



January 15, 2009

Department Chairs
Administrative Analyst/Specialists
Administrative Support Coordinators

Dear colleagues,

In order to meet eligibility requirements established by the U.S. Department of Education, the Financial Aid and Scholarship Office must verify enrollment in specific coursework prior to disbursing SMART grant funds. I'm contacting you because we are unable to accomplish this without help from academic departments. Briefly, the federal National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent (SMART) Grant is for junior and senior level Pell Grant recipients with a minimum of a 3.0 grade point average, and who are in majors identified by Congress to be of importance to national security. The maximum SMART grant is \$4,000 per academic year, and we want every student who is eligible to receive these funds.

We must now verify that each SMART grant recipient is enrolled in qualifying coursework before we authorize disbursement of the grant. Beginning with the spring 2009 term, we will require SMART grant recipients to submit a SMART Grant Academic Requirement Verification form, which is attached hereto for your information. There are currently 59 students with SMART grant awards for the Spring 2009 semester, so I am hopeful this will not cause too much additional work for department staff. The form must be completed by both the student and his or her academic department advisor for each term of eligibility. We request advisors verify the student's enrollment in at least one course (per term) that meets "core major or specific coursework requirements" for the SMART eligible major. Advisors or authorized representatives signing the form will thereby acknowledge they have reviewed and verified enrollment for that student in at least one course that meets major coursework requirements for the term specified. The Financial Aid and Scholarship Office will retain this form as verification of required course enrollment. It is the *student's responsibility* to ensure that this form is complete and submitted to the Financial Aid and Scholarship Office by the university census date each term (February 20 for the spring 2009 term).

We hope this mailing provides guidance in completing the required form for SMART grant eligible students.

How to Complete the Academic Section

- Eligible students will receive e-mail notification from the Financial Aid and Scholarship Office informing them of the enrollment requirement. They will be instructed to download the required form from the Financial Aid and Scholarship Web site and to complete the Student Section.
- Each student will submit the form to his or her major academic department for enrollment verification and signature.



- Authorized staff will review the student's current term enrollment and will list at least one course that meets **core major or specific coursework requirements** as defined below.¹
- The authorized advisor, faculty or staff member will sign and return the completed form to the student.
- It is the student's responsibility to return the completed form to our office by the census deadline each term.

While I'm aware this new process will result in some additional workload for many of us, I very much hope that the increased awareness of the SMART grant will also generate interest in and knowledge of the program. Please contact us with any questions you may have, and if you think you have SMART grant-eligible students we may not have identified. The SMART Grant offers up to \$4000 each year to junior and senior students enrolled in approved science, math, engineering, technology, and other identified high need programs of study. Our Web site (<http://fa.csuchico.edu/fa/typesOfAid/grants/types/smart.shtml>) offers additional information on eligible majors and specific grant requirements. Please visit the site yourself and refer students there for additional information.

Your help in ensuring our students meet eligibility requirements is very much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Dan Reed
Interim Director
Financial Aid and Scholarship Office

¹ Core major or specific coursework is defined as those related courses meeting the "major coursework" component of a degree program. Two examples: (1) a student majoring in Biology **will meet this requirement** if enrolled in a physics course if the physics course is a requirement within the major coursework component; (2) the same biology student enrolled that semester in only humanities, the arts, or physical education courses (or other general education, elective courses) **does not satisfy the major coursework component**, and will therefore be ineligible for a SMART Grant that term.