

Florida Educational Equity Act Report

July 2016 – June 2017

I. Equal Opportunity Compliance

The Office for Student Financial Affairs (SFA) operates a “race-blind” financial aid awarding policy. There are a limited number of preferential scholarships, notably the National Achievement and Presidential scholarships, which were approved through the University’s agreement with the U.S. Office of Civil Rights.

II. Equity Accountabilities

SFA awards financial aid solely on the basis of financial need or financial need and merit for a limited number of scholarships. Through a series of financial literacy workshops provided throughout the year, SFA provides financial aid information to students and parents to assist them in areas such as educational budget planning, debt management, credit and identity theft, and completing the financial aid process. These sessions continue to be a successful tool for educating students and parents on financial aid related issues.

In addition, SFA’s Resource Center, located in S-107 Criser Hall, enables students to research and apply for financial aid, including scholarships and part-time jobs. The Resource Center is staffed by UF student employees.

SFA provides training and materials to the Office of Admissions to actively recruit students from diverse backgrounds to attend UF. Our “Gator Financial Aid” brochure educates students on the importance of applying for aid early, UF’s cost of attendance, and average aid packages. This information assists the Office of Admissions as they travel throughout the southeast, focusing on underserved areas.

SFA also continues to partner with the Office of Admissions to recruit students from diverse backgrounds to attend UF. SFA participates in the UF “Florida Days” event, providing prospective students and families with information about financial aid offers, applying for scholarships, financial literacy, and next steps they’ll need to take to receive their financial aid.

III. Diversity in Services

The distribution of financial aid is provided in detail in the SFA Fact Book, which is produced annually and is available online at www.sfa.ufl.edu/publications/. The Fact Book provides a breakdown of the various financial aid programs offered, as well as the demographic breakdown of financial aid recipients.

During 2016-2017, the average scholarship award for black students is \$7,466 and the average scholarship award for white students is \$3,859. Final scholarship award averages for 2016-2017 will be available after June 30, 2017.

The AIM Program is part of the University of Florida’s [Office for Academic Support \(OAS\)](#). The mission of the AIM Program is to assist first-year, high-risk students by

offering a variety of services that establishes the foundation for academic success. Of the 464 students who were admitted to the program for 2016-2017, 303 students enrolled for the Summer B term.

SFA supports this program by ensuring these students receive need-based financial aid funding to cover their Summer B educational expenses. SFA provided \$305,801 in UF Turner Grant and \$458,514 in AIM Grant to these students, which, along with Pell Grant, covered their Summer B 2016 costs. SFA further supports this program by providing financial literacy workshops similar in nature as the ones offered to the Bernie and Chris Machen Florida Opportunity Scholars.

IV. New Initiatives

In 2016-2017, SFA entered its 11th year of the Bernie and Chris Machen Florida Opportunity Scholars (MFOS) Program. During this year, 1,148 students are participating in the MFOS program, and \$11,651,265 in MFOS scholarships have been disbursed. Final disbursement information for the MFOS program for 2016-2017 will be available after June 30, 2017.

The Office for Student Financial Affairs also continues to partner with other UF departments to provide training on how to apply for aid, steps to receive aid, as well as financial literacy and loan indebtedness. SFA provided training to Graduate Minority Programs and the Office of Academic Support to improve our service to all student groups. The Office of Student Financial Affairs has provided financial literacy education to First Year Florida classes to assist students in managing their finances while in college. SFA partnered with the Office of Admissions to provide financial aid application information to prospective students in an on-campus, open-house format. SFA continues to work with academic units, such as the College of Engineering, and campus committees, such as the Council of Associate Deans, to ensure that individuals across campus can assist students and are aware of the ways in which our office may serve them.

V. Accolades

The MFOS Program continues to provide positive results in equity and diversity. Final results regarding the demographic breakdown of MFOS students during 2016-2017 reflect 30% Black, 39% Hispanic, 11% Asian, and 19% White. Sixty-two percent of recipients are female, and 38% are male. The MFOS average Grade Point Average for the 2016-2017 cohort is 3.25.

Considerable efforts have been made by SFA and the University to provide support services for MFOS students. Some of the services include priority for residence hall living accommodations, reception with the University President, MFOS orientation, financial literacy seminar series, peer mentoring, and empowerment groups.

SFA incorporates diversity training throughout the year. The SFA training coordinator works with SFA staff, departments, and student organizations around campus to provide diversity training that will educate, inform, enlighten, and strengthen how we work with students and staff.