



April 17, 2019

For immediate release

## **Background**

In fall 2018, Student Government became aware of issues with financial aid disbursement that had a disproportionately negative impact on graduate and professional students, especially law students. Student Government leaders, including the Internal and External Affairs Agency Heads, communicated with Student Financial Affairs and student leaders in the law school in order to address this issue.

Issues with financial aid disbursement resulted primarily because the Levin College of Law began its academic year prior to the UF undergraduate calendar start date. Additionally, financial aid was not disbursed until after the drop/add period had ended, because aid is disbursed based on credit hours. Fall 2018 was also an anomaly, in that the university shifted to a new disbursement system that had unforeseen difficulties. Issues relating to this system should not arise again. Issues continued into the spring semester because aid that is not based on credit hours was fully disbursed in the fall semester, leaving many law students with significantly less aid than they were anticipating for the spring semester.

## **Looking Forward**

For law students, a number of changes have occurred that aim to prevent similar issues from occurring. First, the law school's academic calendar for the 2019-2020 academic year has been shifted. The first week of law classes will begin in late August 2019, closer to the start of the undergraduate fall semester. The law school is also shifting to a block tuition structure. Because of this, aid is able to be disbursed before the end of drop/add. Finally, the law school has made intentional changes to their disbursement system to purposefully distribute aid more evenly between the fall and spring semesters.

Student Government cannot take credit for all of these changes, as they are the result of generations of student leaders and administrators working together to address student grievances. Student Government supports the student leaders who worked with administrators to address the issues they saw and hopes that financial aid disbursement will continue to improve.

## **Resources**

There are a number of resources available for students - undergraduate, graduate and professional - if troubles arise regarding financial aid. If you are unable to make necessary payments, such as rent, because of issues with financial aid disbursement, reach out to financial affairs and they can make accommodations to assist you. One example would be short-term loans that can help students make immediate payments prior to aid disbursement. Many graduate programs also have their own financial affairs offices outside of the main Student Financial Affairs office in Criser Hall. If you are in a medical or health program; including medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, nursing, PPHP and pharmacy; a graduate business program or law, please reach out to your college's satellite office for financial affairs.

[Options for Financial Aid](#)

[Student Financial Affairs and Satellite Offices](#)