

Tuition increases add to workload of student aid office

By RACHEL ORR
Staff Writer

More applicants. New federal guidelines. Last-minute tuition increases. Circumstances like these have kept the University's student aid office hustling since last spring. The office was faced with a 15 percent increase in financial aid applicants, as well as new federal guidelines for granting Guaranteed

Student Loans (GSLs) and determining independent status.

"We're still processing the tail end of those who applied in May," Eleanor Morris, UNC's director of student aid, said Monday.

Adding to the burden of more applicants and new guidelines, the University announced tuition increases in early August effective for this school year.

"We had to go right ahead, without changing the basis on which it (the financial aid package) was made," Morris said.

For students who need additional aid because of the tuition increases, Morris said reassessment forms will be available at the Student Aid Office in Vance Hall.

The additional aid probably will be delivered at the end of September or

early October, she said, and most likely come in the form of loans.

Because of federal policy changes this year, students who receive GSLs — 8 percent interest federal loans — must demonstrate need, even if their parents' incomes fall below \$30,000, Morris said. For independent students, the same applies to their own income.

Also, establishing independent status is now more cumbersome, Morris said.

But graduate and professional

students automatically qualify as independent if their parents aren't planning to claim them as dependents, Morris said.

These students, most of whom meet the new GSL qualifications, may actually have a larger financial aid package because of the federal changes.

"I got more money this year in financial aid, and I'm happy about that," said Marcella Clifton, a third-year dental student from Charlotte. Clifton said without the increase

in aid she would probably have been forced to find a job.

Thomas Clifton, a first-year dental student from Wilmington, said the changes have helped him financially. "I purposely went off my father's income for that (the better financial aid package)," he said.

Despite the increase in aid applicants, the new federal rules and tuition increases, Morris said Monday that the student aid office had 12,257 financial aid checks ready, a record number for this time of year.

Tuition

two years, medical, dental and veterinary students can anticipate tuition hikes similar to this year's.

Admission directors of the medical, law and dental schools on campus said it is too early to assess the effect of the tuition increases on out-of-state enrollment.

Kenneth May Jr., director of admissions and student affairs for the School of Dentistry, said the steep tuition hikes would test the school's ability to attract out-of-staters.

"We'll see if it's the reputation or the low tuition," May said. Joyner said low tuition was not the


reason UNC is a bargain to out-of-state students.

"If what we're charging out-of-state students at Chapel Hill is the same rate as other institutions and we offer


them a finer education, then it's a bargain," Joyner said.

Staff writer Helen Jones contributed to this story.


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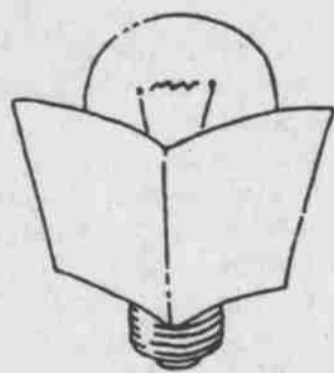


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