revision of Financial Aid Awards**

Once an award letter is sent to the student, there may be instances which warrant a change to the original notification. An aid administrator may review the student's circumstances, make an adjustment to an award and post the revision to the student's Access Southwest account. It is the student's responsibility to closely monitor their Access Southwest account throughout their enrollment.

#### **Revision Initiated by the Office of Financial Aid**

The Office of Financial Aid will automatically consider a revision in a student's aid package when the following occurs:

- There is a presence of conflicting information within the file.
- There is a change in availability of funds.
- There is an Office of Financial Aid error.

Students are notified as soon as possible with a message explaining the change, in the case of an Office of Financial Aid error. If this situation occurs, it is customary to contact the student personally, or send a personalized letter.

#### **Revisions Initiated by Request from Student**

It is the student's responsibility to notify the Office of Financial Aid of changes in a student's resources and/or circumstances. The student may notify the Office of Financial Aid of such an instance that affects the student's family contribution by completing the Special Conditions Application along with any documentation to validate the change in circumstance. If a change to the award is allowed, the aid administrator will notify the student.

#### **Over-Awards**

An over-award occurs any time a student's financial aid (federal, institutional, state, and outside aid) and other resources are not fully paid to the institution.

#### **Eliminating an Over-Award**

Before reducing a student's aid package because of an over-award, an attempt should always be made to reduce or eliminate the over-award by adjusting any undisbursed funds. Once all funds have been disbursed, it is the responsibility of the student to pay back any owed funds.

#### **Causes of an Over-Award**

There are several causes of an over-award/over-payment.

- Change in enrollment status.
- Additional resources – the student has resources greater than those originally used to calculate the award.
- Administrator error – the aid administrator inadvertently makes an error.
- Cancellation – the outside source cancels the award.
- Fraud – the student intentionally deceives or misrepresents information to obtain funds.

### **Treatment of an Over-Award**

If eliminating the over-award is not possible, the aid administrator must reduce the over-award using the following sequence:

- If an over-award occurs due to a change in enrollment status, additional resources, administrator error, or cancellation, the aid administrator must first reduce or eliminate an over-payment for the following term and then bill the student for any remaining amount.
- If an over-award occurs due to fraud, the procedures outlined by the U.S. Department of Education must be followed.

It is the policy of SMCC to pay the over-payment of Title IV funds for the student. This would prevent the student from being in an over-payment situation. The student would then be billed for the amount owed to the school. Southwest Mississippi Community College will then place a hold on the student's account preventing them from enrolling in any future courses at SMCC, viewing their final grades via their Access Southwest account, obtaining their official academic transcript, etc.

### **Financial Aid Disbursement Schedule and Notification**

The earliest financial aid may be credited to a student account is 10 days prior to the start day of the current term. Financial aid will not credit to the student account until all eligibility requirements have been met and verification, if required, has been completed. A Financial Aid Disbursement Calendar is generated each semester by the Office of Financial Aid, once the Academic Calendar is provided by the Registrar's Office. The calendar provides the dates in which financial aid is scheduled to disburse or credit to the student accounts.

Pending financial aid is a temporary status and is used for financial aid planning purposes only. Pending financial aid allows the Business Office to defer payment of student's tuitions, fees, room, board, and bookstore charges until the financial aid is finalized and credited to the student account. Students are responsible for making payment arrangements for the difference between the student's total charges and the total amount of financial aid awards based on the designated due dates established by the institution.

Financial aid awards are not final until they have credited to the student accounts. Southwest Mississippi Community College posts pending financial aid to the student accounts until around the seventh (7) week of the semester. This usually falls two (2) weeks prior to the 60% date of the term. At this point, the Office of Financial Aid submits disbursements to the Common

Origination & Disbursement (COD) system. Once COD approves disbursements, the awards are credited to the student accounts. The Business Office then has no more than 14 days once the awards are credited to the student account to issue refunds to students. After the initial disbursement, the Office of Financial Aid submits disbursements to COD weekly and the Business Office processes checks each Friday.

Once checks have been processed, the Business Office will mail the student's refund check to the address on file through the Registrar's Office. An email is sent to all enrolled students informing them to verify their address through their Access Southwest account prior to refunds being processed.

Students enrolled in less than full-time hours for the full semester, with accelerated or late-start classes, will only be awarded for the full semester courses. Once the accelerated or late-start classes begin, the awards for that course will be added to the student account and disbursed to COD. This will prevent the student from receiving a disbursement for a class they do not attend. Disbursement of funds will take place once attendance in accelerated or late-start classes begins.

Generally, financial aid is awarded for the academic year and disbursed each semester based on a student's enrollment status. Different aid programs (i.e. scholarships, grants, other funding) may disburse at different times throughout the semester.

### **Refunds**

The full Southwest Mississippi Community College refund policy is posted in the SMCC Catalog as outlined below.

A student who withdraws from school during the first full week of classes will receive a refund of 100 percent of tuition and the board charges (meal ticket), the second week, 50 percent; and the third week, 25 percent. After the third week, no refund will be made. No refund will be made for room rent. No refund will be made of any out-of-state, online, technology or student services fees. No refund will be made of special department, CEU, or non-credit fees. No student will be allowed to officially withdraw until all fees are paid.

### **Procedures for Requesting a Refund**

A student who discontinues enrollment after the published drop/add period may be granted a refund if proper procedures are followed. Procedures for requesting a refund are:

- Write a letter requesting a refund to the Director of Academic Counseling or the Career-Technical Counselor.
- Attach supporting documentation (military orders, physician's letter, etc.)
- Submit the letter within six weeks of the end of the term.

Supporting documentation must include one of the following:

- Written documentation of call to or enlistment in active military duty or change of military station.
- Death of the student or member of the student’s immediate family (parent, spouse, child, sibling)
- Illness of the student or of a dependent person of such severity or duration as confirmed in writing by a physician, that completion of the semester is precluded.

### **Return of Title IV Policy**

The Higher Education Amendments of 1998 defines “withdrawal” as failure to complete the period of attendance on which federal aid eligibility was based. Therefore, this policy affects not only those individuals who complete the formal withdrawal notification process, but also those students who simply stop attending class (unofficial withdrawal). The last date of attendance recorded will be used for official and unofficial withdrawals. In either case, when a recipient of Title IV funds ceases attendance during a term, the college must calculate how much aid was earned by the student.

These rules are federally mandated and the amount of aid a student has earned for the enrollment period is based on the length of time the student remains enrolled for that period. The Office of Financial Aid determines the percentage of the term completed by dividing the number of calendar days completed as of the date of withdrawal by the total number of calendar days in the term. If withdrawal occurs on or before 60% of the term has elapsed, the percentage of federal aid earned is equal to the percentage of the term completed. However, 100% of federal aid is earned if the date of withdrawal occurs after 60% of the term has elapsed.

Southwest Mississippi Community College will return the appropriate funds to the U.S. Department of Education for a Title IV recipient who withdraws, officially or unofficially, from all classes on or before the 60% point of the academic term. The student will be subject to repayment based upon the federal “Return of Title IV Funds” calculation.

The Return of Title IV Policy applies to students who withdraw or are dismissed from enrollment at Southwest Mississippi Community College. It is separate and distinct from the SMCC Refund Policy. The calculated amount of the “Return of Title IV Funds” (R2T4) that is required for students affected by this policy is determined according to the following definitions and procedures, as prescribed by regulation, and may or may not be the same as used in other contexts at SMCC.

A student who withdraws is one who either officially goes through an official withdrawal from the institution, is administratively withdrawn, suspended, or withdraws from all of his/her courses.

### **Institutional Responsibilities**

Southwest Mississippi Community college is responsible in regards to Title IV funds includeing:

- Providing students with policy information
- Identifying students who are affected by this policy and completing the return of Title IV funds calculation for those students

- Returning any Title IV funds due to the correct Title IV programs on behalf of the student
- Notifying the student of the amount that was returned on their behalf and informing them of any balance owed to the institution.

### **A Student's Withdrawal Date is:**

- The date the student began the institutional withdrawal process or officially notified the institution of intent to withdraw
- The student's last date of attendance at a documented academically related activity

### **How Aid is Earned**

Title IV aid is earned in a prorated manner on a per diem bases (calendar days) up to the 60% point in the semester. Title IV aid is viewed as 100% earned after that point in time. The institution will perform a return of funds calculation to determine the amount of earned aid up through the 60% point in each payment period or period of enrollment. The Office of Financial Aid uses the Common Origination and Disbursement Web Site R2T4 Calculator to determine the amount of aid a withdrawn student is eligible for based on their last date of attendance provided by the Registrar. All unearned funds will be returned on behalf of the institution and the student by the institution to the appropriate Title IV program within 45 days. Pell grant funds are subject to a downward adjustment prior to inclusion within the R2T4 calculation if the student failed to begin attendance in all courses for which the Pell Grant funds were awarded.

### **Official Withdrawals**

A student is considered to be "officially" withdrawn on the date the student notifies a designated campus office or official (acting in his/her official capacity) of his/her intent to withdraw. SMCC designates The Office of Academic Advising, the Office of Career Technical Advising and the Registrar's Office for this purpose. SMCC reserves the right to use the student's last day of participation in an academically related activity for the purposes of the return of funds calculation.

### **Unofficial Withdrawals**

A student is considered to be "unofficially" withdrawn if he/she has been cut out of all of their courses due to non-attendance. The SMCC attendance policy can be found online at [www.smcc.edu](http://www.smcc.edu). Students found to have ceased attendance in class will be considered an unofficial withdrawal and the Office of Financial Aid will calculate an R2T4 to determine the amount of earned/unearned aid based on the student's last day of participation in an academically related activity.

### **Administrative Withdrawals**

In the event that the college administratively withdraws a student for nonparticipation, all Title IV funds will be returned. The college will process such an administrative withdraw if the student does not attend courses within the first two weeks of the scheduled meetings for a class.



The college reserves the right to use the student's last day of participation in an academically related activity for the purpose of the return of funds calculation if the date more accurately reflects the student's withdrawal date than the date the student requested an official withdrawal.

### **Unearned Funds / Returns**

The college has 45 days from the date of determination that the student withdrew to return all unearned funds for which it is responsible. The college is required to notify the student if they owe a repayment via written notice. The Office of Financial Aid will provide the student with a letter/email informing him/her that a Title IV return calculation was performed. The Business Office will issue the student a bill for any balance due that is created by the return of Title IV funds.

### **After a Student Withdraws**

The Office of Financial Aid will:

- Perform the calculation of Return of Title IV funds the student has earned, and if any, the amount of Title IV funds for which the school is responsible.
- Adjust student accounts to reflect the return or post-withdrawal disbursement.
- Notify the student in writing of the R2T4 calculation.

The Office of Financial Aid will return the amount for any unearned portion of the Title IV funds for which the school is responsible within 45 days of the date the official notice was provided. The student will be provided a letter explaining the return of funds in accordance with the Return of Funds Policy, including the amount and type of funds that were returned. A copy of the letter/notification will be stored in the student's file.

### **Example of Calculation**

1. Determine the percentage of Title IV aid earned by the student by taking the calendar days completed in the payment period, divided by the total calendar days in the payment period (excluding breaks of 5 days or more and days the student was on approved LOA).

$$18 \text{ (completed days)} \div 118 \text{ (total days)} = 15.3\% \text{ (% of completed calendar days)}$$

2. Determine the amount of Title IV aid earned by the student by multiplying the percentage of Title IV aid earned times the total of the Title IV aid disbursed plus the Title IV aid that could have been disbursed for the payment period.

$$15.3\% \times 2805.00 = 429.17 \text{ (Amount of aid earned by student)}$$

If the percentage is greater than 60%, the student earns 100% of the disbursed Title IV funds or aid that could have been disbursed. If the percentage is less than 60%, then the percentage earned is equal to the calculated value. If a student earned less aid than was disbursed, the institution would be required to return a portion of the funds and the student may be required to

return a portion of the funds. The college will return all Title IV funds to the Department no later than 45 calendar days after the date the school determines that the student withdrew on behalf of both the institution and the student. When Title IV funds are returned, the student may owe a balance to the institution.

### **Order of Return**

Southwest Mississippi Community College is authorized to return any excess funds after applying them to current outstanding direct institutional charges. An explanation of the R2T4 calculation performed on a student's behalf is available through the Office of Financial Aid upon request, if the request is received within three years after the end of the award year the calculation was performed.

SMCC does not participate in the Federal Student Loan Program, therefore, in accordance with Federal regulations, when Title IV financial aid is involved, the calculated amount of the R2T4 funds is allocated to only Federal Pell Grant.

If you believe that your individual circumstances warrant that your charges or refunds should be determined in a manner other than the published SMCC refund policy, or if you would like examples of your R2T4 worksheet, please contact your appropriate Financial Aid Counselor.

### **Post Withdrawal Disbursements**

If you did not receive all of the funds that you have earned, you may be due a post-withdrawal disbursement. The Business Office will issue a check to the student within 14 calendar days from the date of the notification of withdrawal. The institution may use a portion or all of your post-withdrawal disbursement funds for tuition and fees. For all other school charges, SMCC needs your permission to use the post withdrawal-disbursement. If you do not give permission, you will be offered the funds. However, it may be in your best interest to allow the school to keep the funds to reduce your debt at the school. If a response is not received from the student within the allowed time frame or the student declines the funds, SMCC will return any unearned funds that the school is holding to the appropriate Title IV program. Post-withdrawal disbursements will occur within 90 days of the student's last date of attendance.

### **Time frame for returning an unclaimed Title IV Credit Balance**

If a school attempts to disburse the credit balance to the student and the student does not claim the funds, the school must return the funds no later than 240 days after the date the school issued the check. If a check is returned to the school, the school may make additional attempts to disburse the funds, provided that those attempts are made no later than 45 days after the funds were returned or rejected. When a check is returned and the school does not make another attempt to disburse the funds, the funds must be returned before the end of the initial 45-day period. The school must cease all attempts to disburse the funds and return them no later than 240 days after the date it issued the first check.

### **Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy**

Southwest Mississippi Community College (SMCC) is required by federal regulations to establish minimum standards of satisfactory academic progress (SAP) to determine a student’s eligibility to receive Federal Title IV student aid for their chosen program of study.

Federal Student Aid at SMCC consists of:

- Pell Grant
- Federal Work-Study
- SEOG

To maintain student financial aid eligibility, the student must progress satisfactorily toward completing a chosen academic or career-technical program.

Satisfactory progress will be measured according to the following criteria:

- Qualitative: Cumulative GPA in your level of study
- Quantitative: Successful pace of completion of a minimum of 67 percent of all credits attempted
- Maximum time-frame: 150 % of the normal time-frame for your specific program

Students must pass a minimum percentage of all courses attempted and must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA (grade point average) as calculated by the Registrar’s Office as shown below:

<b>Hours Attempted Cumulative</b>	<b>Minimum Required GPA Cumulative</b>	<b>Percentage of Hours Passed Cumulative</b>
<b>0 - 29</b>	<b>1.50</b>	<b>67%</b>
<b>30 - 59</b>	<b>1.75</b>	<b>67%</b>
<b>60 +</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>67%</b>
<b>96</b>	<b>Generally Not Eligible</b>	<b>Generally Not Eligible</b>

Students should also complete the educational program (major) within 150% of the published length (according to the SMCC Catalog). For example, a major or program requiring 64 hours for a degree allows a maximum of 96 attempted hours (64 hours x 150% = 96). Once a student exceeds 150% of hours needed to complete the degree, he or she will no longer be eligible for Federal Financial Aid. Appeals may be granted in certain cases. See How to Appeal Financial Aid Suspension below for more information.

- Students who exceed 150 percent of the published length of their program will not be given a Financial Aid Warning semester. They will go immediately into financial aid ineligibility and must complete a SAP appeal at that time.

**Items to Consider:**

- Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress is not the same as progress required for graduation.
- Being declared ineligible for financial aid does not mean you have been academically dismissed from SMCC.
- Any appeal of ineligibility is good for only one term. SAP must be reviewed at the end of each term. Approval of an appeal will place the student on financial aid probation for the next term of enrollment.
- Failure to meet the minimum standards again after an appeal was approved will place a student in ineligible status again.

**Notification of SAP Status** – Students not meeting the SAP standards outlined in this manual, whether they are being placed on Financial Aid Warning or Financial Aid Suspension, will be notified via mail to the address they have on file in the Registrar’s Office. Only student’s wishing to utilize Federal Financial Aid are required to submit the appropriate appeal for reconsideration.

**Transfer hours from other colleges** - A student’s entire academic record will be evaluated to determine eligibility for financial aid, regardless of whether financial aid was received for all semesters. Courses from the student’s official transcripts from previous colleges that are forwarded to the admissions office and are a part of the student’s program of study are added to the SMCC academic transcript and are used to calculate the student’s SAP status. The courses that are transferred as a part of the student’s program of study will be included as hours attempted, hours earned, and in the GPA calculation. Transfer credits will be subject to the same SAP standards as institutional credits. Alliant will calculate SAP based on the transfer credits that have been entered into the student’s program of study.

**Repeat Coursework** – When calculating the student’s SAP status, the student’s cumulative GPA is used, along with the student’s hours attempted versus hours passed. The highest grade in a repeated course is used to calculate the student’s cumulative GPA. The grade obtained in the specific semester is used to determine the student’s semester GPA. All semester GPA’s are used to calculate the cumulative GPA; however, the lower grades of the repeated courses are excluded. A student may repeat a passing course one time with a grade of “D” or better and receive Title IV funds. Any additional repeats of the same course will not be Title IV eligible, however they will be used in calculating the student’s completion percentage and maximum time-frame allowed.

**Effective date of this policy** -This policy is effective beginning with the Fall 2018 term. SAP for Summer term 2018 and Fall 2018 term will be checked at the end of the Fall 2018 term using this policy. For terms beginning after the end of the Fall 2018 term, SAP will be checked at the end of each term.

**Financial Aid Warning** - Students not meeting SAP due to not passing the percentage of hours attempted or earning the minimum GPA requirements at the end of the semester will be placed on Financial Aid Warning for the next semester. Students on Financial Warning may continue to receive Federal Student Aid for one more semester.

**Failure to Meet Warning Semester Requirements.** If the student does not meet SAP at the end of the warning semester, the student will be placed on Financial Aid Suspension and is no longer eligible for Federal Student Aid.

**Financial Aid Suspension** - Students on Financial Aid Suspension are no longer eligible for Federal Student Aid. The student may pay out of pocket and attempt to get back into compliance with the SAP requirement or the student may appeal the suspension if there were any extenuating circumstances that prevented them from meeting the SAP Requirements. See How to Appeal Financial Aid Suspension below for more information.

Below is a chart that demonstrates the pace of progression a student must maintain to ensure completion within the maximum time frame:

After Attempting This Many Hours-Cumulative	Percentage of Hours Attempted That Must Be Passed-Cumulative	At Least This Many Hours Must Be Passed-Cumulative	Minimum Cumulative GPA Must Be At Least
6	67%	4	1.50
12	67%	9	1.50
19	67%	13	1.50
29	67%	20	1.50
30	67%	20	1.75
35	67%	23	1.75
47	67%	32	1.75
59	67%	40	1.75
60	67%	40	2.00
75	67%	50	2.00
84	67%	56	2.00
95	67%	64	2.00
96	Generally not eligible	Generally not eligible	Generally not

If your program of study requires more than 64 credit hours earned for a degree to be conferred, according to the SMCC catalog, the maximum number of hours you may attempt will be the number of hours required by the SMCC Catalog multiplied by 150%. You will still need to pass at a minimum 67% of all work attempted and maintain the minimum GPA to be eligible for Federal Student Aid.

**Satisfactory Academic Progress Review**

All coursework listed on transcripts for students, including any semesters that students did not receive financial aid will be included in the SAP review.

- **Incompletes:** A grade of “I” will count as an “F” in all financial aid calculations. Once the Incomplete is removed, the actual earned grade will be used. It is the responsibility of the student to inform the Office of Financial Aid when a change of grade has been made.
- **Repeats:** Students may repeat a passing course one time with a D or better and receive Title IV funds. Any additional repeats of the same course will not be Title IV eligible. The calculation of

repeat coursework is outlined in this manual.

- **Add – Drops:** Title IV financial aid will not be adjusted once late registration ends. However, all attempted classes, including dropped courses, will count toward your GPA and percent needed to continue eligibility.
- **Withdrawals:** Students may withdraw from a class and receive no credit with a grade of “W”. Classes from which students withdraw will count in the hours attempted.
- **Developmental Courses:** These courses will be treated in the same manner as a regular course since students receive intuitional credit and grades for these courses.
- **Transfer Credits:** All credit hours from another institution, that are transcribed to the SMCC academic transcript and are required courses for the student’s program, will count in the hours attempted. Credit hours received at a non-accredited institution where Title IV funds were not received by the student, will not be included in the financial aid calculation of attempted hours. The transcription of transfer coursework is outlined in this manual.

### **Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Process**

A student can appeal the suspension of their financial aid if one or more of the following situations occurred:

- Death in the immediate family
- Illness or injury
- Change in Academic Program
- Unusual Circumstance

The student must complete the Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal and disclose what has changed in their situation that will allow them to meet the SAP requirements at the end of the next evaluation. Once the appeal is submitted, the Director of Financial Aid will determine if the student will be placed on Financial Aid Probation or deemed ineligible for Title IV funds. The results of this evaluation will be mailed to the student’s address on file with the Registrar’s Office.

Along with the SAP Appeal Form, the student must submit supporting documentation to back-up an extenuating circumstance.

An extenuating circumstance should generally meet the following criteria:

- Be a circumstance that occurred during the semester that you fell below SAP.
- Must be something that was out of your ability to control.
- Must be something you could not have reasonably anticipated.
- Must have been a severe enough nature to have reasonably impacted your academic performance.

Documentation should clearly align with the circumstances stated. It should also meet the following requirements:

- Clearly list the issue or circumstance.
- Clearly provide the specific dates or date range(s) of the issues.
- Clearly relate to your extenuating circumstances.

- The dates or dates ranges provided fall within the semesters that you did not meet SAP requirements.
- Show that the extenuating circumstance was something beyond your ability to control and was unexpected.

### **Maximum Time-Frame**

As required by federal regulations, a student must complete the program of study (major) within a time frame not to exceed 150% of the published length of the program. All courses including, but not limited to, withdrawals, repeats and accepted transfer hours from another college, will be counted in the time frame. A student becomes ineligible when it becomes mathematically impossible for the student to complete the program within 150% of the length of the program, generally 96 credit hours. At this point, the student will be placed on Financial Aid Suspension and given a code of MAX and are not eligible for Federal Student Aid. A SAP Extension of Credits Appeal may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The student must submit the Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal to the Director of Financial Aid who will then determine if the student has changed academic programs and has a described a plan for completing the new program specifying the remaining credit and courses and an anticipated date of completing the new program. When reviewing the student's SAP Extension of Credits Appeal, only the hours that are accepted into the student's current degree program or second degree program are used to determine the student's maximum timeframe. If approved for an extension of credits, the student will be notified of the terms of the plan via mail.

During the Probation and/or Extension of Credits semester, the student will continue to be eligible for Title IV funds. At the end of each term, while on Financial Aid Probation and/or Extension, the student must meet the terms of their Probation and/or Extension to continue receiving Title IV Funds. Academic progress will be evaluated at the end of each semester. The student will be notified of these results via mail.

If the student does not meet the terms of their Probation and/or Extension, all financial aid will be suspended.

Appeals and other documentation may be delivered in person, by mail, or by fax to the SMCC Office of Financial Aid.

### **Pell Grant Lifetime Eligibility Used Policy**

Per the Consolidated Appropriation Act of 2012, a student's maximum duration of Pell eligibility is 6 Scheduled Awards, as measured by the percentage of "Lifetime Eligibility Used" (LEU). This is equivalent to 12 full-time semesters. Equivalency is calculated by adding together the percentage of the student's Pell eligibility received each year to determine the student's LEU, not to exceed 600%.

### **Grading System**

The final grade represents an evaluation of the student’s achievement during a semester’s attendance in a course. In addition, regular examinations of one to two hours in length are given according to a definite schedule. At the end of each semester, all students are required to take final examinations. The evaluations will be expressed according to the following letter system:

A	Excellent
AU	Audit
B	Good
C	Satisfactory
F	Failure
I	Incomplete
P	Pass (No Quality Points Awarded)
W	Withdrawal (No Academic Penalty)
WF	Withdrawal Failing (Same as Failure)
WH	Withdrawal Holding (Outstanding Account)
WP	Withdrawal Passing

An incomplete must be removed within the first regular semester which follows the grade period reporting “I,” or it will automatically become “F.” Questions concerning the accuracy of final grades must be brought to the attention of the Vice-President for Admissions and Records in writing within one semester. Students wishing to contest a grade must contact the appropriate instructor first.

### **Audits and Program Reviews**

Federal regulations require a Federal Student Aid compliance audit every fiscal year. Each audit must cover the time period since the last audit. Southwest Mississippi Community College’s fiscal year ends June 30, and is audited annually by a private auditor. Auditors review a sample of student files to ensure the Office of Financial Aid is in compliance with federal, state, and institutional policies. Any exceptions found during the audit will be addressed. The auditor then submits an Independent Auditor’s Report including any findings to Southwest Mississippi Community College. An electronic version of the report is uploaded to the government using the online submission site eZ-Audit by the Vice President of Business Services. Federal reviews are conducted by the U.S. Department of Education on a basis determined by the department.

Preparation for the audit is done in cooperation with the auditor’s request. Typically, the auditors will randomly select a specific number of students from each of the Title IV programs. The files are pulled and given to the auditors. Any additional assistance requested is responded to promptly.

A complete listing of financial aid audit guidelines is listed in the Audit Guide published by the U.S. Department of Education. This reference document may be viewed for additional information.

### **Misrepresentation**



In the difficult situation of a student and/or parent purposefully misrepresenting information in hopes of obtaining aid or additional assistance, the Office of Financial Aid is required to have a policy of referral when confronted with actual or suspected cases of fraud and/or abuse.

### **Policy for Misrepresentation**

Students and/or parents who willfully submit fraudulent information will be investigated to the furthest extent possible. All cases of fraud and/or abuse will be reported to the proper authorities.

### **Procedures for Misrepresentation**

If in an aid administrator's judgement, there has been intentional misrepresentation, false statements, or alteration of documents which have resulted or could result in the awarding or disbursement of funds for which the student is not eligible, the case shall be referred to the Director of Financial Aid for possible disciplinary action. After investigating the situation, if the Director believes there is a fraudulent situation, all information must be forwarded to the Office of the Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Education at (404)562-6460 or (800) 647-8733.

The Director of Financial Aid will review any possible fraudulent documentation with the appropriate aid administrator and if the decision is made by the Director to pursue the possibility of denying or cancelling the student's financial aid awards, a phone call and e-mail to the student's Southwest account will be sent requesting the student come in to discuss the situation. If the student does not make or attend an appointment, the Director may:

- Not process a financial aid application until the situation is resolved satisfactorily.
- Not award financial aid
- Cancel financial aid
- Determine that financial aid will not be processed for future years.

All processing of the application or disbursement of funds shall be suspended until the Director has made a determination as to whether the student shall be required to make an appointment.

### **Gainful Employment Disclosures**

Southwest Mississippi Community College is opting for early implementation of the rescission of the Gainful Employment rule. Let this notice serve as documentation of our intent to implement the rescission of the regulations early from here forward. Per this announcement, Southwest Mississippi Community College will not be required to report GE Data for the 2018-2019 award year to comply with the current requirements in 34 CFR 668.412 (d) and (e) that require institutions to include the disclosure template, or a link thereto, in their GE program promotional materials and directly distribute the disclosure template to prospective students.

The actual announcement can be found at:

<https://ifap.ed.gov/eannouncements/062819GEAnnounce122EarlyImplofRescissionGERule.html>

## **Rights and Responsibilities of Students Receiving Financial Assistance**

- Criteria for continued student eligibility under each program:
  - Pell Grant - Students must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) each year in order for eligibility to be determined. The information provided on the FAFSA is used by the Department of Education to calculate each student's Expected Family Contribution (EFC). The EFC is used by each school to determine if a student is eligible for Title IV aid, and for how much. Students who are eligible for the Pell Grant must also be making Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) as determined by SMCC's SAP Policy listed in this manual. Students must not have been convicted of a drug-related offense while receiving Federal funds, must not be in default on a Federal student loan, must not have received a Pell Grant for more than 12 full-time equivalent semesters and cannot owe an overpayment on Federal aid received. Male students must also register with Selective Service before reaching age 26. Contact the SMCC Financial Aid office if you have questions.
  - Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG) - Students must meet all the requirements for continued eligibility for the Pell Grant listed above. FSEOG is awarded based on need and availability of funds. Need will be determined each year.
  - Federal Work Study (FWS) - Students must meet all of the requirements for continued eligibility of the Pell Grant listed above. FWS is awarded based on need and availability of funds. Need will be determined each year.

- The student must be making satisfactory academic progress in his or her course of study to receive Federal Student Aid.

Students who have lost their eligibility for Federal Student Aid may re-establish their eligibility. View the SAP policy for more information.

The Office of Financial Aid will collect all aid awards (grants, loans, work study, institutional scholarships and all other scholarships) and credit all awards to the student's Business Office account. The Business Office will disburse the appropriate awards to the student.

Federal Pell Grant, FSEOG, State Aid, Institutional Scholarships, and any other Scholarships will be paid accordingly. These amounts will be disbursed to the student's Business Office account. Institutional charges will be withheld before refunds are paid to students.

Federal and Institutional Work Study are paid monthly for hours worked. Pay periods are posted to current Work Study Time Sheets.

- Obtaining Books and Supplies with Pell Grant and other student aid funds - Southwest Mississippi Community College posts financial aid that exceeds the student's cost of total charges of their student account to be used in the campus bookstore. These funds are uploaded by the Business Office to the student's ID card once all account charges have been paid. If a student uses these excess funds in the campus bookstore, they are consenting for financial aid

funds to pay for the charge created on their student account by signing the bookstore receipt. Any unused funds will remain on the student account as a credit balance until released.

- The general conditions and terms are applicable to any employment provided to a student as part of the student's financial assistance package are listed below:

Students generally work up to 10 hours per week and 20 hours per week during the summer. All positions are on the Southwest Mississippi Community College campus in Summit, Mississippi. Approximately 70 students share some \$70,000 each year. Students are paid minimum wage for hours worked and are paid once per month. Students can earn approximately \$500 per semester and \$750 during the summer months.

Eligible students are referred to different campus departments and must complete a Work Study Agreement Forms with the department head for which they will be hired. During this interview process, the job responsibilities will be discussed with the student. If the student feels he/she cannot perform the responsibilities, he/she can decline the position. Students are typically employed in areas which include, but are not limited to: clerical assistants, secretarial assistants, instructional assistants, library assistants, data entry clerks, fitness center, student activities, reading tutors, early childhood development assistants, cafeteria, and computer technician assistants. Students must be currently enrolled to be eligible or planning to attend classes in the fall for summer employment.

### **Student Right to Know Act of 1990**

The Student Right-to-Know Act, passed by Congress in 1990, requires institutions eligible for Title IV funding, under the Higher Education Act of 1965, to calculate completion or graduation rates of certificate- or degree-seeking, full-time students entering that institution, and to disclose these rates to current and prospective students. Every institution that participates in any Title IV program and is attended by students receiving athletically-related student aid is required to disclose graduation/completion rates of all students as well as students receiving athletically-related student aid by race/ethnicity, gender and by sport, and the average completion or graduation rate for the four most recent years, to parents, coaches, and potential student athletes. To read more about the Student Right-to-Know Act, please visit the National Center for Education Statistics website at:

<https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/?q=southwest+mississippi+community+college&s=all&id=176354>.

### **Clery Act, Federal Crime Awareness and Campus Security Act Statistical Data & Guidance for Campus Security Authorities (CSAs)**

#### **Background and What is a CSA?**

The Jeanne Clery Campus Security Policy and Crime Statistics Disclosure Act (aka the Clery Act) requires colleges and universities who receive federal funding to annually compile and distribute campus security policies and crime statistics. A Campus Security Authority (CSA) is an individual, who by virtue of their institutional responsibilities under the Clery Act, is

designated to receive and report criminal incidents to Campus Police (or the Title IX Coordinator in cases of sexual violence) so that they may be included and published by October 1<sup>st</sup> each year in the institutions Annual Security and Fire Safety Report. Crimes reported by CSAs are also used by the institution to issue or facilitate the issuance of timely warnings or emergency notifications for crimes that pose a serious or continuing threat to the campus community. Per the law, CSAs are “Officials with significant responsibility for student and campus activities.” CSAs include all individuals employed by Southwest Mississippi Community College.

CSAs have an important job to do by reporting Clery Act crimes reported to them by students and other community members since they may be hesitant to report crimes to police but may be more comfortable with reporting crimes to other SMCC officials. If an individual reporting an incident needs assistance, CSAs should explain how to get help. CSAs should advise victims on the Silent Witness Program if they do not want an investigation conducted. This is a program that ensures the administration, faculty, and staff at SMCC is dedicated to providing a safe learning environment. It also states that SMCC provides a silent witness program to help ensure that it stays that way. If a student witnesses a crime, they may use the Silent Witness Program form, found on the SMCC website, to report it to the SMCC Campus Police Department. The contact field on the form may be left blank if one wishes to report a crime anonymously. CSAs should also share with victims resources such as the Campus Police Department, The Title IX Coordinator, and/or support services in the local area. Victims reserve the right to choose to act or not. In the event of an emergency situation, CSAs should contact SMCC Campus Police.

### **Reportable Crimes**

CSAs are responsible for reporting allegations of Clery Act Crimes that are reported to them in their capacity as a CSA. Crimes reported to CSAs that may not be classified as Clery Act crimes should still be reported to the appropriate authorities. Clery Act crimes, alleged or committed, that a CSA is required to report to Campus Police or the Title IV Coordinator include the following:

### **Criminal Offenses**

For Clery Act reporting purposes, definitions of criminal offenses are based on the FBI’s Uniform Crime Reporting Handbook (UCR). Definitions of sex offenses are based on the FBI’s National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS).

- Criminal Homicide – Murder and non-negligent manslaughter – The willful (non-negligent) killing of one human being by another.
- Criminal Homicide – Negligent manslaughter – The killing of another person through gross negligence.
- Robbery – The taking or attempting to take anything of value from the care, custody, or control of a person or persons by force or threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear.

- Aggravated Assault – An unlawful attack by one person upon another for the purpose of inflicting severe or aggravated bodily injury. This type of assault usually is accompanied by the use of a weapon or by means likely to produce death or great bodily harm.
- Burglary – The unlawful entry of a structure to commit a felony or a theft.
- Motor Vehicle Theft – The theft or attempted theft of a motor vehicle.
- Arson – Any willful or malicious burning or attempt to burn, with or without intent to defraud, a dwelling house, public building, motor vehicle or aircraft, personal property of another, etc.

### **Sex Offenses**

- Rape – The penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without consent of the victim.
- Fondling – The touching of the private body parts of another person for the purpose of sexual gratification, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her age or because of his/her temporary or permanent mental incapacity.
- Incest – Nonforcible sexual intercourse between persons who are related to each other within the degree wherein marriage is prohibited by law.
- Statutory Rape – Nonforcible sexual intercourse with a person who is under the statutory age of consent.

### **Other VAWA Offenses**

- Dating Violence – Violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim. The existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on the reporting party’s statement and with consideration of the length of the relationship, the type of relationship, and the frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship.
- Domestic Violence – A felony or misdemeanor crime of violence committed –
  - By a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim
  - By a person with whom the victim shares a child in common
  - By a person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with, the victim as a spouse or intimate partner
  - By a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction in which the crime of violence occurred
  - By any other person against an adult or youth victim who is protected from that person’s acts under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction in which the crime of violence occurred
- Stalking Incidents – Engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to –
  - Fear for the person’s safety or the safety of others

- Suffer substantial emotional distress
- Hate Crime – A criminal offense that manifests evidence that the victim was intentionally selected because of the perpetrator’s bias against the victim.

The following eight categories of bias are reportable under the Clery Act:

- Race – A performed negative attitude toward a group of persons who possess common physical characteristics, e.g., color of skin, eyes, and/or hair; facial features, etc., genetically transmitted by descent and heredity which distinguish them a distinct division of humankind, e.g., Asians, blacks or African Americans, whites.
- Religion – A preformed negative opinion or attitude toward a group of persons who share the same religious beliefs regarding the origin and purpose of the universe and the existence or nonexistence of a supreme being, e.g., Catholics, Jews, Protestants, atheists.
- Sexual Orientation – A preformed negative opinion or attitude toward a group of persons based on their actual or perceived sexual orientation. Sexual Orientation is the term for a person’s physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction to members of the same and/or opposite sex, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, and heterosexual (straight) individuals.
- Gender – A preformed negative opinion or attitude toward a person or group of persons based on their actual or perceived gender, e.g., male or female.
- Gender Identity – A preformed negative opinion or attitude toward a person or group of persons based on their actual or perceived gender identity, e.g., bias against transgender or gender non-confirming individuals. Gender non-confirming describes a person who does not conform to the gender-based expectations of society, e.g., a woman dressed in traditionally male clothing or a man wearing makeup. A gender non-confirming person may or may not be lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender person but may be perceived as such.
- Ethnicity – A preformed negative opinion or attitude toward a group of people whose members identify with each other, through a common heritage, often consisting of a common language, common culture (often including a shared religion) and/or ideology that stresses common ancestry. The concept of ethnicity differs from the closely related term “race” in that “race” refers to a grouping based mostly upon biological criteria, while “ethnicity” also encompasses additional cultural factors.
- National Origin – A preformed negative opinion or attitude toward a group of people on their actual or perceived country of birth. This bias may be against people that have a name or accent associated with a national origin group, participate in certain customs associated with a national origin group, or because they are married to or associate with people of a certain national origin.
- Disability – A preformed negative opinion or attitude toward a group of persons based on their physical or mental impairments, whether such disability is temporary or permanent, congenital or acquired by heredity, accident, injury, advanced age or illness.

For Clery Act Purposes, Hate Crimes include any of the following offenses that are motivated by bias:

- Murder and Non-Negligent Manslaughter (description found above)
- Sexual Assault (description found above)
- Robbery (description found above)
- Aggravated Assault (description found above)
- Burglary (description found above)
- Motor Vehicle Theft (description found above)
- Arson (description found above)
- Larceny-Theft – The unlawful physical attack by one person upon another where neither the offender displays a weapon, nor the victim suffers obvious severe or aggravated bodily injury involving apparent broken bones, loss of teeth, possible internal injury, severe laceration, or loss of consciousness.
- Intimidation – To unlawfully place another person in reasonable fear of bodily harm through the use of threatening words and/or other conduct, but without displaying a weapon or subjecting the victim to actual physical attack.
- Destruction/Damage/Vandalism of Property – To willfully or maliciously destroy, damage, deface, or otherwise injure real or personal property without the consent of the owner or the person having custody or control of it.

### **Arrests and Referrals for Disciplinary Action**

- Liquor Law Violation – The violation of state or local laws or ordinances prohibiting the manufacture, sale, purchase, transportation, possession or use of alcoholic beverages, not including driving under the influence and drunkenness.
- Drug Law Violation – The violation of laws prohibiting the production, distribution and/or use of certain controlled substances and the equipment or devices utilized in their preparation and/or use. The unlawful cultivation, manufacture, distribution, sale, purchase, use, possession, transportation or importation of any controlled drug or narcotic substance. Arrests for violations of state and local laws, specifically those relating to the unlawful possession, sale, use, growing, manufacturing and making of narcotic drugs.
- Weapons Law Violation – The violation of laws or ordinances prohibiting the manufacture, sale, purchase, transportation, possession, concealment, or use of firearms, cutting instruments, explosives, incendiary devices or other deadly weapons. This classification encompasses weapons offenses that are regulatory in nature.

When in doubt about if an incident is a Clery Act Crime, or even if it is criminal nature, CSAs should report the crime.

### **Reportable Geography for Clery Act Crimes**

The location of alleged or committed crimes is important to take into account when reporting a crime to Campus Police or the Title IX Coordinator. The following three locations fall within the reportable geography for Southwest Mississippi Community College.:

- On campus – Including student residential buildings
- On public property – All public property, including thoroughfares, streets, sidewalks, and parking facilities, that is within the campus, or immediately adjacent to and accessible from the campus.
- On non-campus property – Any building or property owned or controlled by a student organization that is officially recognized by the institution; or any building or property owned or controlled by an institution that is used in direct support of, or in relation to, the institution’s educational purposes, is frequently used by students, and is not within the same reasonably contiguous geographic area of the institution.

A map of SMCC’s campus can be found online at [www.smcc.edu](http://www.smcc.edu). This map details all on-campus buildings and locations, public property surrounding and within the campus and other adjoining properties that are accessible from the campus.

When in doubt about the geography or classification of a reported crime, CSAs should report the crime to Campus Police or the Title IX Coordinator (in cases of sexual violence).

### **Procedures for Reporting Clery Act Crimes**

CSAs are required to report crimes when they become aware of information as SMCC is mandated per the Clery Act to accurately release crime statistics to the SMCC community and greater public. CSAs must report crimes to the appropriate party in a timely manner to honor the institution’s obligation to the Clery Act as well as to potentially pass along information that could help protect the greater campus community. No personally identifiable information is included in the crime statistics published by SMCC in the Annual Security and Fire Safety Report. Excluding crimes of sexual violence, CSAs can report crimes without personally identifiable information in situations where a victim is reluctant about reporting a crime or wants to remain anonymous. Please be advised that reports for sexual violence crimes need to include personally identifiable information. However, whenever possible it is vitally important to include personally identifiable information and as much detail as possible when reporting a crime as this will aid law enforcement with properly recording, classifying, and addressing the crime. Double reporting of the same crime can also be avoided when personally identifiable information is included in a report.

### **To Protect and to Serve**

The Campus Police Department is a team of professionals working to provide a safe and secure environment in which the educational mission of the College can be fully realized. The officers and staff are service oriented and committed to the safety and well-being of those associated with SMCC. They provide crime prevention and control, criminal investigation, traffic and parking supervision, disaster coordination, maintenance of public order, and other related services. The officers of the department are responsible for the enforcement of state and local laws.



They also work closely with the Vice President for Student Affairs Office to ensure that the safety policies and procedures are uniformly executed and conveyed in a clear and consistent manner to the college's students, faculty, and staff. The department's ability to function as an independent law enforcement agency enables the staff to respond to situations requiring police assistance while still maintaining the autonomy of the college.

### **Our Officers and Their Training**

The Campus Police Force employs a staff of campus police officers. Officers are in constant radio communication with mobile and stationary units as well as with other police agencies.

### **Facility Access and Security**

Currently, SMCC operates under an "Open Campus" policy. However, there are specific security measures regarding access to campus buildings and social events. Identification cards with proper validation are issued to all faculty, staff, and full time students. They are to be used for admission to residence halls, athletic facilities, and social events. These cards are also necessary for students, faculty, and staff to take advantage of library, bookstore, financial aid, food service, and business office privileges. Failure to have ID card on one's person at all times when on college property can result in disciplinary action. The ID card must be surrendered to any college official upon request.

### **Our Assistance Program**

Many faculty, staff, students, and visitors to our campus are unaware of the services that our officers provide. The following is a list of services:

- Investigate all incidents on campus
- Make emergency notifications
- Provide escort service to your car or from building to building
- Unlock vehicles at student's request
- Boost disabled vehicles
- Work accidents

### **A Secure Campus**

The college:

- Provides a full service police department
- Provides and maintains doors that lock to all rooms and buildings
- Conducts campus lighting and safety surveys
- Trims shrubs and trees around buildings
- Provides residence hall staff that respond to routine and crisis situations
- Provides security assessment for facilities on an ongoing basis

- Provides initial identification cards to all students, faculty, and staff which provides access to campus activities and facilities
- Manages campus parking

## **SAFETY AND SECURITY IS A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY!**

### **Students are expected to:**

- Lock the doors and windows to their rooms at all times
- Refrain from propping doors or entrances open
- Refrain from allowing strangers to enter their rooms or floors
- Call campus police or residence hall staff for assistance when needed
- Walk with others at night on campus
- Report suspicious person/activities to residence hall staff or campus police immediately
- Report crime immediately to campus police
- Take appropriate steps to secure personal property like bikes, cars, jewelry, etc.
- Participate in security related programming, such as engraving personal property
- Read, understand, and abide by the college and residence hall rules and regulations
- Provide input to the college about how the campus can be made safer
- Report, in writing, instances of obscene or harassing phone calls or conversations
- Provide insurance coverage for personal belongings
- Refrain from providing other individuals personal keypad code for entrance of residence halls.

### **Security in the Residence Hall**

SMCC has four residence halls, one for females and three for males. All students have the opportunity to request changes in room assignments which are accommodated as quickly as possible, based upon available facilities. The college does not provide off campus housing.

1. Professional residence hall directors staff the residence halls and are on call 24 hours a day. They undergo training in enforcement of residence hall security policies.
2. Desk assistants are assigned to the front desk at the main entrance of the women's residence hall during specific hours of the day.
3. Overnight guests in the residence halls may apply to the Director of Student Activities and Housing. They must be of the same sex as the student being visited and must be approved by the Head Resident and Director of Student Activities and Housing. Overnight stays should not exceed more than one consecutive night.

### **Residential Safety/Security Programming**

Currently, the college employs a multi-faceted program to inform students and employees of campus security procedures and crime prevention.

- The campus police department, along with the Vice President for Student Affairs Office Personnel, utilizes printed materials, student forums, and multimedia presentations to promote crime prevention and awareness in the college community.
- Guest speakers are invited to campus to present programs relative to such topics as accepting responsibility for one's own actions and developing civic responsibility to report, prevent, and deter crime.

### **To Report Crimes and Emergencies**

In the event of an emergency or criminal act, members of the college community are instructed and required to report the incident to the Campus Police by calling 601-551-3838.

Southwest Mississippi Community College, like any other organization, is vulnerable to a wide range of natural, technological, and human related disasters. These disasters may cause injuries, loss of life, and disruption of services and the possibility of significant property damage. Before, during, and after a disaster, the college requires special procedures to address the needs of prevention/mitigation, preparedness, and response and recovery management. To address such disasters, Southwest Mississippi Community College has developed an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). This plan can be found on the Southwest Mississippi Community College website at [www.smcc.edu](http://www.smcc.edu).

### **Drug and Alcohol Prevention Program**

In keeping with its educational mission, Southwest MS Community College will emphasize educational strategies in addressing problems related to the abuse of alcohol and other drugs by any member of the college community (students, faculty and staff). However, any of those who violate the drug and alcohol abuse policy will be subject to prosecution by the civil authorities and to disciplinary action by the college. Thus, all employees, athletes, band members, and cheerleaders must undergo drug testing.

Southwest Mississippi Community College will distribute the DAAPP program disclosure to all employees and all students enrolled for academic basis on an annual basis. This will be distributed by the Office of Financial Aid.

A substantive biennial review to assess the effectiveness of SMCC's DAAPP will be completed and presented to the President of SMCC and the SMCC Board of Directors.

The Board of Trustees of Southwest Mississippi Community College adopts this plan to accomplish the following:

1. Aid in the prevention of alcohol and other drug abuse through strong educational efforts;
2. Encourage and facilitate counseling and rehabilitation programs by those members for the academic community who need assistance with alcohol and/or other drug related problems; and
3. Discipline appropriately those members of the SMCC academic community who engage in substance abuse and/or related behaviors while maintaining confidentiality. This policy is in accordance with Miss. Code Section 71-7-3.

### **Education and Prevention Efforts**

Southwest Mississippi Community College will provide educational programs aimed at preventing the abuse of alcohol and other drugs. Educational efforts shall be directed toward all members of the college community and will include information about the incompatibility of the abuse or sale of alcohol and other drugs with the goals of Southwest MS Community College; the health hazards associated with the abuse of alcohol and other drugs, the incompatibility of the abuse of alcohol and other drugs with the maximum achievement of educational, career, and other goals. In addition, the potential legal consequences of such involvement with alcohol and other drugs.

### **Drug Test**

Southwest Mississippi Community College will require all current administrators, faculty and staff to be drug tested by August 15, 2005. All new employees will be drug tested and are subject to a criminal background check prior to employment. All employees will be subject to a random drug test throughout each school year or anytime there is reasonable cause. Employees will be tested for: heroin, cannabis, mescaline, lysergic acid, diethylamide or LSD, opium, cocaine, amphetamine, MDMA or ecstasy, methaqualone. Any employee failing a drug test will be allowed to take a second test on the same day, at the employee's expense, at a site selected by the administration. If an employee who fails a drug test voluntarily submits to treatment or rehabilitation agencies, then they will have another drug test upon completing treatment. For employees working in good faith with treatment or rehabilitation agencies, every attempt will be made to return the individual to full employment or student status. However, any employee who cannot pass an acceptable drug test will no longer be employed by Southwest Mississippi Community College. If an employee refuses to take a drug test, then they are in violation of the DRUG AND ALCOHOL PREVENTION PROGRAM (DAAPP). If a potential employee refuses, then a job offer may be rescinded. Athletes, cheerleaders, athletic aids, and band members will also be drug tested. All students required to be tested will be given a copy of the drug testing policy for students.

### **Counseling and Rehabilitation Services**

Those students, faculty, or staff who seek assistance through the college for an alcohol or drug related problem will be provided with information about counseling and rehabilitation services available through the college and/or community resources. Professional standards of confidentiality shall be observed at all times. Individuals will be encouraged to voluntarily avail themselves of services. For those working in good faith with treatment or rehabilitation agencies, every attempt will be made to return the individual to full employment or student status. The abuse of alcohol and/or drugs is harmful to the individual's health and may cause serious health problems, breakdown of the family structure, decrease productivity in the workplace, and impair the education and learning process.

Drug and alcohol counseling and referral services are available to the college community through the H.R. Department/Counseling. A complete listing of drug and alcohol counseling, treatment, rehabilitation, and re-entry programs is also available to employees and students of this college in this manual.

### **Students**

Students must make their own arrangements to pay for treatment and/or substance abuse counseling; however, the Office of Academic counseling and recruiting in addition to career and technical counselors will make referrals based upon student need.

### **Employees**

Employees who are members of the State & School Employees' Health Insurance Plan have the following options. Information about these benefits can be obtained from the department of human resources in Kenna Hall.

Benefits are provided for inpatient, residential treatment facility, intensified outpatient program, and outpatient substance abuse treatment. All inpatient hospital and residential treatment facility admissions for substance abuse treatment must be certified as medically necessary by ActiveHealth. Refer to the Medical Management and Utilization Review section for certification requirements.

Intensified Outpatient Program: as provided for the treatment of substance abuse, refers to a program provided as a continuation of inpatient substance abuse treatment prescribed by a physician, under the management of a substance abuse provider, which is licensed or certified by the appropriate state or federal agency and is approved by the Plan.

### **Referral information for Employees and Students:**

**Chemical Dependency Unit Services.** Inpatient or hospital-based facilities offer services for individuals with more severe alcohol and/or drug problems and who require a medically-based environment. Treatment usually includes detoxification, group, individual, and family therapy, education services, and family counseling. Chemical Dependency services are provided by the providers listed in this manual.

**Detoxification Services.** Detoxification is the process through which a person who is physically and/or psychologically dependent on alcohol, illegal drugs, prescription medications, or a combination of these drugs is withdrawn from the drugs of dependence. Methods of detoxification include: medical detoxification (detoxification in a hospital setting) and social detoxification (detoxification in a non-hospital supportive environment). Detoxification services are provided by the programs listed in this manual.

**General Outpatient Services.** General outpatient substance abuse treatment is appropriate for individuals whose clinical condition or environment does not require a more intensive level of care. Multiple treatment modalities, techniques and strategies include individual, group, and family counseling. Central outpatient services are provided by the programs listed in this manual.

**Intensive Outpatient Services.** The 10-15 week Intensive Outpatient Program is a community-based outpatient program which provides an alternative to traditional residential treatment or hospital settings. The program is directed to persons who need services more intensive than traditional outpatient services, but who have less severe alcohol and drug problems than those typically addressed in residential treatment. The IOP allows the consumer to continue to fulfill

his/her obligations to family, job, and community while continuing treatment. Intensive outpatient services are provided by the programs listed in this manual.

### **Providers**

#### **Pine Grove Recovery Center, Hattiesburg**

2255 Broadway Dr.  
Hattiesburg, MS 39402  
(601) 288-2273

#### **Jolimar Recovery Center Inc., Summit**

740 Jolimar Trail SE  
Summit, MS 39666  
(601) 276-9556

#### **Region 11 Adams, Amite, Claiborne, Franklin, Jefferson, Lawrence, Pike, Walthall, Wilkinson Southwest MS Mental Health Complex**

701 White Street  
P. O. Box 768  
McComb, MS 39649-0768  
(601) 684-2173

<http://www.swmmhc.org/>

### **Resources**

The Mississippi Department of Mental Health

Alcohol and Drug Services: <http://www.dmh.ms.gov/alcohol-and-drug-services/>

### **Disciplinary Actions**

Students, faculty members, administrators, and other employees are responsible, as citizens, for knowing about and complying with the Mississippi law that makes it a crime to possess, sell, deliver, or manufacture those drugs designated collectively as “controlled substances” in Section 41-29-113 et seq. of the Mississippi Statutes. The college will impose disciplinary sanctions on students and employees outlined in this policy for violation of the standards of conduct required by the Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention Program. Faculty and staff in violation of this college policy will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in college disciplinary procedures. State and Federal Statutes will regulate mandatory participation in rehabilitation programs.

The following minimum penalties shall be imposed for the particular offense described.

### **Corrective Action**

Any employee conduct, that in the opinion of Southwest Mississippi Community College, interferes or adversely affects our business is sufficient grounds for corrective action. Corrective action can range from oral warnings to immediate termination. When coaching, counseling, and development plans fail to assist an employee in achieving the expected level of performance, or

when behavior or conduct is severe enough to require immediate corrective action, the College follows a general policy of progressive discipline typically in the following order:

- Counseling Session documented to file
- Verbal Warning documented to file
- Written Warning added to file
- Final Written Warning added to file
- Suspension
- Termination

### **Conditions for Immediate Suspension**

When a student, faculty member, administrator, or other employee has been charged by the college with a violation of policies concerning alcohol and other drugs, he or she may be suspended from enrollment or employment before initiation or completion of regular disciplinary proceedings, if, assuming the truth of charges, the responsible authority concludes that the person's continued presence within the college community would constitute clear and immediate danger to the health or welfare of other members of the college community.

An immediate suspension and subsequent hearing will be in accordance with college disciplinary procedures.

### **College Regulations Governing Illegal Drugs:**

1. Trafficking Illegal Drugs
  - a. For the illegal manufacture, sale or delivery, or possession with intent to manufacture, sell or deliver, of any controlled substances identifies in Schedules I and II of Section 41-29-113 and Section 41-29-115 of the Mississippi Statutes (including but not limited to heroin, cannabis, mescaline, lysergic acid, diethylamide or LSD, opium, cocaine, amphetamine, MDMA or ecstasy, methaqualone), any student shall be expelled, and any faculty member, administrator, or other employee shall be discharged.
  - b. For the first offense involving the illegal manufacture, sale or delivery, or possession with intent to manufacture, sell or deliver, of any controlled substance identified in Schedule III through V of Section 41-29-117, Section 41-29-119, Section 41-26-121 of the Mississippi Statutes (including but not limited to steroids, diazepam, Phenobarbital), the minimum penalty shall be suspension from enrollment or from employment. For a second offense, any student shall be expelled and any faculty member, administrator, or staff shall be discharged.
2. Illegal Possession of Drugs
  - a. For a first offense involving the illegal possession of any controlled substance identified in Schedules I or II of Section 41-29-113 and Section 41-29-115 of Mississippi Statutes, the minimum penalty shall be a fine of up to \$300 and/or suspension from enrollment or from employment.

- b. For the first offense involving illegal possession of any controlled substance identified in Schedules III through V of Section 41-26-117, Section 41-29-119, and Section 41-29-121 of the Mississippi Statutes, the minimum penalty shall be probation for a period to be determined on a case by case basis and a fine of up to \$300. A person on probation may be required to participate in a drug education and counseling program, consent to regular drug testing, and accept such other conditions and restrictions as the appropriate college official deems applicable.
- c. Refusal or failure to abide by the terms of probation on second or other subsequent offenses involving the illegal possession of controlled substances, progressively more severe penalties shall be imposed including expulsion of students, faculty members, administrators or employees.
- d. The college reserves the right to dismiss any student from the residence hall and/or from the college for having or using illegal drugs.
- e. The college reserves the right to dismiss any student for drinking alcohol on or off campus. Any student who brings alcoholic beverages on the campus, or has alcohol in his/her dorm room, or enters the campus while under the influence of alcohol may be dismissed from the dormitory.

### **Possession, Sale or Consumption of Alcoholic Beverages**

1. Possession, sale, or consumption of alcoholic beverages on campus or at off-campus sponsored activities is prohibited.

Alcoholic beverages include but are not limited to beer, wine, distilled spirits, wine coolers, and liqueurs.

2. It is against the state law of Mississippi to have alcoholic drinks on a college campus. Use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol will carry the following penalties:
  - a. 1st Offense – The student will be fined \$75.00 for possession on campus. For any alcohol violation the student will write a typed, three-page paper on the dangers of alcohol for the Vice President for Student Affairs.
  - b. 2nd Offense – The student will be fined \$150.00 for possession on campus. For a second alcohol violation the student will be suspended and will have to move out of the residence hall.
3. State Laws are outlined as follows:
  - a. Drinking Age
    - The legal drinking age in Mississippi is 21.
    - Selling, giving, or serving alcoholic beverages to persons under 21 is unlawful.
    - In Mississippi, this law extends to possession of alcoholic beverages by anyone under 21.



4. In addition to the legal requirements and penalties above, students found to be in violation of this college policy will be subject to penalties under the student Code of Conduct.

### **Civil Conviction for Drug and Alcohol Offenses**

If employees of Southwest MS Community College, in performance of college duties within the scope of their employment, are convicted of an offense related to drugs, they will be subject to the same penalties as the offense would warrant if committed on college property or at a college sponsored event. The term “conviction” would mean a findings of guilt (including a plea of nolo contendens), or imposition of sentence, or both, by and judicial body charged with the responsibility to determine violations of Federal or State criminal drug statutes.

The individual involved is required to notify the college of the conviction or incident within five (5) working days following said conviction or incident.

A biennial review of the Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention Program will be conducted to:

- Determine its effectiveness and implement changes to the program as needed; and
- To ensure the disciplinary sanctions described in the policy are consistently enforced.

### **Southwest Mississippi Community College Drug Education and Testing Program for Athletes and Athletic Aids.**

SMCC is very interested in the academic performance and athletic development of all young men and women who represent this institution in all arenas. Since our society has many problems associated with certain drug and alcohol use that cause great concern, SMCC is especially interested in our college students’ abilities to avoid these problems.

To address such activity, the SMCC Athletic Department shall develop and implement a program of drug and alcohol education for all athletes, managers, trainers and all students working with the athletic program; a testing program to identify those students who are involved with the use of drugs and/or alcohol; and special counseling and assistance to enable the involved student to become and remain drug and alcohol free. Administrative procedures shall be set forth by which the student will become and remain drug and alcohol free in order to continue in the applicable program.

The SMCC Athletic Department administers a program of drug prevention for the purpose of assisting athletes, managers, trainers and all students working with the athletic program (who, for this document, will be termed athletic aides). The objectives of the program are as follows:

1. To provide the student athlete and athletic aides information on the dangers of drug and alcohol use and abuse.
2. To identify those athletes and athletic aides involved in drug and alcohol usage by administering mandatory drug tests at the beginning of the fall semester or prior to their initial season of competition, by administering unannounced random drug tests

throughout the year, and by administering drug tests due to an athlete's or athletic aide's association with drug paraphernalia or possession.

3. To maintain confidential records and recommend treatment for those individuals with drug and/or alcohol use problems. According to MACJC rules, a student athlete who tests positive for drugs and is dismissed from the SMCC athletic program may not participate at another member's (MACJC) school athletic programs for a period of two calendar years.
4. Any athlete or athletic aide who tests positive for the following controlled substances as defined by Section 41-29-101 et. Seq. of the Mississippi Code of 1972 being the Mississippi Uniform Controlled Substances Law, and their derivatives to include: Amphetamines, Barbiturates, Cannabinoids (Marijuana), Cocaine Metabolite (as Benzoyl-Ecgonine) Opiates, Phencyclidine, THC Metabolite and Steroids will be removed from the SMCC athletic program. Any student that has a second alcohol violation will be removed from the SMCC athletic program.

The following procedures shall be used in the operation of the SMCC Drug Education and Screening Program:

1. All athletes, band members, cheerleaders and athletic aides participating in every sport/event will take part in a mandatory drug screening conducted by the Office of the Vice-President for Student Affairs at the start of the fall semester or prior to the student's participation in said sport/event for the school year and in random drug tests throughout the school year. All athletes and athletic aides can additionally be required to take a drug test if drug paraphernalia is found in their dorm room, or on their body, or in a vehicle of their possession or location.
2. All athletes and athletic aides will be required to sign a consent form for drug screening and room searches giving Southwest Mississippi Community College permission to search their dorm room and test the athlete and athletic aide for drug use. Students less than 18 years of age will be required to have their parents or guardians to sign the consent form before they will have any scholarship awarded and before being allowed to participate in any SMCC athletic activities or live in the dorm.
3. All students will report to the appropriate official any prescribed medication and may have to present a copy of the doctor's prescription and any over-the-counter medication they are taking prior to any drug test.
4. The drug test will monitor for the substances listed in Objective 4 (page1). of SMCC Student Handbook: as defined by Section 41-29-101 et. Seq. Of the Mississippi Code of 1972 being the MS Uniform Controlled Substances Law, and their derivatives to include: Methamphetamine, Amphetamines, Barbiturates, Cannabinoids (Marijuana), Cocaine Metabolite (as Benzoyl Ecgonine) Opiates, Phencyclidine, MDMA (Ecstasy), and THC Metabolite and anabolic steroids.
5. Urinalysis will be used on collected urine samples to determine that a student is drug free. Hair tests or other tests may be used.

6. Steps will be taken to ensure proper collection, identification, and confidentiality when urine samples are collected.
7. Alcoholic drinks will be included as illegal substances. It is against the state law of Mississippi to have alcoholic drinks on a college campus. Use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol will carry the following penalties: 1st Offense – The athlete or athletic aide will be fined \$75.00 for possession on campus. For any alcohol violation the athlete or athletic aide will be subjected to additional discipline by his/her coaches/director. 2nd Offense – The athlete or athletic aide will be fined \$150.00 for possession on campus. For a second alcohol violation the athlete or athletic aid will be suspended from the athletic team and may have to move out of the residence hall.
8. Drug test results will be made known to the athletic director, Vice President for Student Affairs, and head coach.
9. In the event of a positive drug screen the student has the option to pay to have the sample sent to a lab (selected by SMCC) for confirmation. The student may consent in writing to have the fee charged to his/her student account. If student does not request the sample to be tested by the lab or refuses to take the drug test, then he/she is found to be in violation of the SMCC Drug Education and Screening Program and will be treated as though they have a first positive drug test. The student may not participate in the athletic program until the results from the lab are returned.

The following actions will be taken:

- A. First positive drug test – Prior to Season or initial drug screen
  - a. If it is on the initial drug screen during the start of the fall semester or prior to the start of a season in a sport, the student will not be allowed to move into an SMCC residence hall or will have to move out of the residence hall. The student will be removed from the team and his/her scholarship will be suspended for the remainder of that semester after which the student must test drug-free prior to the next semester of participation. Any athlete or athletic aide screening positive will have a confidential meeting with Vice-President for Student Affairs and the head coach of the sport with which he/she is associated. Prior to the next semester of participation, the athlete or athletic aide must pay for his/her drug testing to regain eligibility and pass a drug - screen administered by the Office of the Vice-President for Student Affairs.
  - b. If school has already started, the scholarship will be prorated by the week on a 16-week semester. If school has not started, the student will have to pay for his/her school expenses until such time that the scholarship is re-instated at the head coach's discretion in the following semester, after the athlete or athletic aide tests drug free.
  - c. The athlete or athletic aide will be required to attend a preapproved by the Vice President for Student Affairs drug rehabilitation/counseling program with an

outside agency at his/her own expense and present acceptable evidence of completion of the rehabilitation program before being reinstated.

- d. In the event of a positive drug screen the student has the option to pay to have the sample sent to a lab (selected by SMCC) for confirmation. The student may consent in writing to have the fee charged to his/her student account. If student does not request the sample to be tested by the lab or refuses to take the drug test, then they are found to be in violation of the SMCC Drug Education and Screening Program and will be treated as though they have a first positive drug test. The student may not participate in the athletic/activity program until the results from the lab are returned.
- B. A first positive drug test during a random drug screening
- a. The student will have a confidential meeting with the Vice-President for Student Affairs, and the head coach/sponsor of the sport/group with which they are associated.
  - b. The athlete or athletic aide will be required to attend a preapproved by the Vice President for Student Affairs drug rehabilitation/counseling program with an outside agency at his/her own expense and present acceptable evidence of completion of the rehabilitation program before being reinstated.
  - c. A two-week suspension from the team will occur and the student-athlete must sit out 20% of scheduled games (minimum of: 2 football games; 5 basketball games based on 23 game season, 9 baseball games based on 46 game season, 4 soccer games/matches based on 18 games/matches, 9 softball games based on 46 game season.) This excludes scrimmages and jamborees. If the breach in policy occurs during the off-season, the two-week suspension may be enforced during the next season of participation.
  - d. Suspension begins from the date the college becomes aware of the test results.
  - e. No participating in team activities (ie. practice/games/ travel) during the suspension and the athlete or athletic aide will be mandatorily tested within the next three random drug screenings performed.
  - f. In the event of a positive drug screen the student has the option to pay to have the sample sent to a lab (selected by SMCC) for confirmation. The student may consent in writing to have the fee charged to his/her student account. If student does not request the sample to be tested by the lab or refuses to take the drug test, then he or she are found to be in violation of the SMCC Drug Education and Screening Program and will be treated as though they have a first positive drug test. The student may not participate in the athletic/activity program until the results from the lab are returned.
- C. Second positive drug test
- a. In the event of a positive drug screen, the student has the option to pay to have the sample sent to a lab (selected by SMCC) for confirmation. The student may

consent in writing to have the fee charged to his/her student account. The student may consent in writing to have the fee charged to his/her student account. If student does not request the sample to be tested by the lab or refuses to take the drug test, then he/she is found to be in violation of the SMCC Drug Education and Screening Program and will be treated as though they have a first positive drug test. The athlete or athletic aide will be suspended from athletic participation for the remainder of the season or school year. The student will not be allowed to participate in SMCC athletics/programs again or live on campus.

### **Student Complaint Procedure**

Southwest Mississippi Community College has an administrative procedure in place which is designed to receive, investigate, and resolve student complaints, whether academic or nonacademic. Students who fail to use existing appeals committees will forfeit their right to future due process.

Any student who wishes to make a formal complaint regarding a college program, a service of the college, an employee of the college, or any other individual or aspect of the college must take the following steps within five school days of the incident:

1. Discuss the problem with the faculty member, staff member, or administrator involved and/or use existing appeals committees where available prior to initiating formal complaint procedures under this policy. If informal efforts are not productive or appropriate in resolving the complaint, the student proceeds to steps 2 and 3.
2. Contact the Vice-President for Student Affairs, College Drive, Summit, MS 39666.
3. Express the nature of the complaint and pertinent information in writing to the Vice President for Student Affairs.

The Vice-President for Student Affairs will either handle the complaint personally or will refer it to the appropriate person for disposition. A written response will be made to the student within 15 business days. Students who are not satisfied with the resolution of the investigating officer shall have the right to appeal to a grievance committee. This appeal must be made within 3 business days after the decision by the investigating officer. The grievance committee will be appointed by the President of the college and will consist of at least two faculty members not directly involved in the alleged problem. The decision of the grievance committee is considered final. A written response will be made to the student within 5 business days.

Should a student be unsatisfied with the resolution of their grievance, the student may follow the State complaint process from the Mississippi Commission on College Accreditation (MCCA) at [http://www.mississippi.edu/mcca/student\\_complaint\\_process.asp](http://www.mississippi.edu/mcca/student_complaint_process.asp). The MCCA will not respond to complaints until the student has exhausted all grievance procedures provided by the institution.

No adverse action will be taken against a student for filing a complaint.

**Financial Aid Contact Information**

**Amber Kelly**  
Director  
601-276-3707  
[akelly@smcc.edu](mailto:akelly@smcc.edu)

**Tammy Cain**  
Counselor A – F  
Veteran’s Affairs  
601-276-3708  
[tlc@smcc.edu](mailto:tlc@smcc.edu)

**Stacey Hodges**  
Counselor G – N  
601-276-4805  
[slee@smcc.edu](mailto:slee@smcc.edu)

**Surbrina Cameron**  
Counselor O – Z  
Work Study  
601-276-4804  
[scameron@smcc.edu](mailto:scameron@smcc.edu)