

# CONCORD UNIVERSITY BOARD OF GOVERNORS

## **Policy No. 28**

### **Policy on Student Financial Aid**

**Effective Date: 05/08/2006**

#### **Section 1. GENERAL**

1.1 Scope: This policy establishes general guidelines for Student Financial Aid policies and procedures for Concord University W.Va. Code 18B-2A-4

1.2 Effective date: May 8, 2006  
Revised by BOG: April 19, 2011  
Revised Approved by HEPC: January 26, 2012

#### **Section 2. PURPOSE**

2.1 To establish clear procedures for the awarding of financial aid to students qualified for such financial assistance.

2.2 To ensure accurate and reasonable awards that enhance recipient students' ability to pursue an education at Concord University, maximizing the full utilization of available resources to respond to each student's need as funding levels permit.

#### **Section 3. STEPS IN APPLYING FOR FINANCIAL AID**

3.1 Students seeking financial aid at Concord University must have applied for admission, been accepted as either a full or part-time student, and have successfully completed the FAFSA for the US Department of Education.

3.2 Applicants for financial aid may be asked to submit additional, relevant and appropriate documentation prior to the processing of the application for aid being processed completely. Failure of students to provide the Concord University Office of Financial Aid such requested documentation may jeopardize, reduce or cancel the requested aid.

3.3 Requests for additional documentation must be made in writing and sent to the student by regular mail by the Office of Financial Aid and sent to the student's permanent address and/or campus address. If such written request for documentation fails to generate the requested documentation, a second written request shall be sent, by certified mail, to the student by the Office of Financial Aid including language clarifying that failure to comply with this request for additional documentation may jeopardize the student's ability to receive financial aid. Failure to produce the requested additional documentation after the second notification letter has been received may be grounds for the discontinuation of the student's process for obtaining financial aid at Concord University.

3.4 Once all requested documentation has been received by the Office of Financial Aid, the Director of Financial Aid will review the student's aid report

form (SAR) which is generated by the FAFSA.

3.5 The Director of Financial Aid shall calculate the Total Cost of Attendance, less the Expected Family Contribution, less expected summer earnings, and less any awarded institutional, foundational or sundry scholarships, to calculate the student's total unmet need.

3.6 The Director of Financial Aid shall apply those sources of aid for which the student qualifies in order to minimize the unmet need total. Concord University does not guarantee to be able to match full unmet need with other sources of aid. It shall be the professional judgment of the Director of Financial Aid to distribute available funds in a manner which best meets the needs of the students and the University. All such distributions shall be in keeping with the relevant state and federal regulations and laws relevant to such activities.

3.7 Any entitlement award for which a student qualifies shall be awarded in full to the student regardless of other awards for which they may qualify. In the event that an accepted and awarded student qualifies late in the award cycle for such an entitlement award (such as the Pell Grant), the Director of Financial Aid may in some instances combine awards in a student's package which modestly exceed the cost of attendance if, in the Director's professional judgment, extenuating circumstances justify the over-award.

3.8 It shall be the general intent of this policy to award each qualifying student the best aid package possible without over-awarding students beyond the total cost of attendance. The awards should maximize the funding from outside, third party sources and thus minimize the use of institutional and foundation sources as much as possible. However, students receiving third party aid should first have their loan totals reduced, their work-study hours reduced, before the outside aid is levied against their institutional scholarships or grants.

#### **Section 4. CHANGED AND/OR RESCINDED AID**

4.1 The loss of financial aid or adjustments to a student's aid award shall be made only in writing within 10 working days of the change to the award. Students may elect to accept changes or reject the award by responding to the award acceptance form sent to each student with the award letter. Refusal to generate the response sheet from the students shall jeopardize the student's financial aid award. In these instances, the contact process for notification shall follow as outlined in 3.3 above.

4.2 It shall be the responsibility of the Director of Financial Aid to monitor the compliance of each awarded student with the funding sources and regulations relative to the aid that student is receiving. The Director shall notify the student in writing whenever the student fails to meet the requirements for the continuation of the particular award. Students failing to meet the minimal criteria for aid may be either placed on probation for their aid and given time to regroup in compliance with their aid criteria, or they may be suspended from the aid process altogether. Generally, any student placed on financial aid probation for more than two consecutive semesters will be in grave danger of suspension.

4.3 Any student having an aid package reduced, probated or suspended, may appeal this decision in writing within 5 working days to the Director of Financial Aid. The student appealing may wish to provide the Director with additional information that the student deems relevant to his/her failure to comply with the award's criteria for continuation. The Director may reverse or uphold the suspension of financial aid in light of the appeal. If the Director affirms the probation or suspension of financial aid after the appeal is reviewed, the student shall be notified in writing by certified mail within five days of the decision.

4.4 Denied appellants may elect to appeal the decision to the Director of Enrollment. Such appeals must be made in writing to the Director of Enrollment and received within five working days of the Director of Financial Aid's appeal decision. Failure to appeal to the Director of Enrollment within the five day window of opportunity shall render the Director of Financial Aid's decision final. Appeals to the Director of Enrollment must be responded to in writing by the Director of Enrollment within five working days of the receipt of the final appeal letter. The Director of Enrollment's decision shall be final.

4.5 In the event that tuition and fee increases are implemented by the university, it shall be the responsibility of the Director of Financial Aid to adjust the Total Cost of Attendance figure used in the calculations for awarding financial aid. The total cost shall be increased proportionally to the rise in the cost of those portions of the students' costs adversely effected by the increase. In this manner, adjustments to awarded financial aid packages will better keep pace with the tuition changes as long as state and federal appropriations are maintained at an equal pace. In the event that federal and/or state financial resources fail to keep pace with the cost increases, Concord University will endeavor to generate other forms of assistance but it does not guarantee that every student's full need will be met.

4.6 The Director of Enrollment shall be responsible for managing a healthy balance between the need-based aid awarded and the merit-based aid awarded. Both types of awards are important but the balance of the two should lean toward more generous offerings of need-based awards than of merit awards. Maintaining at least a 12:1 ratio of need-based awards offered versus merit based awards offered will keep the awarding balance in order. However, all such awarding ratios and policies are subject to the limitations of funding and the contingent amounts available for student aid.

4.7 The Director of Enrollment shall be responsible for ensuring an optimal balance of loans versus scholarships within the student body as a whole. It shall be the policy of the university to keep the average total loan accrual of our graduates beneath the national average of loan accrual for graduates from similar 4 year institutions.

## **Section 5. TUITION REDUCTION OPTIONS FOR NON-WEST VIRGINIANS**

5.1 Out of state students may elect to take advantage of three tuition reduction options at Concord University: the TOPS Program, the Border Counties Program

and the Children of Educators Program. Details of all three options shall be posted in the Admissions Office and made readily available to recruits.

5.2 Applicants for these (tuition reduction) options must apply for admissions, be accepted as a full-time student, be a first time freshman or transfer student, agree to live on campus, and complete the application for tuition reductions.

5.3 Any student accepted into this program will have demonstrated evidence that he/she qualifies for the particular option for which they are applying. Proof of residence, declared major, proof of employment of a parent in a public or private primary, secondary or county school board office may serve as sufficient documentation for the student to participate. Once enrolled in one of the reduction plans, no student shall be permitted to switch to another option.

5.4 If an enrolled participant in the program suddenly fails to qualify for the option they selected upon their first acceptance, they shall not be permitted to continue to study at the reduced rates of tuition. A student switching majors from an approved TOPS major to a non-TOPS major shall lose the benefit of the reduction. It shall be the responsibility of the Director of Financial Aid to review annually each student's compliance with this program. The tuition reduction options shall be open only to incoming freshmen and renewable for up to eight consecutive semesters, if the student maintains a minimum GPA of 2.0, lives on campus, and is a full time student.

5.5 Students graduating from high schools located in counties that geographically touch the border of West Virginia shall have the opportunity to apply for the tuition reduction option. The Border Counties Program students will receive the same level of tuition relief as the TOPS counterparts. Renewal criteria will be the same as it is for the TOPS program.

5.6 Students who are the Children of Educators may also apply for the reduced tuition program. Renewal criteria for this program will be consistent with the other two options as stated above.

5.7 Once a tuition reduction program option is taken away from a student, they will not be eligible to reapply for the reduced tuition plans. They will be charged the regular rates of tuition and fees for normal out of state students. In this event, the student's financial aid package will be adjusted upward to reflect the increase in the total cost of attendance. It will be the responsibility of the Director of Financial Aid to notify each student of such changes of status relative to this tuition reduction option.

## **Section 6. NONDISCRIMINATION**

6.1 The Director of Enrollment, The Director of Financial Aid, and the Executive Director for the Concord University Foundation, and the Athletic Coaches or Divisional Chairs awarding aid and scholarships, shall follow all federal, state and institutional rules, regulations, and statutes concerning the non-discrimination and equal and fair treatment of all students seeking assistance in the financial aid process regardless of race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation of any applicant or recipient of aid.