Financial aid could be available to those who apply

David Melendez
Staff Writer

As the cost of higher education rises, the assistance provided to students in need is being reduced.

However, there is financial assistance for students who have financial need and apply for it. Students can submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). According to http://www.pellgranteligibility.net, due to an unexpected shortfall in the federal funding for the 2011-2012 school year, Congress voted to reduce funding by several billion dollars in Spring 2011. Eligibility requirements have been raised a bit, requiring slightly more of a financial need than before, however the maximum amount for a Pell Grant will remain $5,550 for the academic school year.

The issue to keep in mind is not that funds have been somewhat reduced, but rather that students are not applying at all. Many students are finding themselves in debt due to student loans and assistance from family to get by each semester. Some students have to work multiple jobs or live with parents or other family in order to save enough for the upcoming semester, while others take classes at local community colleges to save money. There are even some students who have to make the difficult decision to skip a semester, due to lack of funds.

“My mom has to pay for my tuition every semester and I admit, it has cost her quite a bit. I feel guilty for her having to charge her credit cards to put me through school“ says Julian (last name withheld by request), a former University of Houston-Downtown student. “Now with my mom’s cards maxed out, I have to take a semester off,” Julian said. Julian said that he has never filled out a FAFSA and does not know how to do so.

This seems like a difficult situation but it does not have to be, because it pays to fill out a FAFSA early. According to http://www.FAFSA.com, the earlier a student submits an application for federal student aid, the better. No matter what the state deadline is to submit a FAFSA form, students are able to fill one out after Jan. 1 of every year.

Filling out an application early not only can bring federal financial aid, but also additional aid that is available at a first come-first served basis.

UHD offers grant money to eligible students by garnishing a small percentage of every student's tuition to give to students who present an additional need for academic expenses. In addition, the different colleges at UHD offer their own scholarships to students who apply. When applying for financial aid, there are also little known facts that students should consider when submitting a FAFSA.

Any funding that a student is eligible for can be awarded with just the one application. The FAFSA itself takes less than an hour to complete and it only requires your tax information as well as an estimation of how many college hours you plan to take in per semester. Students can fill out their FAFSA once their 2011 tax returns have been completed. Most of the information submitted stays on the FAFSA website and applying the following year takes even less time.

If a student has been denied federal financial aid in previous years, that student may want to file as independent, rather than a dependent student. The U.S. government judges who will receive an award as well as the aid amount, based on the tax information provided by the applicant. If a student is filed as a dependent by his parents he or she may not receive funds, if the government determines that the parents are able to pay for tuition.

However, if a student files an independent tax return, the government may determine a greater need based on the student's income.

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Websites show opposition of SOPA and PIPA with blackouts

Uwire - While some students may be confused to find Wikipedia and other social media sites offline today, others stand with the sites in their opposition to recent anti-piracy bills facing the House of Representatives.

Wikipedia, Reddit and the Cheezburger Network of social media websites began a 24-hour blackout on Friday as part of the Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA) and PROTECT IP Act (PIPA). Both acts would crack down on the sale of illegally down-loaded material by forcing Internet service providers to block access to sites that violate U.S. copyright laws.

Members of the Wikipedia community and other sites believe these acts would "seriously damage the free and open Internet" by opening the way to further censorship, according to a statement published on the English Wikipedia’s homepage. While SOPA is currently suspended from receiving a house vote, PIPA is still slated to go before the House of Representatives for vote Tuesday, Jan. 24.

White House representatives came out against SOPA and PIPA in a written statement Saturday because the acts threatened a "dynamic, innovative global Internet."

U. Texas Democrats communications director Andre Treiber said the acts risk inhibiting creativity and the freedom of speech, agreeing with the White House’s position. "[SOPA] is stifling, too broad and has a shoot-first-ask-questions-later approach, as far as due process is concerned," Treiber said. "As a whole, it is overreaching and is the equivalent of using dynamite when a scalpel is more appropriate."

Members of the political activist group, Fight for the Future, are standing with Wikipedia and other websites against the bills. Tiffany Cheng, co-founder of Fight for the Future, said if the bill was allowed to pass the United States could eventually become more like China.

See SOPA, page 4
Be a part of the Dateline:Downtown staff for Spring 2012

Dateline:Downtown is looking for:

Advertising Sales
Writers
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Dateline:Downtown is looking for a go-getter to sell advertising space to downtown businesses.

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If interested, please email information to CoxJa@uhd.edu or call 713-221-8569 to schedule an appointment.
Financial Aid from page 1

To put it simply, if you work a part-time job, you probably present a greater need financially for academics. Any money left over after tuition is paid, will be given to the student to use toward food, clothing, transportation and housing.

Financial aid money is out there, the issue is that many do not take the time to apply for it and year after year, funds go unclaimed. Scholarships and grants, unlike loans, are free money given to students that never has to be paid back. The funds from financial aid such as the Pell Grant come from taxpayer money and is meant to help the underprivileged achieve their academic goals.

For students who want to take summer courses, there is even a Summer Pell Grant that students may apply toward the summer session and these funds require a separate application, but any student who receives a Pell Grant for the previous Winter or Spring Semester should be eligible for the summer Pell Grant. The Summer Pell Grants covers 3 to 6 semester hours, roughly two classes and is only available for one session. A student who would like to attend another summer session will have to pay for those classes out of pocket.

Overall, the decision to reduce financial aid funds is a lose-lose situation for students, but a full-time student who presents the opinions of friends and family to your daily web explorations.

The internet search engine Google released its new search format this January, “Search, plus Your World,” which brings the opinions of friends and family to your daily web explorations.

The new format will show results not only from specific web content, but from people you know through Google’s Search, plus Your World.

Google+ profiles. The Personal Content option can also be controlled via the Search Settings menu, so you can choose to never see what other people are thinking about your search subject. If you’re interested in trying out the new features, just go to http://google.com.
Exercise can promote memory

Uwire-While students may forget to work out regularly, a recent study on cognitive health suggested that students who exercise may have better memory. The University of Dublin study, cited in a Nov. 30 article in The New York Times, suggested that physical activity increases the level of the brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF) protein that improves memory. The researchers tested male college students who exercised to varying degrees on their performance on memory tests.

Jamie Bunce, a Boston University researcher who is not affiliated with the original study, said the exact role this protein plays in cognition and recall is still being researched.

"This study raises some interesting questions about the way exercise affects cognitive performance," Bunce said. "It's still unclear what role BDNF is playing, as the study shows increases in BDNF levels didn't necessarily correlate with more accurate memory performance."

Karin Schon, senior postdoctoral associate at the BU Center for Memory and Brain who is looking into the effects of cardio-respiratory fitness on memory-task performance, said researchers at the BU Center for Memory and Brain are looking into the effects of cardio-respiratory fitness on memory-task performance.

The study suggested that a healthy lifestyle consisting of regular exercise promotes good brain health and may even protect individuals from neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's Disease, according to The Times.

"The more we learn, the more it seems the old adage, 'Healthy body, healthy mind' is apt," said Bunce.

Students said they have heard that exercise can prevent future diseases, such as Alzheimer's, but Bunce, a follower of the study's performance, could improve your mental processes in the mean time.

"Now that I know it's not just for the aging population, I might test out the theory for myself," said Harsha Reddy, a sophomore in the College of Arts and Sciences.

Craig Baldino, a BU sophomore, said this study has prompted him to consider his daily routine's impact on his academic performance, especially as the Fall semester's final grades approach.

"When I work out I definitely feel rejuvenated and more productive," Baldino said. "I'm going to rethink my daily schedule if working out more would help me retain more information and bring up my GPA."

BU sophomore Michael Michaelides, however, said while exercise may improve your temporary cognition and memory, it probably does not mean that you will be a better or more productive student.

Despite what the study suggests about BDNF protein levels impact on memory, Bunce said she thinks students should not be quick to make assumptions about how much exercise can affect their academic performances.

"While the authors may argue that acute exercise is enough to increase performance on a memory task, I would hazard a guess that sprinting to your final, in and of itself, may not be sufficient to get that A," Bunce said.

Studies show effects of Facebook on GPA

Uwire-During the intensive studying and last minute cram sessions of finals week, students often blame Facebook for interfering in their study efforts and fueling procrastination.

While Facebook might not be helpful when it comes to studying, it doesn't mean students' grades have to suffer. According to a recent study, some types of Facebook use actually correlate with higher grade point averages.

Published in Computers in Human Behavior, the study analyzed 1,839 college students' grades and Facebook usage.

These students reported spending an average of 106 minutes each day on Facebook. How those 106 minutes of time on Facebook were spent determines the kind of impact Facebook has on the student, according to the study.

Engaging in activities that involve collecting and sharing information, such as sharing informative links, proved to have a positive impact on students' GPAs. Posting frequent status updates and using Facebook chat, however, were determined to negatively affect GPA.

This distinction is one that can also be seen offline and around campus.

"Those students who spend more time socializing to the exclusion of engaging in academic work have poor academic outcomes," the study said.

At the same time, those who post links and use Facebook to communicate useful information are more likely to be engaged with the outside environment and in the classroom, the study said.

Penn State Learning Community Associate, Leigh Anderson said that the impact on GPA could also depend on when the students are accessing Facebook. Those who are frequently updating their statuses are often those who are on Facebook intermittently throughout the day.

This intermittent and frequent checking of Facebook can interfere with the time needed to digest and absorb course material, Anderson said.

Students Greg Bruno and Amy Niedbala both reported spending up to two hours each day on Facebook. Niedbala said that it sometimes interferes with her studying, but they both agreed that it does not have any sort of negative impact on their grades.

"I use Facebook to take a break so I don't get mentally drained while studying," Bruno said. "My time management has a stronger correlation to my grades than Facebook.
February has been a month dedicated to celebrating African American history for thirty-five years, and although most Americans are aware of Black History Month, and use the time to embrace black culture, the history of how Black History Month evolved remains unknown to most.

Black history month is a very important time in American history, the history behind it was actually formed quickly, and it is also easy to understand.

The origins of Black History Month date back to 1915, which was the fiftieth anniversary of the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment that outlawed slavery. A black historian of the time named Carter G. Woodson founded an organization called the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLI). The goal of the ASNLI was to highlight the achievements and accomplishments of black Americans and people of African descent. As the organization grew in popularity, it established and began observing Negro History Week in February 1926.

Negro History Week was set in the second week of February to coincide with Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass’ birthdays (two men who were directly involved with the emancipation of African Americans from slavery). As the decades continued after the 1920s, schools, community organizations and mayors in major cities began to recognize Negro History Week as an annual American tradition.

During the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, Negro History Week became extended into a month long celebration on many college campuses. In 1976, President Gerald Ford officially designated February as Black History Month. President Ford emphasized that it is important for Americans to “seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history.”

Since 1976, every president has observed and designated February as Black History Month.

Over its nearly four-decade lifespan, every Black History Month has been based on a theme central to black history and culture. Over the years, Black History Month themes have ranged from African American success in politics, economics and education. The theme of 2012 is Black Women in American Culture and History.

This year’s theme will focus on the roles and contributions of African American women to their culture and our nation. According to the Association for the study of African American Life and History, the story of black women in American history is unique. “Subjected to a long history of stereotypes about their sexuality, morality, spirituality, and intellect, African American Women have never succumbed to victimhood and have pressed forward to uplift themselves, their families, and their community.”

February is Black History Month

SOPA, continued from page 1

“This strike is about a struggle between a people with a means to communicate freely and the government’s ability to threaten it,” said Cheng. “It’s a fundamental fight for free speech.”

Something, however, must be done to protect the industries that are hurt by illegal activity on the web, said radio-television-film junior Eric Antonowicz.

“Both sides of the issue have salient points,” Antonowicz said. “You can’t just keep breaking copyright law but at the same time I don’t think that censorship is right in any way. I’m glad that they are taking a stand against it but I also think that something has to be done. Copyright gets broken way too much and the industry loses a lot of money.”

This type of Internet protest is historically significant given the size, credibility and usage of Wikipedia and Google, said government lecturer James Henson.

“SOPA is activating a libertarian streak in Internet users that was the stancie 10 to 15 years ago that fell on the wayside as the Internet had become a corporate enterprise,” Henson said. “I don’t think that the world is going to stop turning because you can’t use Wikipedia, but I do think it’s going to raise visibility. It’s still to be seen whether or not this is going to catch on.”
CryptoQuip

This is a simple substitution cipher in which each letter used stands for another. If you think that X equals R, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Solution is accomplished by trial and error.

Clue: N equals R

ASNROS MTIVONUIRXUY UWOU
WTJG SXGRNZRON MTSJG AR
NRLRRNRG UT OY GNOZRNY LTN
GNOZRNY.

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CryptoQuote

AXYDLBAAXR is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L’s, X for the two O’s, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each week the code letters are different.

O QX O IWPOWUWB OG
KEGVHEQPOHF HCTEYC OH
XQSWL XW UWBF PTGWPF.

- W.U. PEVQL

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ★☆

★ Moderate ★☆ Challenging ★★★ HOO BOY!

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Art & Leisure

Jan. 23 - Feb. 6, 2012
Dateline: Downtown
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Amber Waves

IS YOUR “OLD DAD” TOO MUCH FOR YOU?

WACK!

Hey Dad, they fly a lot faster packed with rocks!

Dad...

The Spats

by Dave T. Phipps

by Jeff Pickering

Walk one flight up... Or two flights down!

You’ll burn calories and save time!

Be Kind to Elevators!

King Crossword

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Weekly SUDOKU

Answer

I see SOMETHING finally moved you to put down the video game and get off the couch!...

SAVE 25% of your Twinkies from Bankruptcy

CryptoQuip

(answer) Bureau compartments that hold underwear could be referred to as drawers for drawers.

CryptoQuote

I am a believer in punctuality though it makes me very lonely. - E.V. Lucas

As you can see, Mitt, we still need to address some issues with the right wing.

Mitt Romney

Social conservatives
UHD Sports & Fitness

Players &
Teams Needed

Intramural Basketball League

Men's & Women's

Entry Period
January 17 - January 29

Entry Fee
$20.00 per team

Start Date & Location
Sunday January 29 at 1pm
The Intramural Basketball League will last about 5 weeks and will take place on Sunday afternoons in the Student Life Center

Open to current UHD Students, Faculty, Staff and other Sports & Fitness Members.
To register, stop by the Student Life Center or call 713-221-8225
Visit us at www.uhd.edu/sports&fitnesss

Women's Club Volleyball Team
Spring 2012

Think you've got what it takes?
Tryouts on Jan. 25 @ 6pm
Practices on Mondays 6-8pm & Fridays 5-7pm
Games will be held on Wednesday evenings

Register Online
Visit us at www.uhd.edu/sports&fitness