

## SHORT COURSE ON FINANCIAL AID

Financial aid refers to the wide variety of programs that help students and families pay for college or graduate school. Students receive financial aid in the form of grants, scholarships, work-study, and loans. While some financial aid is in the form of academic or talent scholarships, most financial aid is based on financial need. Those who can demonstrate the greatest financial need will receive the greatest amount of need-based financial aid. Financial need is established by completing the FAFSA (Free Application Federal Student Aid). Financial aid comes in the following forms:

- **Grants** which are free money based on a family's financial need.
- **College Work-Study Programs** which provide students the opportunity to earn money in on-campus jobs.
- **Loans** which are borrowed funds that must be repaid, usually with interest.
- **Scholarships** which may be awarded according to financial need and achievement or may be awarded strictly on academic or other talent.

***Tip:*** Contact the financial aid office at the school you may attend to find out what financial aid is available to you and what documents in addition to the FAFSA you should file with that office. Each school will have its own procedures. Your best source of information (including application deadlines) is the financial aid office at the college or university. Contact the financial aid office no later than the fall of the senior year.

### HOW FINANCIAL AID WORKS

The primary purpose of student financial aid is to provide resources to students who would otherwise be unable to pursue a post-secondary education. Financial aid works on the basic principle: Parents and students contribute to the cost of college to the extent they are able. This is called "expected family contribution" (EFC). If the family is unable to contribute the entire cost, financial aid is available from the federal government, state government, college or university, and private agencies.

***To be considered for most types of financial assistance, students must complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Federal programs, state governments, and most colleges use the FAFSA to establish whether you are eligible for aid. The FAFSA will determine your "expected family contribution" (EFC). File the FAFSA in early January of your senior year.***

### FEDERAL STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Students are advised to contact the financial aid office at the school they are planning to attend to discuss their eligibility for federal financial assistance programs.

- Federal Pell Grant
- Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)
- Federal Work Study (FWS)
- Federal Perkins Loan
- Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) (Federal Stafford Loans)
- William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan (Direct Loan)
- PLUS Loans (Parent Loans)

Not all schools participate in these programs. Also, not all schools take part in all the programs. To find out which programs (if any) are available at a particular school, contact the financial aid office at that school.