

# THE \$OURCE

The Newsletter of Student Financial Services  
Fall 2006 Edition

## Everything You Need to Know About Scholarships

By Jillian DeTeso

One of the most common questions we hear as financial aid counselors is “How do I get more scholarship aid?” The answer is a bit complex, and involves a fair amount of work from the student. Students at NU are awarded a merit-based scholarship or a need-based grant at the time of admission. From then on, as long as they retain the requisite GPA for their scholarship, they will receive the same amount from that fund for each academic semester they are enrolled. Students are not generally awarded a Northeastern merit-based scholarship after the freshman year, with the exception of one or two very selective programs. Please see the Grants and Scholarships section of our website for details: [www.financialaid.neu.edu](http://www.financialaid.neu.edu).

As aid counselors, we recommend that students exhaust their options for scholarship aid by doing a thorough scholarship search online. There is 2.8 billion dollars to be found out there—it’s just a matter of weeding through and meeting the right criteria! We suggest that they begin their search early—usually in the spring for the upcoming academic year. Two online sites we recommend because of the size of their databases and the fact that they do not sell names to third parties are [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) and [www.nextstudent.com](http://www.nextstudent.com). Additionally, our website contains many links to outside sources of funding. It can be found under the “Grants and Scholarships” tab.

Northeastern University also has our own mix of endowed scholarship funds. These funds are fairly specific and awarded to the students that best meet the original donor’s specifications. For example, the donor may have specified a fund to go to a left-handed female from Brookline who is a Bio major! We ask students to fill out an **endowed scholarship application** on myNEU so that we may try and match your specific major or qualifications with the wide variety of funds we have. These funds are typically small amounts and are not renewable each year. We usually ask a student who receives one of these funds to write a thank you letter to the individual who made the scholarship possible.

### Scholarship News in SFS:

#### \*Denim for Dollars!!

The SFS staff has decided to create a new scholarship funded through our own contributions! On the last Friday of every month, we “pay” for the privilege of dressing down in comfy jeans and sneakers. The money we donate goes straight into a scholarship fund to be awarded to a lucky student. We’ll be announcing awarding criteria for this fund in the months to come.

#### \*Scholarships of the Month

Keep your eyes peeled for an NU Announcement which will highlight an endowed scholarship of the month that we are looking to award. We’ll ask those interested to fill out an endowed scholarship application specific to the award.

## Identity Theft Part II: Decreasing Your Risks

By Aaron Clarke

With identity theft on the rise, everyone should take precautions to protect personal information. What can you do to protect yourself?

- Buy a shredder and use it! ALWAYS shred documents containing personal information when you no longer need them. Be especially careful with documents containing your Social Security Number, Credit Card and Bank Account Numbers, Passwords, and Personal Identification Numbers (PINs).
- Order your free credit report annually from ALL THREE credit reporting bureaus. Follow up on any accounts or statuses that look unfamiliar or incorrect.
- Balance your check book regularly.
- Use passwords that are difficult to guess. Do not use loved ones’ birthdays or names. Using a combination of upper and lower case letters and including numbers can make passwords even more difficult to guess.
- Do not carry PINs or Passwords with you.
- Most businesses have “Opt Out” options. Sign up to Opt Out so that your information is not shared with others.
- Carry only the identification you need. Avoid carrying your Passport, Birth Certificate, or Social Security Card when you can.
- Use your Social Security Number as little as possible. Do NOT use your SSN for your Driver’s License Number.
- Cancel stolen credit and debit cards immediately.
- Cancel credit and debit cards that you do not use.
- Do not leave outgoing mail in an unlocked home mail box. Bring it to the Post Office or to a blue USPS mailbox.
- Do not let your mail pile up in an unlocked mail box when you are on vacation. Ask the Post Office to hold your mail.
- Keep virus and firewall software up to date on your personal and work computers.

For more information please visit the following website:  
<http://www.consumer.gov/idtheft/>.

### New!! Financial Aid Counselor Blog

Financial Aid Counselors decided that they needed an easier way to communicate with y’all, to answer questions in a user-friendly format, and to explain things in plain ol’ English. They know better than anyone how complicated financial aid can be!! The blog will be a convenient and useful tool in getting your questions answered. Posts can be anonymous, so no one will know it was you. Surely you’re not alone in your financial aid concerns, so come see if another parent on the blog is wondering the same thing you are. Check out the new financial aid counselor blog at: <http://www.financialaid.neu.edu/wordpress/>. Counselors can’t wait to chat with you!

## Division Changes

by Amy Johnson

Changing your mind about taking classes for spring and wanting to check out coop instead? Or maybe you are deciding to forgo your last coop and graduate early? There are a few things you need to do to make sure your change of plans is approved. Officially, this is called changing your “division.”

You are in a division whether you know it or not. This division determines what your expected pattern of attendance will be for the year. For example, if you are in division C, it is expected that you will attend classes for fall and spring semesters and be on vacation for the summer.

To change your division, please notify your coop advisor. If you do not participate in coop, you can contact your academic advisor. They will make the changes through the Registrar’s Office. Student Financial Services will then be electronically notified. We typically receive notification that a student has changed division at the beginning of each semester. At that time we will redistribute your financial aid according to your new pattern of attendance.

If you have questions about how your division change may affect your aid, please do not hesitate to contact your financial aid counselor.

## Free Money: New Federal Grant Programs

By Kimberly Huse

You may have heard about two new grant programs recently funded by Congress as part of the Higher Education Reconciliation Act of 2005 (HERA). The awarding of these two grants has begun for the 06-07 year. In July, the Department of Education sent notifications to potential recipients based on information submitted on the FAFSA. However, each school’s Financial Aid Office must determine which students meet all the eligibility criteria. Generally, to be awarded either of the new grants a student must also be eligible for a Federal Pell Grant (have an EFC below \$3,850), be a U.S. citizen, and be enrolled full-time. In addition to these general requirements, there are program-specific requirements.

The Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG) is available to students who:

- Are in their first or second year of college.
- Graduated from high school after January 1, 2006, and were not previously enrolled in an undergraduate program.
- Have completed a rigorous secondary school program.
- Have a 3.0 cumulative GPA for renewal in the second year.

The ACG will provide up to \$750 for the first year of study and \$1,300 for the second year of study.

The SMART (National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent) Grant is available to students who:

- Are in their third or fourth year of college.
- Are majoring in physical, life, or computer sciences, mathematics, technology engineering, or in a foreign language determined critical to national security
- Maintain a 3.0 GPA in coursework required for a student’s eligible program.

The SMART Grant will provide up to \$4,000 for the third and fourth year of study.

## New SFS Faces!!

Photo courtesy of LV Marrama



(from left: Bill Smith, Lisa Allen, Tony Erwin)

The most recent addition to our team of Financial Aid Counselors is **Bill Smith**. He comes to us from Bentley College, where he worked as Assistant Director of Undergraduate Admission. He also worked in the Admission Offices of Daniel Webster and St. Anselm’s Colleges. With his move into Financial Aid, he hopes to gain an inside perspective into Enrollment Management and increase his awareness of yield and retention issues in higher education.

Bill enjoys interacting daily with college-age students. He likes to know that he is helping students to accomplish their goals. As a new homeowner, Bill has found that multiple projects are taking up a lot of his free time. When he can grab a free moment, he likes to spend it reading.

**Lisa Allen** has been a part of the Northeastern community for 19 years! She formerly worked in Building Services and as the Manager of Graduate Admissions in the College of Business. Most recently, she has joined SFS as the Assistant Director of Office Administration. Lisa is a student as well as employee. She received her Bachelor’s degree from NU and is currently working on her Master’s in Education. After she finishes her Master’s, Lisa hopes to one day be the Dean of Students.

In her free time, Lisa likes to spend time with her children, ages 13 and 8 and being a cheerleader at their sporting events. She loves the beach and having recently obtained her motorcycle license, riding her bike with friends.

SFS recently welcomed **Tony Erwin** as our new Director of Financial Aid, Client Services. Prior to coming to NU, Tony was the Associate Director of Student Aid and Finance at Stonehill College for seven years. Since 1998, Tony has been conducting trainings for the U.S. Department of Education. He is also president-elect for the Massachusetts Association of Financial Aid Administrators. All told, Tony has been working in financial aid for 13 years!

Tony says his favorite part of his job is helping students and empowering other team members with the knowledge they need to be successful. While in his new position, Tony hopes to inspire the best possible service to the NU community, something he is sure to accomplish with his wealth of financial aid experience. Tony is not all about work, though! While at home, he enjoys spending time with his daughter, cooking, and working on his house.



**Burning Questions...** This newsletter is for you! Please feel free to let us know what **YOU** want to know... send an email to [k.huse@neu.edu](mailto:k.huse@neu.edu) and we will be happy to have your questions answered in our next issue.