

## FAFSA Overhaul Causes Delays in Financial Aid Packages



As college commitment season looms, a significant number of parents and students find themselves grappling with uncertainty regarding their financial aid packages, all thanks to a delay in processing FAFSA applications.

### Congressional Mandate Creates a Processing Delay

This year, Congress has mandated a comprehensive overhaul of the FAFSA system to streamline its usability. However, this overhaul comes with a cost – a delay of four to six weeks in processing FAFSA applications by the federal government.

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### Concerns and Stress for Parents and Students

Michele Petruzzelli of Rocky Hill voiced the concerns shared by many parents, emphasizing the stress surrounding the affordability of sending their children to college. With financial aid information held up, families are left in the dark about the true cost of higher education.

### Uncertain Acceptance Letters and Unknown Bills

Acceptance letters from colleges are arriving, but without accompanying financial aid packages, leaving parents and students holding both good news and looming financial uncertainty. Jeffrey Bliss from Advanced College Planning notes that families are accustomed to having financial aid awards by this time, enabling them to make informed decisions about college affordability.

### Varying College Policies Compound the Issue

The timing of acceptance letters varies among colleges, with some, like Central Connecticut State University (CCSU), employing rolling admissions, and others, like the University of Connecticut, scheduling acceptance notifications for March 1. However, regardless of when acceptance arrives, financial aid packages will follow with a delay due to FAFSA processing issues.

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### Managing Stress Amidst Uncertainty

Advanced College Planning experts emphasize that the burden of this delay does not fall on the colleges themselves but rather on students and families navigating the complexities of financial planning. With deadlines looming, colleges nationwide are under pressure to expedite the release of financial aid information to assist students in making informed decisions about their educational future. As Jeffrey Bliss aptly puts it, the concern lies not in assigning blame but in recognizing the detrimental impact this delay can have on students striving for an education.

As the FAFSA delay continues to disrupt the usual rhythm of college admissions and financial planning, students and parents must navigate this uncertainty with resilience and informed decision-making. While challenges persist, understanding the broader context of these delays can empower families to better manage the financial aspects of pursuing higher education.

**Don't be a silent ninja! Let us know your thoughts in the comment section below.**