Subject: Important Financial Aid Update

Dear STUDENT,

This email contains important information on changes to the 2017-2018 academic year application process for graduate student loans and work study. Please be sure to read this letter in full so you understand how to proceed.

As you may have heard, the Department of Education has changed the first day students may begin submitting their FAFSAs for the next academic year. Previously, families had to wait until January 1st to start the application process. Beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, the FAFSA opens on October 1st. Additionally, instead of providing financial data for the previous tax year, families now include information from two years before. As you may recall, when you completed your FAFSA for the 2016-2017 year you provided your 2015 tax information. If you will complete a FAFSA for the 2017-2018 academic year, you will again use your 2015 tax data. This move to use tax information from two years prior will allow students and families to utilize the IRS Data Retrieval Tool more effectively which will lower the incidences of discrepancies that need to be resolved by the Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA).

With the implementation of early FAFSA submissions, we used the opportunity to review our policies and procedures to make improvements in the application process. We sincerely hope that the changes we’re putting into place starting with the 2017-2018 academic year will show that OSFA is committed to making your application experience streamlined, more efficient, and less time consuming than in previous years.

The biggest change we’re instituting is that all students who submit a FAFSA and are in a degree or eligible certificate program will have their Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan processed for them without having to submit a Graduate Loan Questionnaire. In the event you are in need of funding beyond the Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan amount you are eligible to receive, you will submit a shortened version of the Graduate Loan Questionnaire as well as the necessary Federal Direct Graduate PLUS or private alternative loan paperwork.

Once we process your Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan, you will receive an email notifying you that it is available to view on GWeb. After logging into that system, you can accept all, a portion, or decline the loan in full. If you are accepting a portion of the loan, please keep in mind that the accepted amount will be divided evenly over all semesters in your loan period. If for any reason the loan period on your Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan does not meet your needs, you can request we change the loan period for you through a Graduate Change Form.

Since students will no longer submit the Graduate Loan Questionnaire to receive Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan funding, anyone who receives outside resources from University departments or other agencies must report their funding via the Verification of Outside Awards form. Also, students interested in the Federal Work
Study Program must complete the *Graduate Federal Work Study Request Form* to be considered for that program. All forms listed in this email are available on our website at [https://financialaid.gwu.edu/forms-documents](https://financialaid.gwu.edu/forms-documents).

For more information on application procedures, deadline dates, and policies please visit our website at [https://financialaid.gwu.edu/](https://financialaid.gwu.edu/). If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to reach out to us at finaid@gwu.edu, call us at 202-994-6620 or by visiting us in Colonial Central.