

March 26, 2010

To whom it may concern:

I am writing in regards to issues that I have been having with the Financial Aid Department of Ashford University. I have talked to several people from the Financial Aid— including the manager—and have not been successful in receiving a stipend check that was disbursed in November 17, 2009. This constitutes a formal complaint that I hope the Student Grievance Resolution Coordinator(s) of Ashford University can help me resolve.

I will provide a timeline (for easier reading) of what has happened these past several months.

10/16/2009- I was approved for Military Education Benefits by Ashford (see attachment, 2009 10 16)

10/20/2009- I started my first course with Ashford; successfully finished the course and received an "A"

11/05/2009, I received a "Financial Aid Award Letter" (see attachment, 2009 11 05) regarding courses scheduled from 10/20/2009 to 08/09/2010. It states:

After charges are paid, if any excess financial aid funds remain on your account, a check for thirty percent (30%) of the excess funds will be mailed to you after successful completion of seven (7) weeks of continuous academic enrollment. The remaining seventy percent (70%) of any excess financial aid funds will be mailed to you after successful completion of fourteen (14) weeks of continuous academic enrollment.

11/24/2009- I started my second course with Ashford; successfully finished the course and received an "A"

Week prior to 01/24/2010- Spoke with [REDACTED]; explained to me the process of "how the grant works" as also described by [REDACTED] on an e-mail dated 11/24/2009

01/24/2010- Unsatisfied with [REDACTED] replies and her inability to give me a date for the stipend, I contacted [REDACTED] since the "excess" of \$850 was never mailed out to me; at this time, only \$100 is left, and it's still not being mailed out though all charges have been paid, and the "seven (7) weeks of continuous academic enrollment" has been met (see attachment, 2010 01 24)

01/25/2010- [REDACTED] replied and said [REDACTED] was out of the office; I'm assuming she wanted to speak with her about the situation. [REDACTED] did say that she cc'ed the message to another financial advisor who she described as someone being "more familiar" with the Pell Grant and that she would be able to assist me regarding this. The person she cc'ed was [REDACTED]. Never did I get a call or an email from her. (see attachment, 2010 01 25) In fact, that was my last contact with those ladies because I felt like we were not getting anywhere. I sought for other options. Searched online for people having the same problems with Financial Aid Department; I was not alone.

01/12/2010- I started my third course with Ashford; successfully finished the course and received an "A"

January-Early February- contacted Ombudsman for help; spoke with [REDACTED] and explained to her the situation; said she would speak my Financial Aid Department Manager and have him contact me since that's the next step of the grievance resolution

02/02/2010- spoke with Financial Aid Department Manager, [REDACTED] and said he would request to have stipend check made out; I assumed it was for the \$850 that was on the account since December 08, 2009

02/12/2010- [REDACTED] e-mailed me to let me know that a "small stipend" was send out—\$100—

"and sent off another request to see about a larger stipend being sent" to me. WHY didn't he just request the full amount to be sent out to me? (Again, going back to the "Financial Aid Letter," why was the "excess"—the \$850 that was sitting on the account since December 08, 2009—not mailed out to me after meeting the requirements?)

I replied to [REDACTED] to thank him for the stipend check, and also told him that on that day, "I have fulfilled, and almost exceeded, all that's required of me to receive whatever is still in the account (and more!). I was approved for \$1600; the \$100 is a lot less than that and is not even 30% of the amount that's currently in there." (see attachment, 2010 02 12)

I never did see that "larger stipend" that he requested to be sent out to me.

02/23/2010- I started my fourth course with Ashford; into the final week and still have not received any updates regarding my financial aid

03/26/2010- Called [REDACTED] regarding my fifth course with Ashford (starts next week); was concerned about how my class would be paid since I'm out of Pell grant until the next disbursement, 04/13/2010; She told me that I have 2 MyCAA vouchers on file and that once that class starts, they would also have that one file. I asked her if my credit card would be charged since I no longer have excess Pell Grant in there, and said that no, my credit card would not be charged. I then asked why Ashford takes the Pell as a payment even though the MyCAA vouchers are on file. She said that I would have to take to Financial Aid about that.

As you can see, I have been trying to resolve this matter for months. Since my first choice of payment is MyCAA, and they already have vouchers on file and are guaranteed to get paid, I would like for Financial Aid to send me the remaining Pell Grant balance that was granted to me and was disbursed in November 2009. The remaining amount is \$1500.

The next disbursement date for Pell is already in April 13, 2010. Based on this experience, I may not see that check for awhile. Since I will be attending classes with Ashford for awhile (expected graduation date of June 06, 2011), I would like to work with someone in the Financial Aid Department who has a proven record of actively working with the students. I have had great results with other departments, but I feel like the employees in Financial Aid are not working to their maximum potential. In fact, I feel that I have been "kept hanging," been told of many unfulfilled promises, and been ignored on many occasions. I feel that the stipend is overdue. Excess money sitting in the account was not disbursed as stated in the "Financial Aid Award" letter... talking with the manager was ineffective.

Please help! Thank you in advance.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Account History

Narrow Results by Date From:



To:



Submit

[Print Your Account History](#)

Date	Type	Description	Charges	Payments	Balance
Oct 20, 2009	Tuition	PSY 202: Adult Development and Life Assessment	\$1062.00	\$0.00	\$1062.00
Oct 23, 2009	Military Grant	Military Grant	\$-312.00	\$0.00	\$750.00
Nov 16, 2009	Pell Grant	Pell Grant 2009-10	\$0.00	\$1600.00	-\$850.00
Nov 24, 2009	Tuition	PSY 301: Social Psychology	\$1062.00	\$0.00	\$212.00
Nov 24, 2009	Military Grant	Military Grant	\$-312.00	\$0.00	-\$100.00
Dec 08, 2009	MyCAA	MyCAA 2009-10	\$0.00	\$750.00	-\$850.00
Jan 12, 2010	Tuition	PSY 104: Child and Adolescent Development	\$1062.00	\$0.00	\$212.00
Jan 12, 2010	Military Grant	Military Grant	\$-312.00	\$0.00	-\$100.00
Feb 04, 2010	MyCAA	MyCAA 2009-10	\$0.00	\$750.00	-\$850.00
Feb 12, 2010	Payment	Stipend - PELL 2009-10	\$0.00	-\$100.00	-\$750.00
Feb 16, 2010	Tuition	PSY 325: Statistics for the Behavioral & Social Sciences	\$1062.00	\$0.00	\$312.00
Feb 16, 2010	Military Grant	Military Grant	\$-312.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Feb 22, 2010	Tuition	PSY 325: Statistics for the Behavioral & Social Sciences	\$-1062.00	\$0.00	-\$1062.00
Feb 22, 2010	Military Grant	Military Grant	\$312.00	\$0.00	-\$750.00
Feb 23, 2010	Tuition	PSY 325: Statistics for the Behavioral & Social Sciences	\$1062.00	\$0.00	\$312.00
Feb 23, 2010	Military Grant	Military Grant	\$-312.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

June 3, 2010

Redacted

Dear Redacted:

On May 4, 2010, Ashford University (University) received your formal grievance. Transmitted with your grievance, you submitted a forward of a message dated March 26, 2010, that you state you sent to Redacted by HELP. The University has no record of ever receiving that message and deeply regrets any inconvenience non-receipt might have caused.

In your grievance, you allege that the University has not released excess funding that you are eligible to receive. You identify the remedy you seek as the following:

A stipend check in the amount of \$1,500.00, which is the remaining Pell Grant funding on your student account.

The University's investigation revealed that your Pell Grant funding has been properly handled in accordance with the University's stipend and Direct Bill policy. The University does not consider unpaid vouchers when calculating your stipend and therefore withheld enough funding on your account to cover the cost of your tuition until your voucher payment is received. In other words, the University must retain enough funding on your account to pay for courses during the payment period. Because your MyCAA payments are typically not received by the University until after you have completed a course, the payment of the voucher is not considered during the stipend calculation, and money must be retained to cover the cost of courses.

The University regrets any confusion or inconvenience this situation may have caused you. Please know it is always the intention of Ashford University and its employees to provide excellent student services and an excellent learning experience. We wish you all the best in your continued studies.*

Sincerely,

REDACTED

Vice President of Student Services

** Please be advised that you may appeal this decision to the President of the University. Page twenty-two of the 2009-2010 Catalog describes the appeal process. Please note that you have twenty (20) business days from the receipt of this response letter to file any appeal. An appeal should be submitted to GrievanceAppeal@ashford.edu.*

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