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University of Arizona, Tucson

Students awaiting millions in aid

By Ian Musil
STAFF WRITER

Because of problems with a new computer system, the Office of Student Financial Aid was scrambling late last week to distribute millions of dollars in financial aid and scholarships to students who still need to pay for tuition, books and other expenses.

By Aug. 21, the financial aid office had distributed \$21.7 million in scholarships and financial aid. That number is \$8 million less than the \$30.1 million doled out at the same time last year, said John Nametz, director of financial aid.

Officials at the office said problems implementing and using a new computer system called Matrix, which will distribute financial aid and scholarships, caused the unexpected delays.

If you're still missing your financial aid:

- ▶ You will not be billed late fees for a late tuition payment.
- ▶ You can apply for a \$500 credit at the UofA Bookstore.
- ▶ Pick up a form at the Office of Student Financial Aid. Present the form at the bookstore counter. Bring the form back to customer service to receive credit to your account.
- ▶ New Tuition Payment Deadline: August 26

"This darn thing (Matrix) is complicated. We are figuring out that it's smarter than we are," Nametz said.

Lines spilled out the doors of the financial aid office Thursday afternoon. Officials at the office said they were seeing about one-third more students than usual.

Most students had general questions not specifically linked to the aid distribution problem, but some, particularly graduate students and undergraduates on scholarship, were confused by the delays in their accounts.

"I called 15 times and my stipend is still not credited," said audiology graduate student Tami Scott, who says she needs the money to buy books. "It's just frustrating there's no one to talk to."

"I called a lot and came up from Phoenix,"

said Chris Leigh, an environmental hydrology and water resources freshman, "I don't know why the money hasn't been credited."

Gary Booker, director of the Matrix project, could not comment on the problems the financial aid office is having with Matrix, but he said that individual offices are responsible for their own Matrix software training.

Booker is confident the problem will pass as kinks are worked out and said the benefit of the system will outweigh the inconvenience.

"Development and implementation of any system is a difficult prospect, especially difficult in this kind of effort," said Booker. "Union construction was

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WELCOME HOME



JOSHUA SILLS/Arizona Daily Wildcat

Melanie Skievaski, Pre-Nursing sophomore examines an tin of Danish cookies while she moves into her new room at Gila Hall.

Dorms at capacity

But waiting lists for housing are getting smaller

By Cara O'Connor
SENIOR WRITER

Approximately 300 students are breathing sighs of relief after late cancellations and no-shows have taken them off the Residence Life waiting list and into permanent housing.

Although most of those who were on the waiting list have been placed in one of the 5,500 permanent spaces, some are still living with resident assistants.

For those who are still sharing rooms with RAs, Director of Residence Life Jim Van Arsdel said he hopes to find them permanent housing in the next few weeks, anticipating that some new students will choose to move out and free up spaces.

About 300 of the nearly 8,000 housing applicants were placed on a waiting

list after the May 1 application deadline. All of those students were offered housing before summer's end, Van Arsdel said.

Some of those students were assigned to temporary spaces at check-in with the expectation that no-shows and last minute cancellations would open up permanent residence hall spaces.

This is the second year that incoming freshmen have not been guaranteed on-campus housing. The first-come, first-serve policy was put in place last year following a serious residence hall shortage during the 2001-2002 school year.

"We were extremely full," Van Arsdel said. "That kind of crisis was inevitable."

Despite the lack of space, Residence Life was forced to put nearly 200 stu-

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Attend today or risk no classes

Attendance on the first day is crucial

By Brent C. Gambrell
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

If you're thinking about skipping class on the first day, you might want to think again.

The Office of Curriculum and Registration sent out an e-mail notice last week, warning that those students who skip class on the first day risk being dropped by the professor.

Due to a high demand for seats in many classes, instructors have been asked to drop those students who do not show up on the first day of class and fail to notify the department of their absence, the notice stated.

Attendance is especially critical for students taking math, English composition, and foreign language classes, where there is a high demand for seats, the notice added.

Administrators said they hope that the notice, which was also sent to

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Campus put on alert for card scams

By Nathan Tafoya
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

As the fall semester begins, UAPD is reminding the campus community that a credit card fraud alert is still in effect.

The UAPD's Crime Prevention Office issued the alert on Aug. 12, warning the campus community of a possible credit card scam that may target UA students, employees and visitors.

Sgt. Eugene Mejia, who coordinates crime prevention programs on campus, said the alert was issued after a single incident in which a man told police he started receiving credit cards in his name at his home address. The man said he did not remember applying for the credit cards, saying he only remembered supplying his personal information

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