

UC 9724 08S

To: Joel Bloom, Chair Undergraduate Council

January 23, 2008

From: Richard A. Kasscha
CLASS Representative

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Re: Financial Aid and Scholarships Office

REPLACES UC 8857 065
3/12/08

I am requesting that the appropriate committee(s) of Undergraduate Council be charged with investigating the current operation of the Scholarships and Financial Aid (SFA) Office with the goal of (a) explaining current operational problems and (b) developing the necessary recommended operational policy changes to insure that by August 1, 2008 all monies which are to be awarded by that office have been awarded and are by then available for students to expend within the limits imposed by their particular award, scholarship, or loan.

Last Fall 10 days into that semester an estimated 2% of the students in each of my large lecture sections did not yet have their books and materials because the money which they had been promised had not been released to them through our Scholarships and Financial Aid Office. This semester at the same time the situation is markedly worse, with 10-15% in one of my large lectures having been awarded money which they cannot yet spend, meaning they have no books.

Beyond this is the seeming capriciousness with which the monies are awarded and released, not released, or worse—withdrawn after this semester has started (even monies awarded with no limits on its use last semester. One student waited two hours in line, asked a simple question, was directed to Education, where the person who was to sign a form would not do so because she had been berated by SFA for doing so a previous time. The student went back to SFA regarding what she should do and was bluntly asked to go to the end of line which resulted in another 90 minute wait to get one question answered. This student simply dropped her UH classes because her awarded money had not been released, and applied directly to graduate school without taking two classes on this campus this semester.

This is but one among many such exchanges which are actively hindering our teaching. The Committee(s) should be charged with finding a means to correct such problems and making the SFA office more responsive to its task and the people it is designed to serve.

The goal is more important than the specific means by which it is achieved; something needs to be done as soon as possible to correct such egregious, life-altering problems.