

SWOSU Student Financial Services Office Issues Notice to Parents and Students

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The SWOSU Office of Student Financial Services in Weatherford would like to inform students and parents that financial aid consultants and scholarship search services could be contacting them soon to offer their services to help obtain financial aid for college.

Jerome Wichert, director of the SWOSU SFS office, said as the financial aid process has become more complex, there has been a significant increase in the number of individuals offering professional financial aid services to students and their families.

Most popular among these are financial aid consultants and scholarship search companies.

Financial aid consultants usually charge a fee for a variety of services that are offered for free through colleges and libraries. These services include, preparing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and other financial aid forms and describing the types of federal, state, local, institutional and private aid programs that are available.

Wichert said before anyone pays for the services of a financial aid consultant, remember that the financial aid office assists with these services for free. Contact the financial aid office at a local college or university or the local library for information or assistance. College Web sites, publications, and catalogs are also good sources of information.

The Internet is an excellent method of obtaining free student financial assistance information. In particular, the U.S. Department of Education's Web site provides aid information at <http://www.college.gov/wps/portal>. Individuals can complete the FAFSA free of charge on the U.S. Department of Education's FAFSA on the web site at www.fafsa.ed.gov. The 2010-2011 FAFSA will be available on January 1.

Many scholarship search services charge a fee to find sources of student financial aid. Some of these services have been in existence for some time, others are relatively new. Wichert said search services need to be used with care and only after a thorough investigation of the services they provide.

Several companies have made scholarship search engines available on the internet to students for free. These include, but are not limited to:

- FinAid on the Web - www.finaid.org
- The college board - http://apps.collegeboard.com/cbsearch_ss/welcome.jsp
- Fast Web - www.fastweb.monster.com